“EVER-WIDENING CIRCLES”: PRIVATE VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT, COLONIALISM, AND ARAB PALESTINIANS, 1930-1960

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by

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Abstract

by

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I engage questions about how historical actors envisioned the best way to approach “the local” as outsiders as they grappled with the collateral damage of processes of urban-industrial modernization. I use multi-archival research in the United States, England, Israel, and the West Bank to track how American private voluntary organizations and British colonial authorities deployed a shared strain of rural development among Palestinian Arabs amidst the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Advocates of rural development were ambivalent about modernization and sought ways of nation-building that enabled local societies to retain their integrity and some measure of control over socioeconomic change. Towards this end, advocates promoted a rural development that was practical: immediately relevant for daily life and therefore very dependent on local contexts and the experiences and abilities of the students themselves. In this way, I encourage peacebuilding scholars to take seriously the “everyday” of colonial praxis and push historians of U.S. development towards the “everyday” of specific projects. And I argue that rural development was the predecessor to community development and that,
rather than Asia, it is to the Middle East that U.S. community development primarily owes its emergence.
For Kimberly, Rowan, and Daniel
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABCFM</td>
<td>American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions</td>
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<td>ACEC</td>
<td>Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVAFS</td>
<td>Advisory Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service</td>
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<td>ADS</td>
<td>Arab Development Society</td>
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<td>AFSC</td>
<td>American Friends Service Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUB</td>
<td>American University of Beirut (successor to Syrian Protestant College)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMEO</td>
<td>British Middle East Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC</td>
<td>Brethren Service Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLC</td>
<td>Country Life Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>British Colonial Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAR</td>
<td>Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations (within the USDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCC</td>
<td>Federal Council of Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>British Foreign Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEB</td>
<td>General Education Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDAB</td>
<td>International Development Advisory Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>IVS</td>
<td>International Voluntary Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>JVA</td>
<td>Jordan Valley Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAC</td>
<td>Middle East Agricultural Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>MESC</td>
<td>Middle East Supply Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCC</td>
<td>Mennonite Central Committee</td>
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<td>NEF</td>
<td>Near East Foundation</td>
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NER – Near East Relief

PCC – Palestine Conciliation Commission

PVO – Private Voluntary Organization

REA – Religious Education Association

TVA – Tennessee Valley Authority

UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency

USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture

YMCA – Young Men’s Christian Association

YWCA – Young Women’s Christian Association

**U.S. Foreign Aid Agencies** (in chronological order):

TCA – Technical Cooperation Administration (1950-1953)

MSA – Mutual Security Agency (1951-1953)

FOA – Foreign Operations Administration (1954-1955)

ICA – International Cooperation Administration (1956-1960)

**Archival Abbreviations**

AFSCA – American Friends Service Committee Archives (Philadelphia, USA)

CZA – Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem)

ISA – Israel State Archives (Jerusalem)

MECA – Middle East Centre Archives (St. Atony’s College, Oxford, England)

MCUA – Mennonite Church USA Archives (Goshen, IN, USA)

MSUA – Michigan State University Archives (East Lansing, MI, USA)
NAK – British National Archives (Kew, England)

NARA – U.S. National Archives II (College Park, MD USA)

RAC – Rockefeller Archive Center (Sleepy Hollow, NY, USA)
“The Little Things”

A Palestine Government memorandum on agricultural production in Palestine from the early 1940s noted that the casual observer could be confused about the operation of the Arab agricultural system. In the early months of the year, the land may in fact resemble the proverbial land “flowing with milk and honey” but in later months, the stereotypical barren wasteland. Agricultural patterns, “based on centuries of experience,” were based on an extensive system of farming that almost entirely depended on precipitation and rain water conserved in the soil. The memo continued: “The rotation appears to be so simple, and unproductive in comparison with methods in Europe and tropical Africa, that the visitor is immediately inclined to query and to suggest alternatives which in a very short period he will realize are entirely unsound.”

What was the proper way to approach socioeconomic development across cultures and local knowledge? In a 1952 address to American technicians going abroad in the service of President Harry Truman’s Point Four foreign aid program, a Foreign Service Institute anthropologist explained that when change in a society occurs, “it is the

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1 Memorandum on Agricultural Production in Palestine, August 29, 1942, p. 1, British National Archives at Kew (hereafter NAK), FO 922/97.
supporting structures which go first; core ideas, concepts, and institutions do not go until all or most of the supporting structures have been removed. . . . The technician working in a foreign area will find it easier to change little things.”2 This sentiment was also captured in the work of the private Quaker organization, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). In 1959, the Service Committee’s Field Director in Israel described the Quakers’ development efforts among Arabs to a neighbor, mentioning their discussion of needs with individual families and how to connect them to government services. The neighbor replied, “Ah, your organization is concerned with little things.”3

Approaching local contexts with sensitivity and patience was not uncontested. In the early 1940s, British Education Department staff in Palestine were wary of their counterparts in the Agricultural Department who they chided for having “little knowledge of Palestine but great optimism”.4 And in William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick’s 1958 novel, The Ugly American, the fictional technician Homer Atkins declares to a room full of professional diplomats: “You want big industry. You want big factories. You want big T.V.A.’s [Tennessee Valley Authority] scattered all over the country-side. . . . But [the people] don’t want what you want yet. It takes time for that. That’s why I recommend . . . that you start small, with little things.”5

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2 Edward Hall, Jr., “The Process of Change,” Foreign Service Institute, Department of State, Washington D.C. (1952), 6. Hall was Associate Professor of Anthropology.


At the heart of this dissertation are questions about how a group of historical actors – American, British, and Arab – sought to address poverty, cultural and physical displacement, and the socioeconomic inequalities that perpetuate them. Before concepts like “structural violence,” reformers through the 1900s linked socioeconomic and cultural conditions to domestic and international peace. Speaking broadly, they inherited Enlightenment desires for achieving social harmony by using rationality, science, and technology to guide social change; such ideas came to encapsulate what was considered modern. But the stories told here belie simple narratives of progress toward “modernity” and “modernization,” by looking to reformers who were just as anxious about modernity’s impacts as they were confident in the tools bringing it about.

These reformers included a number of British colonial authorities as well as ordinary Americans from voluntary agencies like the Near East Foundation, International Voluntary Service, and the American Friends Service Committee. They advocated what I call in this dissertation a strain of rural development, which revolved primarily around education for self-driven improvement. Rural development was a form of nation-build that began with individuals and local communities. In the chapters that follow, I do a great deal of lumping, emphasizing continuity across sectarian, national, imperial, and intellectual borders as I track rural development’s iterations over time, from rural reform to colonial reform, from social and technical assistance to community development. However, I see this task as splitting or parsing the study of modernization itself in a partial bid for conceptual clarity. What does the term mean? What has it meant?

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I juxtapose rural development with modernization, the latter defined as a specific vision of development involving centralization of state control, bureaucratization, and urban-industrial socioeconomics. Rural developers were ambivalent about modernization as thus conceived. They sought decentralized control, the bridging of technocrats and ordinary people, and they favored rural revitalization over urban-industrialism.

Accordingly, I use the term “development” in this dissertation to help draw a distinction, even while recognizing that rural development can be seen as one form of modernizing. These reformers were, after all, modernists. Like the American Populists of the late 1800s and early 1900s, rural developers favored the use of rationality and planning, sought to regulate rather than dispense with capitalism, and had faith in the ability of science and technology to improve human life and achieve social harmony. Theirs was a Western faith in modernity that was nonetheless anxious about its effects and disparities, and they sought to help safeguard local communities by helping them “own” processes of change in locally-suitable ways. Situations of urgency can draw out distinctions within development approaches, but they can also foster a form of pragmatism in which shared assumptions override differences. The plasticity of development thinking and practice in these moments is undergird by this modernist faith which allows for an attitude of “getting the job done,” in whatever way(s) proves expedient.

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Modernization can often seem to mean how other societies attempted to (or were forced to) adopt Western styles, techniques, or cultural outlooks. Or it can also seem to mean simply “updating,” adopting the latest and greatest in technology, administration, arms (etc.) I draw on Daniel Immerwahr’s useful distinction: development suggests a socioeconomic vision or plan of action, whatever that may be; modernization is a specific type of development. Daniel Immerwahr, Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development (Harvard University Press, 2015), Introduction.
The primary questions driving this dissertation revolve around how these reformers attempted to address poverty and displacement at local levels to achieve peace. The idea of the “local” is central to the concepts and peoples discussed in the forthcoming chapters. What did “local” mean to them and what type of cross-cultural relationships would bring about desired transformations? In other words, what was their theory of social change – a concern encapsulated in the title “ever-widening circles.”

Current thought in the field of Peace Studies animate these historical questions. John Paul Lederach’s conceptualization of conflict transformation sought to correct the top-down, universalizing tendencies of the conflict resolution field while, more generally, scholars have articulated a “turn to the local” within peacebuilding and development praxis as a response to the similar failings of the liberal peace model.\(^8\) This study of individual projects undertaken by religiously-affiliated private voluntary organizations (PVOs), intervenes in both this literature as well as the historiography of U.S. development.\(^9\) Engaging the local historically through the “quotidian” efforts of PVOs encourages peacebuilding scholars to take seriously the “everyday” of colonial praxis and pushes historians of development towards the “everyday” of specific projects.\(^10\)


\(^9\) NGOs and PVOs can be distinguished as follows: NGOs are any organization that is not directly affiliated with a government; this can include institutes, foundations, and universities, as well PVOs. The term “PVO” more specifically addresses nongovernmental organizations that are nonprofit, voluntary, and are generally involved in charity or social-work related activities.

\(^10\) Reviewers have used “quotidian” to describe the recent monograph by Jessica Elkind, *Aid Under Fire: Nation-Building and the Vietnam War* (University Press of Kentucky, 2016). Her work, however, fits the general mold for scholars of U.S. development to focus on Cold War Asia.
In a development literature framed in secular terms, I place religion back at the center of U.S. development efforts rather than simply at its beginning. Religious actors owe more to the development enterprise than a missionary legacy of intervention that becomes secularized. I trace the legacies of missionary work as well as the ongoing central of Christian-affiliated PVOs to promoting an agrarian and Progressive approach to development, provided continuity with contemporary development and peacebuilding trends concerning “the local.”¹¹ A focus on PVOs also foregrounds overlooked connections with colonial praxis and offers opportunities for analyzing local reactions to development interventions within the context of an evolving intractable social conflict: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹² This history of development places the United States in the world,¹³ and also in specific, regional contexts – in this case, the United States in the Middle East.¹⁴ This approach orients us to the truly transnational and global networks that made development ventures imaginable and actionable. Rural development strategies were born from the near-global drive for mass education. They cut across national, racial, religious, and imperial boundaries, and in this regard, we cannot understand U.S. development efforts nor British without the other. Christian missionaries helped form a

¹¹ My works suggests that there is perhaps more than resonance in Lederach’s conflict transformation approach and community development. We can compare for example the work of Lederach, a Mennonite, with that of IVS with its Anabaptist roots and his family’s shared history with the Mennonite Central Committee.


¹³ I use of the terms “America” or “Americans” when referring to the United States and/or its citizens purely for reasons of readability in the text.

foundation that tapped into trends in rural reform and agricultural extension, Progressive education, and scientific philanthropy – all transnational phenomenon oriented toward the local – which in turn helped inform a strand of British colonial reform after the turn of the century. Experiments with rural development took hold in Palestine under the British mandate, and continued, even sometimes under Arab auspices, into the 1950s, after the founding of Israel dramatically altered the regional landscape. How Arab Palestinians received or rejected, altered or abstained, from rural development within the context of Jewish Zionism remains a critical aspect of this story.

Thus while this is primarily a historical investigation, I engage with and draw together critical approaches to Peace Studies and Development Studies. One of the goals of this dissertation is to encourage scholars and practitioners in peacebuilding and development fields to deepen their understanding of the historical legacies of colonialism. Too often, references to colonialism in these literatures are essentialist, taken-for-granted, and ahistorical. Drawing from Frederick Cooper’s critique of much of colonial and postcolonial studies, “a generic colonialism” situated “somewhere between 1492 and the 1970s” and consisting of “European and then Western capitalist modernity” is commonplace. Flattening time and space, “its power in determining the present can be asserted even without examining its contours.”

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and the problems it has bequeathed, we need more than a superficial and decontextualized understanding of the relevant colonialisms. We lack analytical precision if we do not give “the everyday” of colonialism the same nuanced attention we do to its lingering influences.

Primary Arguments and Theory

As I argue, nation-building was how the reformers in this work answered their own queries about poverty and inequality. Through an evolving body of praxis that I call rural development, nation-building was to unfold from the bottom-up in ways there were holistic, human-centered, self-help-oriented, and primarily agrarian. These methods were consistent with modern trends in state-building and making societies legible, but they were also informed by the inequality and social unrest that accompanied urban-industrial capitalist expansion. In the American context, reformers sought to heal social wounds and preserve democracy; in the British empire, worries over ruling other peoples – and then preparing them for self-governance – hinged on the expectation that cross-cultural contact was dissolving local social fabrics. In both cases, rural development as a form of nation-building seemed to offer a stable, prosperous, equalizing, and locally legitimate way forward. Advocates of rural development maintained a cautious faith in state intervention which they envisioned as similarly being catalytic and simulative, relying ultimately on local actors and resources. If the state lacked such capacity, rural

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developers would act as advisers and bridgers with local communities. Ultimately, as rural developers saw it, mass education as the root of development was the key.

My central claims are about the emergence of community development. As other scholars have noted, U.S. community development in the post-1945 era represented a significant counterweight to strains of modernization because it looked to use local beliefs and traditions to cushion societies from the forces of modernization.\(^{17}\) I look to expand our understanding of the historical roots of community development while arguing that the concept had transnational origins, which included the British empire. First, I contend that community development emerged from rural development. Rural development itself arose from missionary activity, combining elements of Progressive education, agricultural extension, and scientific philanthropy. Missionary connections helped draw together American and British colonial actors, who shared rural development assumptions in their work among Palestinian Arabs, eventually culminating in British community development in the colonies by the 1940s and U.S. community development by the 1950s. Aside from missionary groups, Christian-affiliated PVOs were critical to this process. Second, I argue that, against a historiography dominated by U.S development efforts in Asia, it is to the Middle East that U.S. community development owes its emergence.\(^{18}\) This argument builds on the work of Keith David Watenpaugh, who claims that the region “was where much of modern humanitarianism

\(^{17}\) Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*.  

was born” as mass displacement after World War I led to the rise of professional aid bureaucracies, official categories of “refugee” and “minority” and questions about the international community’s role in the affairs of nation-states. Finally, I suggest that it is to community development and its emphasis on local self-help that contemporary peacebuilders and developers owe the concept of “empowerment,” with all of its colonial baggage.

I make these claims as I explore rural development’s evolution in the context of the Israel-Palestinian conflict from the mandate era through the first decade of Israel’s existence. The conflict between Arabs and Jews – as inter-communal violence devolved into a conflict between those with statehood and those without – put rural development under significant pressure, testing its potential and exacerbating its shortcomings. As with all peacebuilding ventures thus far, rural development failed to bring peace or to create an Arab Palestinian nation-state. This dissertation explores why. The Western missionary impulse encountered a tension between desired change and local culture through the 1800s. As “development” emerged as an international enterprise from the earlier missionary legacies, this central tension remained. When deployed among Arab villages in Palestine by the 1930s, rural development ironically disadvantaged Arabs vis a vis Jews while these tensions tended to exacerbate rather than heal divisions between the two communities.

Two theoretical insights quietly operate behind the scenes of the entire dissertation. Based on the work of Didier Fassin, a French theorist of humanitarianism,

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the first regards the tensions inherent in universal humanitarian thought and action: that paternalism, in the form of giver to receiver, is always-already present. Moreover, the universal implications of the equal value of each human life evaporate on contact in say, war zones in developing countries, when Western humanitarian agencies evacuate their personnel.\textsuperscript{20} The second derives from political theorist Barbara Cruikshank and her work on the ambiguity of democratic empowerment strategies. She argues that the desire to empower citizens – particularly the oppressed and marginalized in a society – is itself a political project, a desire to mold “proper” citizens in particular ways. This ambiguity therefore enables empowerment strategies to be put to “good” (emancipatory) as well as “bad” (oppressive) purposes.\textsuperscript{21}

A third insight, an historical argument by British historians, is that internationalist sentiment and modern humanitarian sensibilities arose alongside, and deeply interconnected with, British colonialism in the late 1800s and early 1900s. That is, the notion that societies around the globe constituted a single human family, with all its attendant obligations to help those in need, took hold because of, and only after, colonial expansion brought Europeans into direct contact with the immense diversity of human cultures. Colonialism engendered, to appropriate the words of historian William Haskell in his work on capitalism, the “recipe knowledge” required to make humanitarian


\textsuperscript{21} Barbara Cruikshank, \textit{The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects} (Cornell University Press, 1999). The work of historian Daniel Immerwahr points in this direction: despite the outwardly “good” intentions of community developers to promote grassroots democracy amidst largely voiceless rural villages in places such as India and the Philippines, the strategies were coopted by local power elites or weaponized as a form of U.S. Cold War foreign policy. See: \textit{Thinking Small}. 
sensibilities possible. The implications of this theory are that British colonialism contained seemingly contradictory impulses – a need to maintain political and economic control and a sense of responsibility for the remote consequences of one’s actions.

Based on these insights, the chapters herein explore tensions in reformers’ work within the local. Rural development projects contained the potential for oppression and emancipation and practitioners had to make tradeoffs given specific contexts. The primary tension from which others stem revolves around the central dynamic of balancing guided change and stimulation by outsider agents with local ownership/empowerment. Put another way, how does one balance the seemingly intractable conflict between cultural relativist and humanitarian impulses: on one hand, respecting differences would preclude outsider intervention that would disrupt local sociocultural fabrics while on the other hand, a principled concern for the welfare of other human beings demands action. How, then, are peacebuilders to address structures of violence while simultaneously respecting “the local”?23

I identify three subsidiary tensions. First, advocates of this strain of rural development retained a paternalistic stance, emanating from their historico-cultural grounding and because paternalism as a structure of unequal power relations inheres in outsider-insider relationships, at times abetting and hindering the work. Second, within such outsider-insider projects, there is an inherent tension between the practices and


23 I am indebted to Kyle Lambelet, Karie Cross, and Heather DuBois for their help in thinking through this framing.
cultural orientations of both sets of people. Difference exists and has to be worked within, but can never fully be overcome. This holds true even for “bridgers,” those with dual-identities as insiders and outsiders, who do not reside firmly in one camp or another. That is, we cannot overcome our sociocultural frames of reference entirely and thus require imperfect partnership and negotiation. Finally, tension exists between universalist and particularist impulses. Promoters of education for development sought to balance, and often synthesize, modern Western science and technology with local knowledge and practices. And they did so while nation-building, using a universal political organizational model that respected but harmonized internally plural cultures within a set of political boundaries. In turn, these inherent tensions force developers to make hard choices – tradeoffs – about what to emphasize and when in their local work.

For instance, this dissertation acknowledges both that local farming practices were well-suited to the climate, geography, and Arab life ways24 and that, as the Jewish settlers demonstrated, adapting machinery and Western techniques to the local environment was possible in ways that significantly boosted productivity and incomes (bracketing issues of environmental sustainability and the desirability of Western concepts of improved living). Even as many Arab villagers in this dissertation took to many of the approaches Western rural developers adapted in Palestine/Israel, one of the cultural biases running through rural development was the belief that Arab villagers had to be educated out of a subsistence economy. This was necessary to improve standards of

living and stimulate initiative in Arab villagers so as to allow them to adapt to modern forces.

Along the way, rural developers were concerned to one degree or another with social and economic equality but were faced with the task of determining how to go about building it – what social and economic pressure points to massage, how to work with the culture’s established authorities, and when it was necessary to work around such local power hierarchies to achieve goals that benefited the village as a whole. To work with local power figures was not necessarily a technocratic dodge of politics to secure goals set by the developers; there were hopes that in doing so, the project would gain cultural legitimacy, that change would not abruptly obliterate local social fabrics, that the whole village would benefit, that social harmony and equality would result. And, in the process, the local hierarchy itself would change in more democratic directions. 25

As rural development was deployed in the non-Western world through imperial structures, the valence of these tensions and tradeoffs only heightened. What did it mean to have empowerment strategies transmitted through formal British colonialism and informal American imperialism? Many scholars suggest that these strategies were an effort to give just enough latitude to local peoples so as to forestall challenges to imperial

25 Missiologists take up the question of inculturation: that “the whole body of the Christian message, not just its extern wrapping, needs to take flesh, become incarnate, in the patterns of thought, language, and symbols of a particular culture.” The same questions missiologists grapple with today could almost seamlessly be inserted into those being tackled by rural developers: “How much does inculturated language matter?”; “What are the criteria for authentic inculturation?” (what is kernel of the faith, and what is husk?); “Inculturation from outside or from inside?”; “Inculturation from above or from below?”; “How feasible is it to separate ‘religion’ from ‘culture’?” Brian Stanley, “Inculturation: Historical Background, Theological Foundations and Contemporary Questions,” Transformation 24, No. 1 (January 2007), p. 22, 24-27. (of 21-27) Cultural anthropologists used the terms enculturation or acculturation, while missionaries themselves would often refer to indigenization, although with more reference to local control and sustainability than cultural or theological adjustment.
control. They would be correct. And yet, they were not purely cynical or instrumental; as, for example, when the British used their control to promote equitable land reform or when providing services helped maintain political stability. Moreover, the same approaches and projects that extended British or American hegemony in the Middle East served to undermine the same; as we will see, Arabs used the logics and practices of rural development to resist Zionist expansion, colonial rule, and then Israeli security measures.

Historiography and Methodology

In the main, this dissertation engages literature on American development and foreign aid. Much of the historical scholarship has explained modernization theory or posited an “American modernization” – its assumptions, intellectual grounding, and placement within U.S. foreign policy from the 1930s to the 1960s. Recently, historians have begun to break apart this “consensus” and investigate variations in modernization approaches, even questioning if modernization was the goal of certain social scientists and state actors, including proponents of U.S.-led community development in the Cold War. There has been, notably, a move to include the perspective of the host countries


29 Nicole Sackley, “Cosmopolitanism and the Uses of Tradition: Robert Redfield and Alternative Visions of Modernization During the Cold War,” Modern Intellectual History 9, No. 3 (November 2012), 15.
and recover processes of negotiation.\textsuperscript{30} My probing of rural development expands on the work of those parsing out differences in American approaches while following Nathan Citino in moving the study of American development efforts geographically from the U.S. in Asia to the U.S. in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{31}

This literature, however, remains U.S.-centric, bound within a model of the exportation of American liberalism abroad. While gesturing towards the importance of non-state actors and religion, it has also hewed to state and secular frames. Finally, although recent work has begun to probe the “technics” of development on the ground, a truly local-level view of development projects which incorporates local voices and responses is lacking. It is these gaps which I seek to address.

In order to make these interventions, I adopt microhistorical and comparative methodologies. Remaining within an “American liberalism goes abroad” model of analysis risks exaggerating notions American exceptionalism. In fact, American thought and praxis circulated in transnational currents. Accordingly, I compare American and British development efforts and suggest that transnational concerns engendered transnational praxis. Placing American efforts in the Middle East alongside those of the British helps to more firmly ground them as it takes into consideration foundations that


had already existed in the region and localities.\textsuperscript{32} The work of American missionaries and Progressive educators, linked to transnational currents, influenced British colonial reform, laying the ground work for cooperation in Palestine that would then emanate through partnerships during World War II and into a shared commitment to community development by the 1950s. It is with a comparative lens and a longer historical view that I argue that rural development prefigures community development, which itself directly stems from British colonialism.\textsuperscript{33}

Rural developers adhered to a specific brand of internationalism. Rather than a simple, benign internationalism that sought connection rather than boundary-making, however, scholars have argued it expanded America power by obscuring the nature of this expansion and the interests that undergird it. Thus, American expansion through “nationalistic internationalism” was made possible by a “spaceless geography” of the globe that opened up space for economic exploitation.\textsuperscript{34} Or, a global geography of integration and interdependence that emphasized creating sentimental bonds across human divides and the values of reciprocity and exchange underwrote American expansion.\textsuperscript{35} Indeed, rural developers justified their interventions by pointing to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Nathan Citino, “The Ghosts of Development: The United States and Jordan’s East Ghor Canal,” \textit{Journal of Cold War Studies} 16, No. 4 (Fall 2014) and “The ‘Crush’ of Ideologies: The United States, the Arab World, Cold War Modernization,” \textit{Cold War History} 12, No. 1 (February 2012), pp. 89-110.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Neil Smith, \textit{American Empire: Roosevelt’s Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
\item \textsuperscript{35} Christina Klein, \textit{Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
\end{itemize}
mutual benefit that development efforts would accrue. But theirs was an internationalism based on a world of sovereign nation-states working cooperatively for mutual benefit and bound together by common laws, norms, or institutions. Rural developers were confident nation-builders, if ambivalent American exceptionalists. They were guided by (an often unspoken) faith in America as a beacon to the world and in a faith in American technical and material achievement. Rural developers sought singularity within universalism and saw in their methods the means to be a model for the world using science and technology but allowing room for – even demanding – local hybridity. Their reforms at home and abroad acted less on a desire to draw boundaries and make distinctions than to emphasize the interdependence of the world’s societies and the ways in which exchange and hybridity could bring about prosperity, democracy, and a rebalancing of the social and economic scales. Rural developers were true nation-builders, seeking development around the world under internationalist justifications; not

36 NEF Progress Report 1933, Rockefeller Archive Center, Near East Foundation Collection AC2009.002 (hereafter RAC 002), Box 2.


38 Michael Adas, “From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon: Integrating the Exceptionalist Narrative of the American Experience into World History,” The American Historical Review 106, No. 5 (Dec., 2001), p. 1694 (of p. 1692-1720). The U.S. has oscillated, he argues, between these two central tensions in U.S. thinking: uniqueness vs. mission and singularity vs. universalism – that is, how can the US be unique and exceptional when it often conceives of its own values as universal and worth sharing/imposing with the rest of the world? The US’s expanding power and influence intensified the paradoxes at the heart of US exceptionalism: it both justified US intervention (to help others progress) even as the US tended to denigrate those it sought to help (the US is still special and unique).
of a space-less geography but a space-less humanitarian obligation that was nonetheless effective only if deeply contextualized at the local level.

Indeed, development projects operate in the human realm. There is thus much to be gained by approaching its study as close to the ground as possible; to attempt to recover and amplify the responses of those in the rural villages whose voices often remain principally in the documents of developers. By deploying microhistories of individual development projects, I seek to probe the micro-dynamics of development in action and to recover the actual experiences in Arab villages and among Arab refugees. Other scholars have begun to illustrate the importance of non-state actors to the development enterprise; my centering the place of PVOs becomes the vehicle for an on-the-ground look at development and an opportunity to reckon with the tensions and tradeoffs that development work entails. This guards against critiques perhaps made too swiftly in the arguments of the existing scholarship. Daniel Immerwahr, for instance, critiques community developers for lacking an understanding of power in local contexts; the work of the AFSC, however, illustrates not a lack of knowledge (though certainly an incomplete one) but rather a slew of difficult decisions concerning how to go about their work in locally-respectful ways.

The PVO microhistories also place religion back at the center of development, rather than only at its beginning. Missionaries and a Social Gospel ethos are often (rightly) credited with prefiguring development ideology and practice, but religious actors disappear thereafter. I suggest that although much scholarship has suggested a process of secularization of religious practices and social orientations, the work of groups on the ground reflected less a conscious secularization and more a perceived need to
adjust programming to contexts of religious and cultural pluralism. The transformation of NEF into a development organization is an exemplar. Moreover, one of my long-running arguments is to continually highlight the very tangible influence of missionary work into the post-1945 era. And, by demonstrating the prominence of Christian-affiliated groups, I illustrate the dovetailing of theological convictions with strategies/approaches that kept religious-affiliated non-state actors at the center of the international development regime.

By trying to see development from both ends also broaches questions of Orientalism and U.S.-Arab relations. If historians of American relations with the Middle East have demonstrated a reluctance to engage with Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) since its publication, a cluster of recent scholarship has directly engaged it. One of Said’s primary claims was that European (and then American) knowledge about “the Orient” or “the East” was incomplete, based in stereotypes, and self-reinforcing; the West used the East’s lack of modernity, progress, and rationality to justify the exercise of power over non-Western peoples. While maintaining the theoretical criticism of the use of knowledge about “the other” as a tool of oppression and boundary-making, some historians have nuanced Said’s easy elision of European and American “Orientalisms.” Although noting the overlap between U.S. and British efforts in development can be seen to reinforce Said’s essentialized “West,” I see my own work as continuing in this “post-Orientalist” vein.

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I borrow from Ussama Makdisi’s work on American missionaries to suggest that missionaries were not simple cultural imperialists; such a view denies Arab Muslims their own agency and obscures the cultural space that such encounters opened up. Similarly, the literature on British and American Protestant missionaries (from which NEF evolved) is moving in this “ambiguous” direction, striving to move past the existing literature’s obsession with the dichotomy of “altruism” and “cultural imperialism.” Arab Palestinians reacted in various ways that belies a strict “cultural imperialism” reading of development (or missionary work) and in ways that demonstrated their agency in various contexts, however circumscribed they were or however unequal the power dynamics. They used its logic to undermine British rule during the mandate and then, in a local variant, deployed it to undermine Zionist expansion and cement Palestinian nationalism. In Israel after 1948, they accepted aid that allowed them to compete and/or thrive in the Israeli economy, but resisted being incorporated into rural development’s nation-building drive. Spaces of hybridity are encapsulated in the work of Afif Tannous, a Lebanese-born Arab educated at American missionary schools who advocated for Arab Palestinian betterment under British colonial auspices, and Musa Alami, an Arab notable and Palestinian nationalist, who created a local hybrid of rural development as a means to build the foundation for a Palestinian nation-state while forestalling Zionist expansion.

If an Orientalist worldview “functions best in a closed informational environment, where propaganda and the Orwellian use of words stands in for reality,” microhistories of actual development projects can help clarify Orientalism as practiced (or adapted).\(^{41}\) Much recent scholarship on American relationships with the Middle East have taken up cultural vantage points in which unchanging negative Orientalist views of Arabs infect American foreign policy, popular opinion, and changing views of Jews and the State of Israel.\(^{42}\) Other studies emphasize Orientalism among those predisposed towards Arabs, but remain within a frame of cultural representation and policymaking.\(^{43}\) Using the lens of development and approaching it through microhistories allows me to address Makdisi’s insightful claim that “It is one thing to criticize American representations of foreign cultures; it is an entirely different matter to study American engagements with them.”\(^{44}\) A keystone to my efforts is to detail American, British, and Arab agricultural geographies, mental and physical, and to compare how they interacted in the specific contexts of singular development projects.

\(^{41}\) Citation from Lawrence Davidson’s review of Douglas Little’s *American Orientalism* in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 33, No. 3 (Spring 2004), p. 121.


Rural developers displayed alternating accurate and inaccurate knowledge of local conditions and practices. On one hand, a common reference point for nearly all the British and American actors in this dissertation is the idea that Arab agriculture had not changed in centuries and that traditions “from time immemorial” had served them well but stagnated their ability to “progress.” On the other hand, American and British actors often had well-informed positions on village life and power dynamics within them; to be sure, PVO personnel performed their terms of service deeply embedded in village life. As early as the 1800s, a British colonial focus on the value of local knowledge and vernacular languages were advocated by Orientalist scholars against assimilationist-minded reformers looking to turn colonial subjects into Englishmen and women.\(^\text{45}\) By the 1920s, a more intentional, welfare-focused interest in “the local” (the Arab village) served to both reinforce elements of Orientalist knowledge while simultaneously undermine them. Indeed, an admittance of the importance and appropriateness of local context and knowledge decentered Western universalist claims about science and technology and thereby aided the disintegration of colonial control.\(^\text{46}\)

The concept of race is not one of my primary units of analysis.\(^\text{47}\) While acknowledging that historical actors could elide race and culture, particularly during the era I am studying, I focus more specifically on the issue of culture. Rural developers saw


change and human difference less in terms of race (fluid or unchanging) and more in terms of culture. With scientific racism increasingly out of fashion by the 1930s, they argued that a host of economic, political, and environment factors helped determine local cultural outlooks which in turn were pliable. This faith in the plasticity of culture formed the bedrock of rural development’s outlook on guided change in other societies.

Explaining Rural Development

Paul Monroe, a Progressive educator and member of the NEF, warned in the 1920s against Western educators failing to admit “the inherent value of the native culture and the significance of its revered utility.”48 The basis of rural development was education, adapted to local contexts and oriented toward practical, every-day concerns. The objective was nation-building: it was through adapted education that individual, communal, and national improvement, independence, and self-rule would succeed and thrive without further outside intervention. Returning to the words of Monroe, “The purpose of education is to develop initiative, self-reliance, insight, individuality, love of work, persistence, tolerance, ability to cooperate, and numerous moral qualities . . .”49 A British colonial advisory committee suggested “[The] emphasis on the practical side of education . . . is sincerely advocated as the most effective means of enabling the


community as a whole to make real progress.” In this way, the colonial state was to “facilitate local initiative, not to order it, and allow for the widest variety of . . . initiative, independent effort, and self-help.”

For rural developers, “real progress” was not urban-industrial modernization, although its view of socioeconomic improvement was modernist. Progress towards empowerment and independence meant using education to increase productivity and standards of living, encouraging the adoption of improved methods and technologies for growing and harvesting crops. It could also mean: support for cooperatives and credit unions (that is, communal and group solutions to problems of marketing, distribution, and cost efficiency); support for small, culturally-relevant artisan industries such as crafts or weaving which aimed to both work within existing cultural practices and help to supplement farming incomes. Its social components were holistic and aimed at raising health and diet to Western standards while creating a greater sense of community and social responsibility that extended beyond the individual and his/her extended family or kinship networks; indeed, the rhetoric of moving Arabs beyond “provincial tribalism” is widespread. Moreover, PVOs sought to reach the entire family – not only husbands, but wives and children.

50 Quotations from Oldham’s memorandum “Educational Policy in Africa,” cited by Frederick James Clatworthy, The Formulation of British Colonial Education Policy, 1923-1948 (University of Michigan School of Education, 1971), pp. 26, 23; Clatworthy provides a thorough institutional view of the Educational Advisory Committee. One of his central arguments is that “the educational policies recommended by the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education during the first twenty-five years of its operation reflected a continuous attempt to orient education policy in the colonies to local needs for human resource development.” Ibid., p. 9.

Finally, there was a cultural component, which built on creating communal bonds – that of changing attitudes amongst the people with whom they were working. Drawing on the concept of self-help, Arabs had to be encouraged to change their attitudes about their own capacity to enact positive change in their lives, at individual, communal, and national levels. From the American PVO perspective, “Arab” or “Islamic” culture, because of its history of colonial subjugation (Ottoman, British), had stunted the desires and socioeconomic and political feelings of efficacy about change – skepticism such Arabs had of governing authorities to provide any locally-beneficial services.

Rural development utilized a few key concepts: an ever-widening circles theory of change, technical assistance, self-help, and agrarianism. I explain each in more detail in the following subsections.

Ever-widening Circles

Operating at all of these levels of “development,” then, rural developers acted as “catalytic agents” stimulating the nation-building process by living with the villagers, establishing personal relationships, and working cooperatively with locals to provide culturally-sensitive and locally-adapted solutions to problems identified by the villagers themselves. I borrow the phrase “ever-widening circles” from a U.S. foreign aid publication to encapsulate rural development’s theory of change. Once the villagers gained the trust of the technicians, and began to change their own attitudes about enacting positive change, the hope was that local responsibility would take over, improvement would become sustainable without external aid. Specific sites of intervention acted as models and stimulants for the benefits of locally-led change to accrue; other communities would see the advantages and adopt similar methods, thereby creating new centers that
would then themselves radiate influence. Bridging technocratic governance with
democratic participation, this approach centered on moving outwards from individual
local leaders to the immediate village community and then on to other villages, until the
catalyzing influence had permeated the entire nation and its various levels of government.
As more and more local communities became energized and sought change, the national
government, which rural developers encouraged to take part in local projects, would
increase its capacity and responsiveness to the needs of its citizens.

Technical Assistance

The term technical assistance is ubiquitous in the development literature but
rarely defined or explained. A U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Technical Assistance
Programs in 1954 defined it simply: “Technical assistance began when the man who
invented the wheel told somebody about it.” 52 Simply defined, technical assistance was,
at its core, about education: the transfer of knowledge from outside experts to local
learners – a demonstration of “how to” that those being taught could absorb and then
conduct themselves. This broad definition fits the expansive nature of its usage by
contemporaries, encompassing activity such as building wells, training people to use
machinery, construct laboratories, advice on public administration organization and legal
structures, port and road-building, and mineral extraction. The term can – and did – cover
such a wide array of knowledge transmission. It therefore made sense for PVOs to
declare in 1953 that over 100 PVOs were operating approximately 2500 technical

52 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Technical Assistance Programs,
*Development of Technical Assistance Programs: Background Information and Documents*, 83rd Cong., 2d
assistance programs in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, and that, in sub-Saharan Africa, about 85% of all educational services had been furnished by Christian missionaries. Such groups clearly saw education as integral to their conception of technical assistance.

For rural development, the educational foundation of technical assistance was supremely important, and saw change in the long-term and on a small scale in order to help local communities improve their conditions by increasing food production, improving health and sanitation, and developing systems of elementary and vocational education. The first director of President Harry Truman’s foreign aid program provided an illuminating description from 1951:

The technical cooperation program is primarily a program of teaching and demonstration. It is a down-to-earth program that deals directly with villages and with people—with people who are barefooted, diseased and hungry. . . . [the problems] can be met not by large grants of funds, supplies or equipment but by helping people to develop simple improvements in methods and practices which they themselves will understand and carry forward.54

The temptation of course, was for foreign experts to perform tasks for local villages or state authorities for reasons of convenience, urgency, or due to cultural translation frustrations. However, it was no coincidence that the term “cooperation” was sometimes a substitute for “assistance,” given the cooperative theory of change involved in education-as-development. While villages looked to capitalize on their own resources


and initiative, rural development worked to build state administrative capacity. The NEF, which helped pioneer this brand of technical assistance in the region, defined technical assistance partly by “the idea of helping people to help themselves”.\textsuperscript{55} Cooperation, joint decision-making, and a concern for the lives of ordinary people were integral components.

Self-Help: A Genealogy

In the growing literature on development and modernization, scholars frequently quote historical actors talking in terms of promoting self-help, but they have not fully analyzed self-help as an operative concept. “Give a man a fish and he’ll eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he’ll eat for the rest of his life.” This (gendered) proverb, of unknown origins, is an effective stand-in for the emphasis that many developers placed on education and local empowerment. In providing aid in times of tragedy or in addressing the root causes of suffering and poverty, the best approach was not one of unending relief assistance, as necessary as this was in the short-term. The only way to achieve long-term success was to embed in the process of giving the means by which locals could adopt them and then carry them forward themselves.

Behind the imperative to promote self-help was a fear of dependency. Readers may be familiar with a strain of "dependency" genealogy linked to industrialism. Generally speaking, in transitioning from pre- to industrial societies, the concept of dependency moved from more social (hierarchy) and legal (coverture) registers to

political (rights of citizens) and economic (autonomy, self-sufficiency) registers. Once considered victims of a form of wage slavery, urban laborers began to claim from states political and civil rights based on their economic independence. In racial and gendered terms, dependency by the 1800s could be meant as benevolent, as women and children dependent on the husband/father and as colonial subjects in need of civilizing. It could also be meant in more pejorative terms as a lack of economic independence and thus social and political status. By the late 1800s, the condition of dependency became associated with recipients of government assistance and welfare; in this instance, poverty was seen not so much in structural terms but as the result of personal failings, manifested in poor choices or idleness which bred degeneracies in one’s character.\textsuperscript{56} A mixture of humanitarianism and religiosity pervaded social reform efforts in Victorian England focused on addressing individual failings and character deficiencies. “Teaching people the virtues of reflection and close attention to the distant consequences of their actions came to be regarded as a universal key to social progress . . .”\textsuperscript{57} The lower classes, the mentally handicapped, criminals, and children were said to share this lack of self-restraint over one’s passions and an inability to forecast the consequences of one’s actions. Crafting individuals of high character who adhered to principles was to facilitate their social mobility. Expanding to include cultural pathologies amongst marginalized groups,}


\textsuperscript{57} Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2,” \textit{American Historical Review} 90, No. 3 (June 1985), p. 361 (of 547-566). Haskell ties such sentiments to the rise of capitalism and the logic of the market in which success demanded such principals. He also, to my mind, effectively discredits reductive “social control” explanations for middle class-led humanitarianism and reform efforts.
this conceptualization of dependency and reform was embodied in examples like Patrick Moynihan’s report on the state of African American poverty in the 1960s and the stigma attached to “welfare mothers” by the 1990s which critics argued blamed victims instead of the system that oppressed them. In the international development realm, anthropologist James Ferguson has recently critiqued this dependency paradigm, with its nuclear-family and gendered, industrial living-wage ideal, by inverting the classic phrase and foregrounding “giving a man a fish” in support of basic income programs in Africa.

The related term self-help operated within these understandings of dependency. Coined as early as 1831 in England, self-help had resonance with sentiments as wide ranging as reform Protestantism, Social Darwinism, and modern social work. The laissez faire capitalist notion of "pulling oneself up by his bootstraps" was a common late-1800s theme in American industrial society. People could raise their station in life through individual commitment and hard work. In some corners, these sentiments dovetailed with the “survival of the fittest” orientation of Social Darwinism. Philanthropists like Andrew Carnegie famously gave money for public libraries and universities but believed that helping the poor directly through welfare relief would breed degeneracy and dependency rather than encouraging individual initiative aimed at social and economic betterment. With clear religious undertones, idleness, a cause and outcome of dependency, could lead to moral degeneration. To be of value to a society, an individual needed to be productive

58 Moynihan’s *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965), commonly referred to as the Moynihan Report. Fraser and Gordon critique the welfare mother idea in “Genealogy of Dependency.”

morally and economically rather than a drain on the resources of the state and a
downward force on society's moral standing.

Yet self-help as a way out of poverty was not confined to such understandings and
often included attempts to craft a more humane, democratic, and participatory society.
Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, a nineteenth-century Boston physician and abolitionist, was
known for his vocational educational work among the crippled and blind. He developed a
colony for the homeless and displaced, recognizing that providing food assistance was
not of itself sufficient; they could, after all, contract “vicious habits.” But he also worked
with them to achieve self-sufficiency through self-help on the belief that the blind should
not be dependent nor isolated, confined to institutions and separated from their families
and society.60 French thinker and activist Jules Payot was an advocate of social justice
and solidarity and thought that properly educated school teachers could “civilize” rural
villages. It was no accident that his Education of the Will (1909) became popular in
religious and missionary education with its emphasis on training individuals to strive for
themselves, to orient their abilities toward hard work.61 Ellen Ranyard of the Female
Bible Mission in 1850s London found it difficult to separate the distribution of bibles
from domestic assistance for poor women; a prerequisite, however, was a willingness to

See also: Harold Schwartz, Samuel Gridley Howe: Social Reformer, 1801-1876 (Cambridge, Mass., 1956),
chap. 6. Admittedly within prevailing racial sentiments but against popular opinion, he also argued for the
Freedman’s Inquiry that recently emancipated African Americans could be productive members of
American society rather than a drain on state and community resources. Matthew Furrow, “Samuel Gridley
Howe, the Black Population of Canada West, and the Racial Ideology of the ‘Blueprint for Radical
Reconstruction,’” Journal of American History 97, No. 2 (September 2010), pp. 344-370.

61 Frances Malino, “Institutrices’ in the Metropole and the Maghreb: A Comparative
Perspective,” Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques 32, No. 1, Shifting Boundaries, Rethinking
Paradigms: The Significance of French Jewish History (Spring 2006), pp. 133-134 (of 129-142).
demonstrate self-discipline, help defray costs, and a general willingness to contribute to their own improvement. And Octavia Hill, of the Charity Organization Society sought to promote self-help among the poor in the 1870s. Christian charity without such attention only served to reinscribe dependency and codify existing class differences. “For I do not myself believe that we from above can help the people so thoroughly and well in any other ways as by helping them to help themselves,” Hill wrote.

Indeed, by the late 1800s the human dignity of the poor could be protected if aid was granted in ways that encouraged self-help. Such an approach, which minimized outside coercion, was also deemed more sustainable in the long-run as the persons being assisted held a greater stake and relied on their own abilities for ultimate success. This new conception of Christian charity took root in a small but influential group of “scientific philanthropies” that reoriented assistance away from individuals, groups, or specific causes and towards “social investments” that would bring about long-term social transformation and human betterment. In the form of foundations, they adopted corporate business models to dispense immense wealth. Such views of how to address poverty were also being championed by many Progressives, especially through education and


63 Cited by Barbara Cruikshank, *Will to Empower*, p. 49.


social work. Mary Parker Follett, Progressive era social worker and theorist of management and organization, remarked that “we can never reform American politics from above, by reform associations, by charters and schemes of government . . . Political progress must be by local communities.”

Rural development was certainly implicated in these various historical iterations of dependency. Rural developers never defined dependency, although its usage assumed understandings similar to those of earlier promoters of forms of self-help: it involved unhealthy and unsustainable reliance on outside assistance that taxed donor and/or state resources that (1) deprived the assisted of their dignity, both by preventing productive labor and in denying them control over their own fate and (2) dis-incentivized self-improvement. Their theory of change held economic independence as the path toward full attainment of citizen rights and its primary intervention was among individuals and specific communities. They viewed poverty and inequality less in personal terms and more in cultural terms. To them, environment and years of oppressive rule had led to stagnation.

Yet, rural developers also seized on self-help’s more emancipatory potential. The promotion of state intervention, and of tying local demands with state resources, and the encouragement of cooperatives and agrarian partnerships more generally were not to overturn industrial capitalism. They were intended to ameliorate its effects. Moreover, rural developers saw in self-help a way to involve people at the local level, to give them a say in and measure of control over the policies and events that impacted their lives, and,

66 Cited by Goldstein, Poverty in Common, p. 36.
to varying degrees, to respect cultural and social patterns amidst guided socioeconomic change. Such approaches would both help secure long-term sustainability and protect the people’s dignity as individuals. Underlying the latter assumption was an anthropology in which dependency on outside sources for well-being was detrimental to one’s morale and sense of self-respect; the potential for productive, constructive action for personal and community betterment would be sapped by fatalism or other disincentives to become self-reliant. This was especially to be the case among refugees who had lost not only their homes but their livelihoods; to return them to means of self-support was considered of greatest urgency.

By the 1920s, amidst lingering scientific racism and the eugenics movement, a new conception of human difference was beginning to take hold: culture. For a number of reasons, such as the influence of anthropology and a measure of Western cultural humility following the wanton destruction of World War I, cultural explanations were mapped onto older, environmental explanations for social trajectories. Within a cultural understanding of social change, self-help served to allow outsiders to guide change but in ways that were locally-adapted and in which locals were themselves invested and leading. I argue that it is from this rural development sense of “self-help” that our current conceptualizations of “empowerment” in the fields of development and peacebuilding derive.

Agrarianism

While the plight and resistance of the urban working classes constituted the “social question” of the age, the countryside was also seen as in need of assistance amidst vast socioeconomic change. This was not just in the imagination of the reformers.
Grafted onto turn of the century anxiety about the effects of urban-industrialism and rural-urban disparities was a crisis of manhood. Scholars have linked fears about the waning of the Civil War generation, the rise of feminism, and the growth of white collar labor to the drive for war with Spain in the 1890s in which a new generation of American men could assure the nation’s masculinity. In rural contexts, such fears overlapped with the drain of American farm youth from their family farms to urban centers, drawn by the promises of employment, adventure, and/or urban amenities. The task for rural reformers was to stem this tide which could only add to urban problems; the solution lay in helping rural peoples become more prosperous and cooperative – that is, more attractive to live in. What emerged in this conjunction of contexts was an insistence on the dignity of labor. Hard work and dirty hands was a respectable and noble way of life and one which ought not be denigrated in light of white collar desk jobs.

“Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition,” penned Thomas Jefferson. His ideas have become the basis for various visions of agrarianism, from the democratic to the aristocratic. Against the agrarian myth of the self-sufficient (noncommercial) small holder beholden to conservative traditionalism as the hallmark of Jeffersonian agrarianism, one historian writes: “he was responsive to every possible change in cultivation, processing, and marketing that would enhance its profitability. It was exactly


the promise of progressive agricultural development that fueled his hopes that ordinary
men might escape the tyranny of their social superiors both as employers and magistrates. More than most democratic reformers, he recognized that hierarchy rested on economic relations and a deference to the past as well as formal privilege and social custom.”

Jefferson viewed industry with skepticism since the relationship of power between employer and employee could easily slip into one of patronage that could undermine democracy. Independent farmers were a bulwark against the corrosive influence of corruption and social hierarchy.

He held a view of the family farm as superior to the factory but within the context of the then-burgeoning agricultural trade with Europe, believed that if small holders adopted the latest and greatest in cultivation and marketing techniques, American farmers could make their living independently and prosperously; in turn, economic freedom was the national path toward social equality by helping to eradicate privilege and hierarchical social customs.

In adopting these ways of understanding self-help, rural developers were truly “Jeffersonian.” Rural developers emphasized rural over urban or industrial development; they favored progress based on the economic independence of small holders but in ways that were guided by and adapted to but by no means bound to provincializing traditions; they saw in maintaining or creating small farmers the means towards economic and social equity especially vis a vis urban centers; and they similarly linked economic freedom

69 Joyce Appleby, “Commercial Farming and the ‘Agrarian Myth’ in the Early Republic,” *Journal of American History* 68, No. 4 (March 1982), pp. 844-845. The agrarian myth was the argument of Richard Hofstadter in 1955; he suggested that agrarians used Jefferson to nostalgically fashion the “yeoman farmer” as folk hero dedicated to a simpler, noncommercial, self-sufficient farm life.

with political democracy. They saw the loss of economic autonomy as a path toward social and economic dependency that was antithetical to republican citizenship and the democratic process.\textsuperscript{71}

Anabaptist Visions

One of the starting points for the dissertation are shifts in Christian missiology that shaped rural developers’ activism abroad. The inheritors of these efforts, often with direct lineages, as in the case of the NEF, the religiously-affiliated PVOs that I explore adopted NEF’s brand of rural development which combined the tensions of the missionary enterprise with NEF’s drive to improve agriculture, adapt social change to local cultures, and create both democratic nation-states and citizenries. My criteria for selecting PVOs for this dissertation revolved primarily around who worked with Arab Palestinians in more than relief capacities between the mandate period and the first decade of Israel’s existence (between the 1930s and 1950s).

NEF and the AFSC, which bookend the dissertation, were two of the most prominent PVOs in the United States at that time – with strong humanitarian resumes and years of experience in the field. They were both founding members of the umbrella group, the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service (ACVAFS), formed in the early 1940s to coordinate private relief efforts and ensure such work aligned with the U.S. government’s war objectives. NEF provided the initial links between American PVOs and British colonialism among Arab Palestinians in the 1930s,

\textsuperscript{71} Charles Postel, \textit{The Populist Vision} (Oxford University Press, 2007).
and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) worked among Arabs in Israel in the 1950s while partnering with the British in their (unsuccessful) push to address resettlement in Jordan. International Voluntary Service (IVS) worked among Palestinian refugees on the West Bank. Finally, ACVAFS helped coordinate PVO action across sectarian and political lines and provided a locus for PVO support for and adoption of community development.

Although my work is limited to these groups, liberal Protestants were not the only players in rural development. Catholics were certainly also leaders, represented by groups like Catholic Relief Services, and more prominently, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association founded upon the wishes of the Pope after World War I and operating out of New York City. The agency’s birth owed much to Protestant tension with local Catholicism in the work of the NEF during and after World War I and after 1948, worked through the Holy See’s Pontifical Mission to Palestine to provide relief and development aid to Palestinian refugees. However, given that IVS was the brainchild of Mennonite and Brethren groups, the Anabaptists traditions – along with the Quakers – are overrepresented in this dissertation.

Although the Anabaptist traditions in America saw professionalization increase like much of the rest of the country, their deep roots in the countryside still predisposed them to agrarianism within development efforts. Anabaptist groups play a central role in this dissertation in large part because of their connection to the countryside, to the land,

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and to agriculture. But it was also their commitment to pacifism and non-violence. Namely, between World War I and World War II, the historic peace churches in America sought alternative service for members of their churches who wished to honor these religious commitments. By 1945, development had become a prime outlet for these motivations, allowing the churches to witness to pacifism while expressing their patriotism. And since many came from rural backgrounds, the Anabaptist presence and influence on rural development was more significant than their relatively small populations would otherwise suggest.

More than convenience or nationalism, however, I argue across these chapters that Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren were at home in rural development in the service of their country because it mirrored their religious commitments: a plausibly humanitarian approach to non-violent change for equality and world peace based on education, personal contact, and the (re)building of human relationships across artificial human divides. Just as God’s revelations were not immediate or all at once, the growth of human togetherness and living in peace was not a revolution but an evolutionary process that resisted coercion, gave respect to individual conscience, and allowed for the need of communities to grow of their own volition.

The “Colonial Turn to the Local”

U.S. partnerships with British colonial and post-colonial apparatuses were eased by a shared commitment to “the local.” The basis for this cooperation is what I call the “colonial turn to the local” which transpired after World War I. Across the first half of the twentieth century, the British empire transformed its colonial management. In the
interwar period in particular the number of technical and research personnel in the British colonial apparatus “expanded dramatically.”73 The African Research Survey (1929-1939)74 was part of this process. Its stated purpose was “to evaluate the kinds of scientific knowledge necessary for imperial administration” which would allow the British empire to capitalize economically on modernizing African economics and societies.75 However, in coordinating an interdisciplinary approach that included ecology and social anthropology, the survey stressed “the heterogeneity of Africa’s environments and the interrelations among the various problems scientists studied.” The result was an emphasis on the importance of difference in “the local” and of local knowledge itself.76

Colonial development policies had never simply boiled down to modernizing colonies and the survey reinforced action aimed at helping peoples adjust to the dislocations of industrialism and capitalism. Fearful of the instability that modern forces were unleashing because of cultural contact and the penetration of capitalist markets, colonial officials concerned themselves with local sociocultural fabrics. In Africa, for instance, officials feared that the “detribalized native” was both a political liability and a humanitarian problem. “With one hand, the state tried to extract African labor, violently if need be. With the other, it sought to shield them from the destabilizing effects of


74 Also known as the Hailey Survey, after Lord Hailey who oversaw it.

75 Helen Tilley, Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950 (Chicago University Press, 2011), pp. 2-4; quotation from p. 3.

76 Tilley, Living Laboratory, p. 4.
capitalism and Western culture.” European colonialism – always incomplete and contingent – had frequently operated “locally” in the sense of working through or with local entities, forming strategic partnerships that enabled their rule. Imperialists had long argued that their colonial policies served the interests of colonial subjects. What made British policies in the 1920s and 1930s a “turn to the local” was an intentional, sustained emphasis on development and promotion of welfare in which increasing measures of control and decision-making were devolved to “locals.”

Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two sets the foundation of the dissertation by charting the roots of rural development and the emergence of the NEF. Rural development, I argue, represented the convergence of transnational trends in Progressive educational thought; agricultural extension; and scientific philanthropy. Each emphasized in one way or another local adaption and self-help. Progressive education favored practical instruction and adapting education to the needs, abilities, and backgrounds of the students themselves and in ways that allowed individuals to uplift their communities. Agricultural extension was itself a form of practical education, extending know-how and material assistance to help individual farmers earn a better living. The creation of county agents marked a desire to use the state to boost prosperity but in non-coercive and locally-adapted ways. Scientific philanthropy picked up both Progressive education and agricultural extension in its own programs to address the needs of rural areas. They favored the cooperation of private and

public entities and similarly advocated self-help as the best way to promote change. These ingredients melded in an environment marked by shifts in missiology and at a time when many missionaries were rethinking their practices in a markedly different Middle East after World War I, a region now marked by rising nationalism and secularism.

The NEF, a lynchpin of the entire dissertation, emerged from this convergence. With its personnel steeped in Social Gospel Progressivism, the organization helped to pioneer rural development in the Middle East and worked directly with British authorities. The organization helped set in stone missionary legacies for the development enterprise as well as the inherent tensions of its origins. In adapting to the new environment, and backed by changing missiology, I suggest that missionaries and the NEF were not “secularizing” but rather acknowledging cultural pluralism.

Chapter Three begins the discussion of rural development among Arab Palestinians against a backdrop of escalating Arab-Jewish tension and violence. It tracks transnational rural reform thought by linking the NEF’s connections to reform among African Americans to British missionaries and their influence on colonial education policy in Africa (which then found expression in Palestine). As a case study, I examine a rural teacher-training program at the Khadoorie Agricultural School in Tulkarem funded by NEF and operated by the British mandate authorities in Palestine in the 1930s. Based on a Progressive model of agricultural extension for rural revitalization, the school promoted rural development by educating teachers who were to return to their villages and act as both formal educators and agricultural extension agents.

NEF personnel were well aware that many Arab villages in Palestine farmed through the use of many small holdings whose operators rotated; such a system enabled
village growth to be absorbed while ensuring a measure of social and economic equality. Where modernizers sought to import tractors and other forms of agricultural mechanization, representatives of the NEF, who did not doubt the value of such machines to increase productivity in theory, saw that they were impractical for many villages: not only were they costly to purchase and maintain, often beyond the means of most villages, but also their value was greatly diminished if used on disparate, small plots. The hybridity envisioned in rural development is encapsulated in the figure of Afif Tannous, a Lebanese-born Arab educated at American missionary schools with a record of service in British colonial Sudan who worked on the joint project. He traveled to each of the villages in the project and worked cooperatively with the trained teachers and village as a whole to guide rural development changes.

However, I suggest that the rural development approach served to disadvantage Arabs in light of their conflict with Zionism. As Jews engaged in modernization, drew on their political clout in the halls of power in London, and banked on Western cultural chauvinism that granted them nation-building autonomy, rural development for Arab villagers could not keep pace. As tensions among Jews and Arabs boiled over in the Arab Revolt in 1936, the area of Tulkarem was a hotbed of Arab resistance, and the Khadoorie school was no exception. Notably, though, the students used the local empowerment and nation-building logic of rural development to resist both colonial policy and Zionist expansion.

Chapter Four tracks the evolution of rural development from World War II and to Israel’s war for independence in 1948, resulting in the Palestinian refugee crisis. Both demonstrated that moments of urgency could, alternately, enhance distinctions between
development approaches and provide an environment in which development pragmatism could reign. Thus, rural development ran up against, and sometimes intersected with, modernization models including the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Adapting policies to local contexts and in incorporating local knowledge – heavily indebted in the British case to the African Research Survey – became critical to the British approach to the region during and after World War II amidst growing nationalist discontent. The regulatory body, the Middle East Supply Center (MESC), demonstrated this desire to “be local.” At the same time, succumbing to the urgencies of war ensured that Jews in Palestine gained more from wartime development efforts than Arabs.

As NEF personnel funneled into government agencies like the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and supported the MESC, they helped create institutional space for rural development within growing U.S. foreign aid bureaucracies. They also helped set the stage for the eclipsing of British by U.S. power in the region. The wartime cooperation between the U.S. and the British in the MESC devolved into separate technical assistance programs: Point Four and the British Middle East Office (BMEO).

ACVAFS, an umbrella organization of PVOs, was instrumental in ensuring that Point Four, at least initially, retained a rural development emphasis. The Korean War in 1950 propelled U.S. foreign policy, including aid assistance, to more overtly politically-minded purposes and modernization approaches began to marginalize rural development. However, it was the Palestinian refugee crisis in 1948 that began this process within the State Department and foreign aid bureaucracy which it controlled. Nonetheless, projects for refugees that simultaneously were used as Cold War diplomatic initiatives to secure peace in the region demonstrated an ability to compromise between rural development
and modernization approaches. And of course, the events of 1948 altered what “the local” meant for organizations and states working among Arab Palestinians, as the next two chapters demonstrate.

Chapter Five turns to a local variant of rural development among Palestinian refugees in the West Bank after 1948, deployed by a Palestinian notable, Musa Alami. Educated in England with a background in the mandate government, Alami was a Palestinian nationalist who adapted the rural development approach for his own humanitarian and political goals: to build a Palestinian nation from the ground up by settling refugees in the Jordan Valley and thereby also forestalling any further Zionist expansion. Even as his work drew from rural development, Alami demonstrated a pragmatism about development approaches and modernization aspects frequently cropped into his planning.

The refugee crisis helped maintain a U.S. focus on the region. I argue that the rural development focus of Point Four translated into U.S. community development by early 1950s. The involvement of IVS, a U.S. PVO with strong Mennonite and Brethren roots and designed to funnel Christian conscientious objectors from the draft to overseas community development work, illustrates this process. IVS’s work also subtly marked a growing shift from British to American dominance in the region. The British felt politically unable to help Alami, a Palestinian, especially given his tense relationship with the Jordanian government. IVS’s practitioners grappled with Orientalist residues as they sought to work within “the local.” Members of IVS, following an ethos of development pioneered by NEF, worked to build friendly relationships on the project, came to respect
certain Arab culturalisms, and came to see the value in local building practices and resources in helping to establish commercial poultry raising.

Alami’s attempts failed. Alami’s own elite status, and the difficulty of working “locally” among a large body of refugees only reinforced the state-level politics that doomed his work. Falling afoul of the Jordanian Government which maintained ambivalent policies towards its new Palestinian Arab charges, which outnumbered native Jordanians, Alami was forced to seek British and American aid. Rural development once again fell short, as anti-Western Palestinian nationalism outpaced Alami’s efforts.

Chapter Six shifts the focus to Palestinians in Israel after 1948. I explore the American Friends Service Committee’s work in the Arab village of Tur’an in Galilee in the first half of the 1950s. As part of rural development’s nation-building logic, the Quakers hoped to enable the Arabs to achieve socioeconomic standards comparable to those of Jews in the hopes that this would allow them to meet Jews on equal terms and to prove to the Israeli government that Arabs could be productive members of the new nation. From this show of goodwill, peace would come to the Middle East.

The standard for Arab integration into Israeli socioeconomic fabric was the cooperative Jewish kibbutzim. The AFSC therefore began their first development project in Israel by introducing agricultural machinery in Tur’an. After a few years, they determined such an approach was inappropriate and then (a) quickly sought to establish a cooperative to enable the village to make the best use of it anyway and (b) determined to shift approaches in their future projects that were more in line with actual needs and capabilities. The project ended in 1955, and the AFSC looked to move in more solidly community development directions in Israel. Their work therefore illustrates the
important shift, but also continuity between rural development as it evolved between Point Four and community development.

Because of the British departure in 1948, the BMEO was not active in the development field in Israel. It did work closely with the Quakers in their community development efforts in the Jordanian frontier villages, which emphasized the creation of credit cooperatives. The BMEO thought in terms of an ever-widening circles theory of change partly because of their rural development emphasis and partly because of their limited financial and technical reach – not dissimilar to how PVOs viewed their own work, or how foundations sought to shepherd and maximize their philanthropic investments – the widest impact for the least cost that grew local capacity and responsibility was the best approach.

However, the Quakers faced severe constraints stemming from geopolitical events, opposition from the Israeli Government, and the Arabs themselves who distrusted the connections between the Quakers and the Israelis. Rising nationalism across the region began to outpace rural development objectives. At the end of 1955, anti-Western and Arab nationalist sentiment drove Arab villagers and refugees to destroy American and British development projects. This included the work of the BMEO, the AFSC project in Jordan, and Musa Alami’s project near Jericho.
CHAPTER 2:

“THE WHOLE WORLD NEEDS THE WHOLE WORLD”: EDUCATION AS REFORM IN AN ERA OF MODERNIZATION

Introduction

In 1926 and 1927, the American relief and humanitarian organization, Near East Relief, undertook a survey of the U.S. philanthropic presence in the Middle East. Having been instrumental in providing relief aid to refugees during World War I, particularly to Armenians, the motley mixture of missionaries, social scientists, philanthropists, and educators looked to how a revamped agency might provide constructive, “scientific” assistance to the region’s governments and peoples.78 They published their findings in 1929, on the eve of the Great Depression and amidst Arab-Jewish unrest in Palestine.

The survey suggested that “great unmet needs and opportunities” remained in the region which was increasingly charged with an often anti-Western nationalism. The surveyors levelled a number of charges against previous missionary educational initiatives: they had been too concerned with conversion; too focused on establishing (foreign) American institutions that they considered outposts “of civilization carrying a message to the barbarians”; and too quick to abandon primary education.79 Thus, the report asserted, missionary institutions were serving mainly urban centers which both


ignored the greater needs of the rural areas and created an educated elite adverse to manual labor and the needs of the masses within their own societies.\textsuperscript{80} “The solution,” the surveyors noted, was not more foreign institutions, but rather “mass education of a simple, direct sort, carried to the people in their fields and workshops. It must be an education vital to their lives.”\textsuperscript{81} American and Western practices and concepts were to be experimented with; what was of value and accepted locally should be kept and the rest discarded. The surveyors argued that existing American enterprises should be seen as “demonstrations to stimulate indigenous activity” while being “closely allied with general movements within the countries themselves.” The report continued:

For Americans to assume responsibility and expense of a comprehensive system of institutions would be the height of folly, and would frustrate the very end to be sought, namely, encouraging the natives to help themselves. . . . A demonstration is likely to be successful in proportion as those for whose benefit it is intended feel that they are taking an active part in it. Every effort should be made to work not only in cooperation with but actually through the agencies of the governments and through local native organizations or individuals.\textsuperscript{82}

Specific projects were to be selected with “a special view to convincing the influential classes of natives that such projects are worthwhile in terms of peace, prosperity and general happiness.”\textsuperscript{83} “National” harmony would thus be achieved, followed in turn by global harmony. The survey encapsulated an emergent conceptualization of how to

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\textsuperscript{80} Daniel, \textit{American Philanthropy Near East}, pp. 174, 188.
\textsuperscript{81} Stevens, “From NER to NEF,” \textit{Bread from Stones}, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{82} Stevens, “From NER to NEF,” \textit{Bread from Stones}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{83} Stevens, “From NER to NEF,” \textit{Bread from Stones}, p. 15.
\end{flushright}
constructively work for nation-building that looked to both adapt to the specific contexts of “local” levels while including the democratic participation of the local peoples themselves. NEF personnel were tapping into transnational, Progressive Era trends in “mass” education, agricultural extension, scientific philanthropy, and liberal Protestant trends concerning the Social Gospel and missiology. And they did so within the Middle Eastern context in the wake of World War I.

Historians have typically addressed these elements – Progressive education, agricultural extension, scientific philanthropy, the Social Gospel, and missionary work – separately. Bring them together analytically allows me to set the foundations for larger claims about Progressive education and development, development’s religious and transnational dimensions, and the importance of the Middle East to community development’s emergence. In this chapter, I take each of the above topics in turn to build a case for how their interaction explains the emergence of the Near East Foundation (NEF) from its predecessor, Near East Relief (NER). These trends constitute what I call “rural development” and I argue that the NEF pioneered it in the Middle East. More specifically, I contend that Progressive educational philosophy is the primary root of rural development. As philanthropic foundations grafted Progressive education and agricultural extension practices into their visions of long-term social change, scientific philanthropy became NEF’s primary model. Critically, however, NEF did so within a theological and missionary context favorable to such a move. Rural development thus cannot be equated with urban-industrial modernization, although it shared modernist assumptions and had the industrial wealth of urban philanthropists – built on exploitative wage labor – as part of its origin story.
Two contexts frame the historical developments in this chapter. First, many within European and American societies held anxieties about the corrosive effects of urban-industrial capitalism on social integrity and cultural and religious values: secularism, materialism, excessive individualism, and growing socioeconomic inequality (such as that between urban centers and the countryside). Second, the expansion of capitalist interactions across the globe along with the rise of communications and travel technologies engendered a growing sense of the connectedness and interdependence of the world’s societies. Especially by World War I, many in the West took to internationalism, or the notion of binding the globe’s peoples together based on the notion of universal brotherhood and the concomitant “familial” responsibilities therein. Relatedly, historians have argued that the expansion of capitalism and its increasing embeddedness in social relationships played no small role in the emergence of modern humanitarianism: a sense of responsibility and obligation towards the suffering of others outside of one’s immediate social or national grouping.84

These two trends – urban-industrial anxiety and interdependence – shaped domestic European nation-building as well as Ottoman and British imperial polices. They also helped determine how the U.S. government and some of its citizens viewed the position and proper form of engagement of the U.S. on the world stage. If anxiety stimulated calls for socioeconomic reform, internationalist and humanitarian visions of human cooperation and peace provided useful framing for resolving emergent tensions.

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within and across societies. These shared concerns and possible solutions help explain the transnational ferment and exchange of sociopolitical reform recipes across the Atlantic in the late 1800s and first decades of the 1900s.85

“Democratic Citizenship”: Progressivism and Education

In the preface to his Democracy and Education (1916), philosopher John Dewey noted that he sought to “detect and state the ideas implied in a democratic society and to apply these ideas to the problems of the enterprise of education.” He suggested that, contextually, his ideas emanated from connecting “the growth of democracy” with “the development of the experimental method in the sciences, evolutionary ideas in the biological sciences, and the industrial reorganization . . .”86 Within a time of great social change, education for democracy would produce democratic citizens – inhabitants of a polity that understood and practiced the values and responsibilities of self-governance. This, Dewey and others argued, was about experiencing what democracy and citizenship entailed not just about reciting their abstract principles.87 Involving students in their education through participation and immersion melded with a belief that individuals had to think of themselves as operating within, and responsible to, a larger community: from their families and neighborhoods to their status as American citizens.


87 Consonant with claims to Dewey’s influence, and that of similar educational reformers of the same era, is the faith many still put in his ideas. See, for instance, Dan Sabia, “Democratic/Utopian Education,” Utopian Studies 23, No. 2 (2012), pp. 374-405.
Between the American Civil War and the turn of the century, America not only sought to piece itself back together politically, it confronted dramatic social and economic changes. Advances in communications, travel, and weapons technology partnered with an expanding global capitalist system to propel America toward Great Power status while helping drive immigrants and farmers to booming urban centers. Adherence to classical *laissez faire* economic principles produced a sheen of prosperity amidst growing economic inequality and rural unrest. The immense wealth of the John Rockefellers, Andrew Carnegies, and Julius Rosenwalds juxtaposed uncomfortably with the crowded slums of New York and Chicago, labor strikes at places such as Ludlow and Haymarket Square, and the boom-bust price cycles that plagued small farmers and led organizations like the Grange and Farmers’ Alliances to protest the disproportionate power of banks and railroad monopolies.

A number of reform movements emerged to grapple with the challenges such transformations wrought. Although diverse, their efforts were related to domestic nation-building: how to maintain a sense of American identity and democracy in a country that had begun to look very different. The Progressive movement is illustrative of this desire for reform. In a well-cited review essay, historian Daniel Rodgers questions whether, given the immense diversity of constituencies, activities, and driving concerns, the term “Progressivism” has any utility. Particularly by the 1970s, scholarly attempts to critique the term matched attempts to find its core essences; it was, in Rodgers’s phrase, a “corpse that would not lie down.”

Instead of trying to capture progressivism within a static ideological frame, Rodgers posits “three distinct social languages,” clusters of available ideas that self-labeled progressives drew on: a rhetoric of anti-monopolism, an emphasis on “social bonds and the social nature of human beings,” and the language of social efficiency. Progressives looked with dismay on the turmoil that industrial, urban capitalism seemed to be unleashing in the late 1800s, including the massive influx of immigrants crowding into urban slums and the social and economic inequalities of unregulated capitalism. The individualism inherent in liberal capitalist thought – the “autonomous man” was excessive and a threat to American political institutions: concentrated wealth threatening to unleash radical upheaval while turning the American republic into an oligarchy. Progressives hoped therefore to preserve American society and the health of its democracy by introducing government regulation of the economy, promoting a sense of individual embeddedness in a wider community, and adapting business organizational models and scientific findings to improve human life.

In achieving these goals, many Progressives like Dewey turned not only to law and government policy but also to education. By the turn of the century, the academic study of education had so burgeoned that outside “certain sociological and economic questions there are none which find readier access to the popular magazines than those

Movement” aware of the dangers of identifying it as a single entity, but do so for linguistic and narrative simplicity.

89 Rodgers, “In Search of Progressivism,” p. 123. But these three distinct bundles did not add up, he argues, to a coherent ideology called progressivism. “Together they formed not an ideology but the surroundings of available rhetoric and ideas.”

upon education.” By influencing the mind and habits, education held immense power to mold individuals into citizens and productive members of society, however those were defined – a belief based less in static biological qualities than in the pliability of “backward cultures.” Educational reform in the U.S. had been taking place across the 1800s, at both the primary and higher education levels, and included a push for universal public education. Like reformers before them, advocates of progressive education were reacting in part against dominant educational models which they viewed as inadequate. If elementary education conventionally focused on the three R’s of reading, writing, and arithmetic, higher education of the nineteenth century stressed the classical literary education of Latin and Greek. An education to match a changing America required dynamism, flexibility, and adaptability rather than static curriculums.

Progressive ideas owed certain intellectual debts. The Enlightenment and Romantic philosophies of men such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued for the uniqueness of “childhood” as a distinct stage in human development requiring differentiated forms of upbringing and education based on “natural,” child-centered


92 In terms of viewing the molding of minds and habits based on race or culture: this is a complex and unresolved issue further muddled by the possibility of certain progressives to see no contradiction in supporting both social and economic equality and eugenics. In general terms, though, it is likely that the ability to be “molded” was an acknowledgement not of predetermined, static biological traits but an emphasis on culture as moldable. This valence would only increase with the work of cultural anthropologists like Franz Boaz and Margaret Mead. I draw on Frank Ninkovich’s scholarship here which takes direct aim at the over-determined status of scientific racism among American elites in historical scholarship on this period; he suggests that the nascent internationalism that liberal elites before the turn of the century engaged in was based in the ambivalent concept of “civilization” and its spread – a cultural view of human change rather than a racial one. Global Dawn: The Cultural Foundation of American Internationalism, 1865-1890 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), Chapters 5 and 6.
practices.\textsuperscript{93} This required a break with past practices which treated children as adults. The thought of men such as Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) drew on these changes and reflected their own individual anxieties about industrialization and the possible loss of pre-industrial ways of life and education, which they viewed as being more “natural.” Froebel, for instance, emphasized both individuality and the importance of relationality to social learning. Structured play contributed to both, allowing the child’s personality to be expressed even as she developed socially and cooperatively with others.\textsuperscript{94}

These lines of thinking influenced children’s schooling in England as well as the United States, where such ideas were introduced in the United States as early as the first decade of the 1800s.\textsuperscript{95} Particularly after the Civil War, American educational reformers cited aspects or essentializations of the work of Froebel and Pestalozzi as solutions to various educational problems.\textsuperscript{96} In Europe and the United States, educational reform remained an uphill battle and implementation of such ideas was never a straightforward or entirely successful venture.\textsuperscript{97} For the purposes of this chapter, however, certain relevant consistencies persisted across contexts: a sense that past models of education


\textsuperscript{94} Beatty, \textit{Preschool Education}, pp. 46-47. He, for instance, advocated for reciprocity in play.


were inadequate; that learning was about more than books and abstract thinking – that
objects, senses, nature, and tangible relevance were important for human development;
and an emphasis on education that was student- and community-centered and oriented
toward usefulness in living life. In other words, education should be “practical,” adapted
to the abilities and experiences of the student, and connected to larger communal needs.

John Dewey is of course one of the most well-known American proponents of
progressive education and his writings reflect similar themes. Dewey adhered to the
school of philosophical thought he helped popularize: pragmatism.\footnote{98} In brief, pragmatism
sought to use thought and intelligence not for abstract thinking but for practical purposes – to unify the realms of theory and practice.\footnote{99} Dewey, like others, was concerned with
human interaction in a rapidly changing world and the interdependence of individuals
within a larger society. He believed that if America and its democratic experiment were
to survive, cooperation had to replace competitive struggle and liberty and social equality
had to supplant corruption and individualism.\footnote{100} Universal education, with its immense
formative power, was critical in achieving these goals and was the primary tool for
“realizing the democratic ideal for the individual and society.”\footnote{101}

\footnote{98 Or, “instrumentalism” in Dewey’s own lexicon.}

\footnote{99 Steven C. Rockefeller, \textit{John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 225. His biographer writes: “The pragmatists were concerned with the nature of the mind, the role of ideas in living, the standard of truth, and the logic of scientific inquiry and problem-solving.”}

\footnote{100 Rockefeller, \textit{John Dewey}, p. 33, 222. Of course debates over what “society” meant had extremes at either end: social connections running toward the nation, the state, the social whole, for Theodore Roosevelt, or social connections based in family, community, and neighborhood for Jane Addams. See: Rodgers, “In Search of Progressivism,” p. 125.}

\footnote{101 Rockefeller, \textit{John Dewey}, p. 224.}
Accordingly, education for democratic citizenship meant that students were to be molded as socially-conscious citizens who could and would actively participate in their own self-governance and the improvement of their communities. Students were not to be viewed as empty vessels into which prepackaged content was to be poured, but rather active learners who were able to participate in and grow a sense of control over their own fates. This could be accomplished best by furnishing curricula that mixed student differentiation with group cooperation. The experiences of the student should, Dewey wrote, “furnish the ground experience of education.”

Life itself, then, acted as the building block for practical knowledge that had a direct bearing on daily living. Such an education would enable students of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and classes to find fulfillment, live prosperous lives, and be able to adapt to the rapid pace of change in modern life. Moreover, linking individual education to social relationships was a means for social betterment and cooperation: students gained a sense of individual integration into a larger whole, learned that personal responsibility came with social consequences, and compelled them to both uplift their communities and responsibly participate in American democracy.


103 Or, as summarized by a later interpreter of his ideas: “Learning, Mr. Dewey shows, is the process of adjusting, and readjusting oneself to a dynamic environment – a process which, to be effectively intelligent, must be motivated by vital, often controversial problems and interests of growing children in their own surroundings. It must encourage the freest possible curiosity and exploration. It must respect differences between individuals and groups. And it must practice cooperation in reaching workable solutions.” Theodore Bramfeld, “Progressive Education on the Defensive,” *Current History* 7, No. 36 (Aug 1944), p. 96 (of 95-100).
Not surprisingly, the emphasis on “practical” and differentiated education led to multivalent and ambiguous applications, and historiographical divides have emerged that mirror the historical ones. Modern scholars see within Dewey’s ideas and those of fellow progressive educators the potential for either social justice or social efficiency (i.e., control).¹⁰⁴ Take for instance, the concept of interdependence within a common social order that underlay much of progressive thinking on practical education. This line of thinking could support such different trends as Robert Owen’s communitarian socialist utopia in New Harmony, Indiana, which combined physical labor and applied learning with moral and intellectual training for communal living, or vocational education toward cultivating a reliable labor force.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the act of relating education to community could be used to promote emancipation from the urban-industrial-capitalist order, particularly for the proletariat, by emphasizing cooperation and equality within interdependence; or, however, it could alternately be used to justify training economic


classes to “cooperate” and integrate neatly into a society in ways that were efficient and harmonious, but hardly just or equal.106

My aim is not to settle these debates but rather to illustrate the tensions within “practical education” and “social efficiency” that would continue to befuddle their educational applications both at home and abroad. A pedagogy emphasizing practicality, adaptability, and community would find willing partners in not only vocational training but also agricultural extension, rooted in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century moves towards scientific agriculture. Although most known for their application among the urban poor and immigrants, progressive educational ideas and approaches proved pliable in rural settings, especially as progressives came to see that rural areas, not unlike urban slums, were suffering from the expansion of urban-industrial capitalism.

“Intensely Practical”: Agricultural Extension as Progressive Education

In 1885, Seaman A. Knapp rose to address a gathering of leading agricultural educators. With a career trajectory that included being a teacher, a Methodist minister, headmaster of a school for the blind, member of the Grange, chair of Iowa State Agricultural College’s Practical and Experimental Agricultural Department, and owner of his own experimental farm, Knapp exhorted his colleagues to make knowledge useful to

106 Fallace, “Toward a Received Dewey,” p. 472. Fallace tracks these historiographic differences from Cremin (1961) and Callahan (1962) to the critiques of Wiebe (1967) and Springs (1970). Fallace suggests that to try to track whether or not “social efficiency” and control were guiding ideologies is misguided as such language permeated nearly all educators at the time and argues that Dewey was often deployed to “reconcile positivistic social science with pragmatic philosophy,” as Dewey’s pragmatism was based in the scientific method; he moreover served as the “glue” that educators used to paste together as coherent their musings on “curriculum design, psychological research, and sociological theory.” See: pp. 487, 484.
American farmers. “Let us change the universal tendency to make all scholarship general and theoretical and let us make our lines of investigation intensely practical.” Indeed, “Chemistry and physics,” he continued, “should be pulled off their high horses, thoroughly spanked, and set to farming.”107

Agricultural extension can be thought of as both (1) a bundle of ideas and practices regarding “extending” new knowledge about soil, fertilizer, seeds, and cultivation techniques to farmers and (2) a cooperative enterprise coordinating federal, state, and municipal governments as well land-grant colleges, experiment stations, county agents, local private groups, and individual cultivators.108 In a similar way to the urban settlement house movement and neighborhood block agents,109 Knapp helped pioneer extension work as a combination of demonstration-based education with the concept of self-help, undergirded by personal contact and exchange between outside experts – county agents – and local farmers and their families.110 In noting Knapp’s contributions, New Deal agricultural reformer Rexford G. Tugwell suggested in 1945 that his “accomplishments in this direction marked the beginning of what, to date, is undoubtedly the most expansive and important experiment ever undertaken in the field of adult


108 The Morrill Act of 1862 created agricultural colleges in each state and the Hatch Act of 1887 provided federal funding for these colleges to establish agricultural experimentation stations. For a general overview of the growth of the American extension system, see: Roy Vernon Scott, The Reluctant Farmer: the Rise of Agricultural Extension to 1914 (University of Illinois Press, 1971).


110 Scott, Reluctant Farmer and E, Brunner and E. Hsin Pao Yang, Rural America and the Extension Service (Columbia University, 1949).
Hyperbolic, to be sure, but the link between agricultural extension and education is undeniable.

Knapp’s own education fit solidly within opposition to the classical education’s predominance. In his efforts to encourage farmers to adopt new agricultural methods, he combined a pedagogical outlook emphasizing that people had a “corporeal existence as well as a mental and spiritual side” with the application of science to improve life in rural areas in which inefficient (and environmentally unsound) “sod-busting” agricultural practices by settlers still dominated. He also followed and helped to popularize the findings of European agricultural scientists pioneering the study of plant and soil chemistry. This was the same period when Abraham Lincoln established the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the American Congress passed the Morrill Act in 1862 which created land-grant colleges whose purposes were to provide instruction in agricultural and mechanical fields. The Morrill Act prefigured later debates over public aid to higher education and represented a compromise between liberal and practical

111 Quotation from the Editors’ Forward (which included historian Harry J. Carman as well as Tugwell) to the biography of Knapp by Bailey: Seaman Knapp, p. xii.


113 Quoted by Bailey, Seaman Knapp, p. 41. Comments made during his tenure at the Ripley Female College.

114 Justus von Liebig (1803-1873), Jean-Baptiste Boussingault (1801-1887), and Sir John Bennet Lawes (1814-1900). Respectively: German chemist who studied the relationship between soil nutrients and plant growth; French chemist who helped pioneer the agricultural experiment station; Englishman who worked on chemical fertilizers and whose experimental farm became the influential Rothamsted Experimental station. Seaman Knapp, p. 54.

115 One of the main proponents for the creation of the USDA was Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, who was an avid fan of technology and its applications and who, during his stint with the Patents Office, worked to collect agricultural statistics and new varieties of seeds.
education: that is, between a wide-ranging curriculum with “pure,” (theoretical) sciences using lectures and books, or a new education for the common man focused on “setting” the sciences towards the “existing problems of the farm or workshop.”

As experiment stations and land-grant college laboratories proliferated, there were many means of diffusing new agricultural knowledge to individual farmers: journals, bulletins, fairs, agricultural societies, traveling lecturers (who literally took education to the farming areas), and short courses (run out of the land-grant colleges). Knapp, however, helped to popularize the “demonstration method.” Farmers were notably reluctant to accept “knowledge” from a stranger, understandably skeptical that an outside expert knew their land better than they did. One farmer from Arkansas recollected the reception of one of Knapp’s county agents: “I can see him riding his white mule over the country roads seeking sympathetic hearers and trying to get cooperators in his work . . . The great bulk of the farmers took him and his work as a joke. They resented the idea that an old man riding over the country could, or even had the right to, question their knowledge of how to farm and cultivate crops.”

In overcoming such reluctance, by the early 1900s Knapp believed he had struck upon a solution that would push farmers to drop old methods based on large expanses of expendable land: combining the irrefutable evidence that came with sustainably securing

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116 Bailey, Seaman Knapp, pp. 80-81; quotation from p. 81. Notably, the latter was the Michigan model; the Michigan Agricultural college being the first to adopt the practical agricultural bent of the new initiative.

117 For more on these earlier means of providing practical, useful information to farmers, see: Scott, Reluctant Farmer, Chapters 2-7

118 Quoted in Scott, Reluctant Farmer, p. 235.
better yields through one’s own labor with a leveraging of local communal dynamics. Locals had to have incentives, he argued, and be personally invested in the work or they simply would not cooperate. Thus, the “demonstration” moved beyond creating a model farm somewhere for people to come and view. Rather, it advocated having the farmer taking part in the actual experiment: trying out new seed, fertilizer, and equipment but supplying their own land and labor. If successful, the social and psychological aspects of communal relationships would come into play as other farmers would look to secure the same benefits by adopting similar methods.

If locally-based “demonstration” was the key method, the county agent – an outside expert – was the primary delivery mechanism. As Knapp’s experience seemed to show, success in agricultural improvement rested on the minimization of outside control and the maximization of direct, communal participation: a light rather than heavy footprint that could respect local conditions. Large government expenditures and intervention were not needed – and could even be counterproductive – while cooperation and backing by neighbors and friends held more meaning and security than funding from distant government strangers. What was needed was a small cadre of experts who could travel around at the local level and promote self-help. County agents thus acted as catalysts, providing the outside stimulus, technical backstopping, and community organizing from which wider change would snowball of its own accord. Promoting effective and efficient change in this way required a local-rootedness, a relationship-building ethos, and an understanding of and respect for the farmers, the community
relationships, the land and climate. Thus, Knapp urged his county agents to “use the characteristics of farmers” to achieve certain goals; they were not to “present themselves as final authorities on all agricultural matters and they should disturb prevailing ideas no more than necessary.” By the time the 1914 Smith-Lever Act institutionalized a national system of agricultural extension, county agents were acting on an implicit, “ever-widening circles” theory of change in which small catalysts effected change that reverberate beyond their immediate work with individual farmers.

A basic philosophical statement of agricultural extension, allegedly appropriated from Knapp himself, became: “what a man hears he may doubt; what a man sees he also may doubt; but what he does with his own hands he cannot doubt.” If there ever was a “practical” education, this surely was it. Indeed, this self-help and experiential sentiment had obvious resonances with larger trends in progressive educational reform, as did Knapp’s emphasis on linking individual and communal uplift, the use of science to

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119 Judith Sealander, Private Wealth & Public Life: Foundation Philanthropy and the Reshaping of American Social Policy from the Progressive Era to the New Deal (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1997), p. 48. Knapp’s Ten Commandments of scientific agriculture included: Remove all surplus water on and in the soil; Plow under a cover crop of legumes in the fall (to help supply nutrients); Use the best seed; Space plants properly; Practice crop rotation; Use natural and commercial fertilizers; Produce as much as possible for family and stock use; Buy better machinery; Buy better stock; Keep totally accurate accounts of the farm operations. Ibid., p. 49.

120 Scott, Reluctant Farmer, pp. 217, 151. Knapp’s biographer notes that while Knapp’s methods were spreading in the South, the work of W. J. Spillman in the North and West, although different, were also seeking to use a system of agricultural experts to promote more productive agriculture. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 essentially combined the two existing systems into a national one. See: Bailey, p. 162-167. For more on agricultural extension, see: Alfred Charles True, A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States, 1785-1928, Miscellaneous Publication No. 15 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Agriculture, 1928).

121 E. N. Holmgreen, “What’s Going on in MSA: A Technical Assistance Story,” Address to the Land-Grant College Meeting on Agricultural Services to Foreign Areas, February 11, 1952, p. 4, MSU Archives, Columbia Project Files, Collection UA 2.9.5.8., Box 230, Folder 85.
acquire knowledge that could be practically applied, and the importance granted to the “students’” experience. Subsequently, as Progressive reformers turned their sights from urban centers to rural areas, they became critical to the support, expansion, and federal institutionalization of agricultural extension.

A primary vehicle for ensconcing agricultural extension as a form of progressive education was a new brand of self-professed Progressive, scientific philanthropies. A minority within the larger field of wealth-based philanthropy, these new entities took on the trappings of corporate organization and management in dealing with wealth disbursements. They also shifted the target of philanthropy from individuals, institutions, or specific causes to long-term social change and impact on policy-making. They displayed a number of progressive impulses: the drive for order and efficiency; faith that humanity, aided by science, could solve – not just ameliorate – its most pressing problems; and a belief that policy for a new age required updating and flexibility through private-public partnerships.122

Scientific philanthropy’s support for agricultural extension and expanded public education along Progressive lines was linked to the concept of self-help. In the mind of many Progressives, self-help through education was inseparable from their proscriptions for social ills. It was at the center of crafting able, participatory citizens to balance democratic participation with increasingly technocratic governance and at effectively creating and sustaining prosperity and social change without creating government

122 Sealander, *Private Wealth*, Introduction. That is, they were a small minority among wealthy philanthropists in America. Ibid., Chapter 1.
dependents. Knapp, like many of his contemporaries, thought that genuine achievement had to come from one’s own hard work. He claimed: “permanent help could only come by human effort, that they must work out their own salvation, just as prosperity, liberty, and civilization can never be donated to anyone, but must be wrought out, fought out and lived out, till they are part of the being of the people who possess them.”123 Thus, Knapp’s methods and agricultural extension seemed to presage a progressive path for rural areas, providing a means to empower the rural masses that looked democratic, splitting the difference between extreme individualism and complete state control: part government intervention, part voluntary self-help. The scientific philanthropies had come to similar conclusions as Knapp about how social change could effectively occur. That is, in their relying on the development of local resources, self-help measures provided scientific philanthropies with a way to catalyze widespread change that would last by allowing philanthropies to act as temporary catalysts rather than permanent presences that created dependencies among segments of the American population. Self-help thus also helped the philanthropies to safeguard and make the most effective use of their endowments.

By the turn of the century, Progressive reformers of the countryside identified what they saw as the problematic issues of individualism and social organization. The American countryside – writ large – was dispersed, lacked modern amenities, and was economically disadvantaged. Thus, agricultural extension became part of wider rural reform efforts in the interests of social equality and harmony. Reformers argued that rural

revitalization through higher standards of living and strengthened communal bonds would both ease political strife and achieve an equitable balance of power between the countryside and the city. These would also stem the tide of rural youth abandoning their family farms – and local folkways – and further congesting urban slums.\footnote{124}

As the U.S. South was more agrarian and had less publicly-financed schooling, much reformer effort concentrated there. For instance, the General Education Board (GEB), financed by Rockefeller monies, adopted Knapp’s county agent and agricultural extension methods as forms of vocational education for adults and even brokered a deal with the USDA to help promote the system in the South. They hoped that more productive farms would increase tax revenue which could then help sustain more public schools and teachers.\footnote{125} In 1908, Theodore Roosevelt’s Country Life Commission (CLC) helped to solidify the link between Progressive rural reform and agricultural extension. Financed by one of the scientific philanthropies, the CLC was populated by self-proclaimed progressives and would help, despite the obscurity of its report in 1909, provide the networking that would later serve this group of foundations which came to interact and share personnel and ideas relatively freely.\footnote{126} A particularly relevant passage of the report stated:

\begin{quote}
We need a redirection of thought . . . a new social and intellectual contact with life. . . . The change will come gradually, of course, as a result of new \textit{leadership}; and the situation must develop its own leaders. Care must be taken in all the reconstructive work to see that
\end{quote}

\footnote{124}{Rodgers, \textit{Atlantic Crossings}, Chapter 8.}

\footnote{125}{On the controversy surrounding this and on GEB’s exclusion from the Smith-Lever Act, see: Sealander, \textit{Private Wealth}, pp. 48; 53-55.}

\footnote{126}{Sealander, \textit{Private Wealth}. The sponsoring philanthropy was the Russell Sage Foundation.}
local initiative is relied on to the fullest extent, and that federal and even state agencies do not perform what might be done by the people in the communities. The centralized agencies should be stimulative and directive, rather than mandatory and formal. Every effort must be made to develop native resources not only of material things but also of people.127

Reflecting faith in self-help, the core of the report was a melding of personal initiative and cooperative spirit. It also encouraged the diversification of farming, the adoption of sustainable cultivation practices, the introduction of cooperatives and credit unions to stop the drain of resources to urban areas, and the enshrining of education as vital to all reform efforts.128

In crafting their assessments, the CLC used transnational comparisons. Whereas the European countryside’s relatively limited geographic space had engendered more concentrated farming communities, the great expanses of America’s West and Mid-West lent themselves to individualism, atomization, and outmoded sod-busting agricultural methods. As with progressive education, rural reform had transnational linkages. Exerting great influence was the Irishman Horace Plunkett, an advocate of scientific agriculture and the cooperative movement amidst the hardships in Ireland in the 1880s.129 He had the ear of men like Theodore Roosevelt and John D. Rockefeller and his views


influenced the CLC report, including the promotion of cooperatives – corporate
capitalism’s “progressive, shadowy twin.”\footnote{Rodgers, \textit{Atlantic Crossings}, p. 326.} This organized form of rural cooperation
was to help leverage the contributions of many small cultivators against the power of
urban, industrial capitalists.

Cooperation, however, served nation-building as well as economic ends. It would help overcome the individualism of the countryside by providing a new communal sociality that was built in part on a rural cultural revitalization. An agrarian-folk romanticism reminiscent of the industrial anxieties of Pestalozzi and Froebel blended with emergent nationalist sentiment in the Folk High School movement in Denmark.\footnote{See: Reese, “Origins of Progressive Education,” p. 11; Beatty, \textit{Preschool Education}, p. 46. Steven M. Borish, \textit{The Land of the Living: The Danish Folk High Schools and Denmark’s Non-Violent Path to Modernization} (Nevada City, CA: Blue Dolphin, 1991).}

These ideas contained a message American Progressives were ready to receive: “that if the prerequisite for effective agricultural revival was cooperation the prerequisite for cooperation was education – not learning that stripped country folk of their rooted attachments but education for cultural revitalization.”\footnote{Rodgers, \textit{Atlantic Crossings}, p. 358.}

It was upon this holistic model that the Campbell Folk School appeared in Appalachia which sought uplift among poor whites while reviving their folk heritage.

But holistic measures were part and parcel of transnational rural reform efforts, a care for not only material well-being, but spiritual, social, and cultural health as well. Knapp himself advocated holistic agricultural extension services: English instruction
would help make better citizens who could read and understand local, state, and national issues; financial management and business literacy could directly help farmers improve their livelihoods; and college education for women would double-down on these benefits. Extension eventually became synonymous with not only crops, but hygiene and sanitation, 4-H fairs and contests for children, and social circles and home economics instruction for women. The CLC’s report discussed churches and schools acting as social centers for rural communities, encouraging all community members toward “an ambition . . . constantly to progress in all of those things that make the community life wholesome, satisfying, educative, and complete.”

Although elites and the highly-educated were prominent in promoting education, rural reform, and agricultural extension, many farmers themselves advocated for the same. They evinced a predilection for modernist thinking and using the state to regulate the economy to their advantage. For the Farmers’ Alliance, “education served to agitate, mobilize, and organize at the grass roots.” Hundreds of thousands of rural inhabitants took part in Farmers’ Alliance-sponsored lectures and instruction. “The regular biweekly and weekly meetings of the suballiances, often held in the local schoolhouse, were mainly educational functions.” Business methods in particular, such as bookkeeping, marketing, and understanding interest rates, would better enable farmers to understand and control for their benefit their position within modern commercial society. Many farmers seized these opportunities “with passion and urgency.” And the Farmers’

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Alliance strove to ensure that land-grant colleges provided scientific and practical knowledge for actual farmers, demanding greater access and more relevant research. As Charles Postel notes, “Farmers accused the University of California of ‘teaching rich lawyers’ boys Greek with the farmers’ money’” and insisted that colleges educate their children for a life of modern farming – to make them better farmers – not training for other professions. And the Alliance was in lockstep with rural reformers on the need to expand and bolster public schooling in the rural areas.135 Similarly, such Populist foment was instrumental in shaping Progressive reforms, as the state began to incorporate reforms that workers and farmers in organizations like the Grange and Farmers’ Alliances had been advocating for across the late 1800s and early 1900s. Pushes for vocational education and agricultural extension hit Congressional legislative agendas due to popular pressure from farmers (and workers), even if professional and business groups entered the debate “defensively.”136

Rural revival did not mean turning back the clock on urban-industrial capitalism. Although Progressive reforms for urban and rural areas were bids to mop up the messes of competitive capitalism and introduce regulations to dull its sharpest edges, industrial relations were essentially preserved. Much of the foundation wealth moving in “scientific” directions for the countryside was amassed in urban-industrial capitalist pursuits. Both John D. Rockefeller, who supported the GEB, and Cleveland Dodge, who supported NER and NEF (discussed below), had massive investments in the oil and

mining industries, respectively. Their philanthropic interests in promoting rural
development sat alongside their own lives’ work as industrial modernizers (and exploiters
of wage labor), working to channel the economic and social forces they had helped to
shape. Their philanthropy is an example of the ways that capitalism, even with its
nefariously exploitative tendencies, fostered humanitarian sentiment.137 Their
philanthropy also demonstrates the seemingly paradoxical relationship between industrial
modernization and rural development: being in conflict but also sometimes intertwined.
Modernization tended to disadvantage rural areas, provoking populist unrest and
resistance. Yet, attempts to reform the countryside maintained similar notions of progress
and modernity, levelling the inequalities that modernization helped create.

Given this ambiguity, rural reform and agricultural extension were not themselves
uncontentious. A particularly controversial application of Progressive education and
agricultural extension as rural reform was the philanthropic foundation work among
African Americans in the U.S. South. The South lagged behind the North in terms of
public-supported education and African Americans in the South were even further
disadvantaged. Critical to any vision of social harmony in America was addressing racial
tension between blacks and whites. While Progressive philanthropists and reformers
“emphasized ‘practical’ programs of vocational education” in part “to remedy inequities
perpetuated by racism and ethnic prejudice,”138 some historians have seen a smokescreen
for white, northern industrial wealth trying to integrate the agrarian South more firmly

137 Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarianism.”
138 Sealander, Private Wealth, pp. 35-36.
into the national economy by making more productive workers and farmers.\textsuperscript{139} Similarly, the CLC has been both lauded and condemned, seen as either “deeply democratic,” levelling economic and social relations or as an arrogant/romantic movement of urbanites to subsume farms and food production within an urban-industrial hegemony.\textsuperscript{140} The ambiguity is perhaps best illustrated by the philanthropy official who noted that effective policies had to “proceed from the general consciousness of the American people” and “this consciousness is, in part, at least, to be created.”\textsuperscript{141}

Again, however, my goal here is to retrieve the resources, practices, and perceptions that would influence the emergence of the NEF. In its efforts to nation-build by remolding rural villages abroad, it would adopt many of these transnational methods and ideologies: holistic services for all ages, education for women and girls, cooperatives, self-help, local initiative and control, and the Folk school model of local cultural revitalization. Critical in this regard was how rural reform in these guises resonated with

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{139} James D. Anderson and Donald Spivey’s work are foremost in this regard. \textit{The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988; \textit{Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915} (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978). Sealander provides a more balanced assessment, noting the philanthropists were neither intentionally imperial nor wholly altruistic, but rather intertwined within the progressive desire for improvement and social justice, providing aid with genuine intentions while remaining paternalistic. Sealander does, however, criticize Knapp’s method with its emphasis on starting with the “best” farmers. This only benefited those with already existing advantages; that is, it did not reach the poorest and most in need of such skills. It especially did not reach land tenets, the poorest of the whites and most of the black farmers. Sealander, \textit{Private Wealth}, pp. 40, 51. Danbom also criticizes the extension system for serving the most elite farmers and being in the pockets of corporations rather than having the true interests of farmers at heart.

\textsuperscript{140} Peters and Morgan, “Reconsidering a Milestone,” p. 311. Peters and Morgan critique the negative scholarly opinion on rural reformers and the CLC specifically, arguing that while Bowers painted reformers and Hyde Park Bailey (author of the CLC report) specifically as romantics, Danbom paints them as urban-based modernizers.

\textsuperscript{141} Quoted in Sealander, \textit{Private Wealth}, p. 31. Emphasis added.
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American Protestants who saw in turn-of-the-century America a need for both social and spiritual renewal.

“Coagents of the Millennium”: Protestant Reform, the Social Gospel, and Progressivism

“Hail, Engineer, coagent of the millennium!” So penned a pastor in a 1914 essay in the pages of Methodist Review. In reference to the Book of Revelations, he wrote that if “the city of John’s vision is a figure of final earthly society,” it was not only filled with happiness, truth, and worship but also cleanliness, walls and pavements, pure water, and a lack of hunger. Thus it stood to properly bemoan “the amazing popularity of technical education as a menace to culture.” The term culture, he continued, could be safely used “as expressing something essentially and inclusively spiritual.” Relatedly, if humankind was to reach “maturity” – to be united above moral and spiritual provincialism – more than “preaching and believing” were necessary. It required humanity harnessing the earth’s natural powers, including “a world digestive system of factories and mills” and “a world circulatory system of enginery and ships.” Earthly concerns alone would not bring about the millennium, he argued, but they were critical in achieving the disposition and will to work towards it arrival. “It will take considerable engineering as well as preaching to get the whole world there.”

Engineering acted as a vehicle that promoted physical and cultural progress and therefore spiritual health and human unity – prerequisites for the millennium. This

exaltation of “the engineer” within American society, so prominent across American culture at the time, held the implication that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ had less to do with personal development or God’s grace than it did with human action. Such was the turn of the century milieu in much of American Protestant Christian thought as “mainline” denominations adjusted to the dramatic changes in American society.143

By the 1900s, mainline or establishment Protestants were forced to recognize that their hitherto assumed cultural hegemony in America was wavering. Religious participation grew across the nineteenth century even as it was splintering into new Christian sects.144 Moreover, an increasingly urban and industrial society was perceived as becoming even more “foreign” as large influxes of Catholics and Central and Eastern Europeans came to American shores in the latter half of the 1800s. The Protestant establishment sought to navigate the changes engulfing the nation while maintaining their influence on an “American” culture. Thus, they began to “circle the wagons” out of their sense of responsibility for the country: “for its moral structure, for the religious content of national ideals, for the education and welfare functions that governments would not (or, it was thought, should not) carry out.”145

143 Scholars using these designations often include the following denominations: Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians as well as the white divisions of the Baptist and Methodist families; after 1900, Disciples of Christ and United Lutherans are typically added. On this, I follow William R. Hutchison. See: “Protestantism as Establishment,” in Between the Times: The Travail of the Protestant Establishment in America, 1900-1960, ed. William R. Hutchison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 4.


Earlier American religious revivals had pushed for individual spiritual renewal. Now, an emphasis on the sociality of sin and the example of Jesus Christ as the appropriate social response to the challenges of modern life challenged conventional sensibilities. One of the splintering factors in American Protestantism during the 1800s was a difference between readings of (among others) the Book of Revelations, referenced above, categorized as premillennial and postmillennial eschatologies. For the former, God’s Kingdom on earth would emerge outside of history with Jesus’s Second Coming ushering in the thousand-year golden age of peace and justice; conversely, for the latter, the golden age would precede Jesus’s return, only after humankind had worked towards transforming the human world of the here and now. If “Premillennialists took literally the biblical command to preach the Gospel not as a fulfillment of the millennium but as an urgent preparation of a millennium that might begin at any time,” Postmillenialism lent itself to social reform. The Protestants who adopted it began to read the Bible less literally and to favor a view of Christianity in which one’s faith was tied more to living like Jesus Christ and less to strict adherence to doctrinal orthodoxies.\textsuperscript{146} Although having deeper historical roots, postmillennial thinking emerged strongly in the mid-1800s combining its “eschatological hopes” with a faith in American civil institutions and technological competence to help bring about God’s kingdom on earth.\textsuperscript{147} Building the


\textsuperscript{147} Jean B. Quandt, “Religion and Social Thought: The Secularization of Postmillennialism,” \textit{American Quarterly} 25, No. 4 (October 1973), p. 392. Revivals of this kind combined personal conversion with the regeneration of social institutions, prompting the coming of the golden age of peace and justice. Technology and social processes were viewed as “God-given agents” in this regard.

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Kingdom of God “had become as much a matter of technique and program as it was of conversion and religious piety.”

Praise for the “engineer” was not confined to postmillennialist thinking, but it was amidst these circumstances that the Social Gospel emerged as a modernist form of postmillennialist thought. A view of conversion as moral improvement and a Darwin-inflected evolutionary understanding of human development melded with a faith in science and technology as divine instruments. Together, they produced an optimism about the regeneration of society and the ongoing march toward progress – the Kingdom of God – that gave less weight to God’s grace or the churches and more to human action and applied science. The Social Gospel thereby theologically collapsed the distinction between the supernatural and natural worlds, viewing God as immanent in the world and in social processes. Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist clergyman of German origin who witnessed the misery of poverty in New York City firsthand, was the consummate Social Gospel proponent. He sought to Christianize the social order through positive action in the social and political realms and engagement with modern processes and culture that mirrored the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. This theological orientation


149 On premillennialist modernism, see Brendan Pietsch’s dissertation, “Dispensational Modernism.” Quandt, “Secularization of Postmillennialism,” pp. 394, 396. Quandt points to a comparison of Washington Gladden and Josiah Strong to illustrate the transition from a more revivalist version to a more rationalistic version of postmillennialism. Ibid., p. 397-401.

150 Moorehouse, “Erosion of Postmillennialism,” p 75.

151 In Quandt’s estimation, Social Gospellers like Josiah Strong “obliterated the traditional line between what God discloses and what man’s reason can discover by itself.” “Secularization of Postmillennialism,” p. 400.

provided an intellectual and philosophical dovetail with elements of progressivism. To be sure, in creating a Christian-based social order in “harmony with the ethical convictions which we identify with Christ,” Rauschenbush believed such change required not only a Dewey-ian sense of individual growth within community but also the application of science to social life and the cleansing force of education to wash away the sinful social habits of previous generations. Moreover, the drawing together of an interdependent human family through the promotion of ecumenicalism and social solidarity was a millennialist objective that would orient human societies toward harmony, peace, and justice.

Although certainly not all, many within mainline Protestantism pushed for both ecumenicalism and adoption of the Social Gospel as appropriate responses to contemporary challenges. Emerging as early as the 1840s but solidifying its presence by the 1860s, the Evangelical Alliance advocated evangelical unity and nativist concerns

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with Catholic and non-Anglo-Saxon immigration. Josiah Strong, general secretary of the organization in the 1880s, pushed the Alliance toward both cooperation and social action. In his influential book *Our Country* (1885), Strong sought to reach a popular audience warning of the dangers of immigration and Catholicism to “American Civilization,” called for greater evangelization, used the new science of statistics to make his moral case, and advocated for the role of experts in politics and society.\textsuperscript{155} The Federal Council of Churches (FCC), though, most directly illustrated the mainline move toward unity and the social gospel, which it adopted controversially in 1908.\textsuperscript{156}

Thus, a shared orientation with progressive educators existed: working within social science and cultural trends to improve life and educating Americans to work towards a sense of the common good (a process of individual regeneration leading to social regeneration). In two realms in particular Social Gospel Protestants joined forces with the larger Progressive movement: education and adoption of social science methodologies. If Protestant educational reformers hoped to “share the responsibility of meeting the educational challenges of industrial mass society” with progressive counterparts, the fact that committed Christians were deeply involved in the social

\textsuperscript{155} Schneider, “Voice of Many Waters,” pp. 99-100. The book was published two months after the famous Haymarket riots, which purportedly gave the book’s message a new urgency. Moreover, the book’s publication was supported by the American Home Mission Society. On this see: Stritt, “The First Faith-Based Movement,” pp. 82-83. We should not neglect to note, furthermore, that Strong’s notions were underwritten by a racist belief in the superiority of Anglo-Saxons.

\textsuperscript{156} Four churches, out of an original thirty-three, withdrew from the FCC before 1933 as a reaction to this liberal direction, and conservative members of remaining churches would continue to make their oppositional views known. Schneider, “Voice of Many Waters,” pp. 105-107. The FCC was the precursor to the National Council of Churches, established in 1950.
sciences was representative of the “harmony” typical of American Progressivism before World War I. 157

In the broad scope of higher education, Christian denominational colleges had flourished during the nineteenth century, abetted by American expansion in the West and flexible academic standards. However, the rise of the modern research university, modeled on the German version with secular orientations and specialized disciplinary guilds, began to challenge not only the Protestant domination of student training but also claims to authority over truth and knowledge. Moreover, standardizing higher education fit neatly into the Progressive drive for order and efficiency and the sprawling, chaotic nest of idiosyncratic denominational colleges were often viewed as part of the problem. While many Protestants viewed the challenges to their authority with dismay, others, buttressed by the Social Gospel, began to work within these trends. Thus, Rockefeller, a devout Baptist, supported the establishment of the University of Chicago which founders modeled on German lines. Moreover, his Progressive GEB shared this commitment to standardization in higher education: supporting the stronger, more established denominational colleges so as to “weed out” the weaker ones. 158

Addressing multiple educational levels, the Religious Education Association (REA) combined prominent educators and religious leaders and explicitly sought to


158 Bass, “Protestants and Education,” pp. 53-54.
coordinate religious and progressive educational endeavors.\footnote{In addition to Rockefeller, the REA had philanthropic funding from D. Stuart Dodge, whose son Cleveland would help establish Near East Relief.} The REA published the *Journal of Religious Education* which made efforts to keep up with the social science literature in the 1920s and 1930s and its mission was “to present, on an adequate scientific plane, those factors which make for improvement in religious and moral education.”\footnote{Moore, “Secularization: Religion and the Social Sciences,” p. 239. William Rainey Harper was a primary founder of the REA; Harper was a Baptist who also helped found the University of Chicago. REA membership included Booker T. Washington; Setran, “More Religion,” pp. 4-5.} The REA also focused part of its attention on Sunday schools, seeking to incorporate the new research in child psychology as well as the educational philosophies and practices of John Dewey: differentiating learning by age groups and encouraging students to see themselves as part of a larger, integrated social whole.\footnote{Bass, “Protestants and Education,” pp. 62-63. Dewey was born a Congregationalist and, one biographer argues, adopted the Social Gospel in his early career, hoping to reconcile Christianity with modern culture: “dissolving the separations between God and the world, the spiritual and the material, religion and science, and Christianity and democracy.” Rockefeller, *John Dewey*, p. 21.}

The intersection of progressive education and Social Gospel reformers is also illustrated in the connections between Columbia’s Teachers College and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Educators and their ideas mixed freely between the two institutions and both rejected inherited orthodoxies – theological and pedagogical. They not only adopted the Progressive ideas of practical, student-centered learning based on individual experiences and practical applications but also a shared desire to overhaul social organization for a more equal and just democracy. Men such as George A. Coe, a professor and member of the REA, argued that American democracy was the social ideal emanating from Jesus’s teachings: “the idea of democracy is essential
to the full appreciation of his [Jesus’s] teaching . . . the fact remains that his desire for a brotherhood of men leads on with inevitableness of fate to the ideal of a democratic organization of human society, and that his fusion of divine with human love presents us with a divine-human democracy as a final social ideal.”162 Accordingly, educational reform along progressive lines would promote democracy as the Kingdom of God on earth. If the divide between God and earthly social processes was artificial, democratic education was inherently religious. Thus, Coe could label progressive educators “Christian prophets” returning schools to a forgotten “religious” heritage.163

Social Gospel educators were also not shy about adopting the tenets of science and were interwoven into the emergence of the social sciences. After all, if the objective was to “Christianize the social order”164 through social solidarity and promoting the common good (to usher in the millennium), it did not make sense not to engage, to divorce Christianity from the social sciences or culture at large. Accordingly, Social Gospellers, like their Progressive counterparts, required an understanding of the objects, structures, and people in need of change. They needed knowledge about them. This drive intersected with Progressive education and student-centered learning; if learning was to be adaptive to student experiences, teachers and educators needed an understanding of the background, previous knowledge, and life experiences of the children (or adults). The emerging social sciences thus provided the tools to scientifically study human society.

Many Christians certainly ignored or criticized the landmark publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 and the threat it seemed to pose to the authority of Christianity in making truth claims about the world, but many mainline Protestants came to see science as an ally to the Social Gospel movement and its attempts at social reform.\(^{165}\) In this conceptualization, scientific laws were God’s laws and thus science’s applications were a form of revelation: “part of God’s plan for the perfection of the world” and therefore an indicator of progress towards the Kingdom.\(^{166}\)

The Interchurch World Movement, an expression of ecumenicalism and the Social Gospel that rivaled the FCC, had widespread Protestant approval and benefited from Rockefeller largesse. Its Town and Country Division sought to survey and compile statistics and data about the religious life of America’s non-urban areas. The Movement’s demise in 1920, however, saw the Institute of Social and Religious Research emerge from its ashes, continuing its application of social science methodologies to modern challenges in religious life.\(^{167}\)

Relatively, scientific philanthropy’s advocacy of the social sciences was of great importance. Many within them were Protestant reformers and the turn to social change was illustrative of the intersection of a Social Gospel-infused mainline Protestantism with Progressive education. The GEB was the successor to the American Baptist Education

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\(^{166}\) Quandt, “Secularization of Postmillennialism,” pp. 399-400; citation from p. 400.

\(^{167}\) Having overstretched itself, the IWM collapsed in 1920; this event “vindicated the FCC’s slower, less flamboyant style of cooperation” although the FCC “continued quietly to imitate the movement’s utilization of business techniques and bureaucratic procedures.” Schneider, “Voice of Many Waters,” p. 101.
Society and continued its focus on education, although it took on the trappings of Social-Gospel Progressivism. In foreign contexts in particular, understanding and having knowledge of the people of rural villages – their religious beliefs, social structures, customs, and folklore – was critical. And American Protestant missionaries played a vital bridging role. Rockefeller, Sr. was himself a devout Baptist and perhaps “the greatest supporter of missionaries in his generation.”

William H. Kilpatrick, another prominent Progressive educator who taught courses at both Teachers College and Union Seminary while serving as a member of the REA Executive Council, acted as a consultant during the Young Men Christian Association’s (YMCA) overseas transition to a Progressive educational program in the mid-1920s. Indeed, scholars have noted the tight-knit networks of families that linked together American philanthropists, Social Gospel Progressives, and missionaries in the Middle East. Active in the region since the early 1800s, American Protestant missionaries would also come to a realization of the desirability of studying and engaging human societies – influenced by not only domestic theological trends but from their own experiences abroad.


Accommodating the wishes of the Ottoman Viceroy of Syria during World War I, Syrian Protestant College’s president, Howard S. Bliss, accompanied the director of a new university in Jerusalem on an observation tour of the Beirut campus. During their conversation, Bliss remarked to Jamil Bey that his college did not exist as a rival to Ottoman institutions; rather, he suggested, they desired to “promote and not retard” native education and that “we are here to share with the people of the East the best things we have in the West, or rather to exchange the best things that East and West have received. For the whole world needs the whole world.” Bliss then responded to Jamil Bey’s inquiry about dealing with such a religiously diverse student body. Bliss indicated that the school’s motto was “frankness and good-will,” and that every student’s “theological and religious opinions were sympathetically respected,” going so far as to note that “missionary and Christian” though the college was, all students joined their Muslim colleagues in celebrating Mohammed’s birthday. When Jamil Bey departed, Bliss sent him off with the catalogue of an American theological seminary: “with its noble programme of up-to-date theological discipline, with its outlook wide as truth, with its sympathy for all religious aspirations.”

In an article written not long after, Bliss continued to emphasize religious and cultural sensitivity as one mark of the “modern missionary.” The reasons were both

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practical and theological. Missionaries in the region had encountered resistance by referring to locals as “heathens” and “barbarians.” Moreover, a primary emphasis on learning and reciting Bible verses had garnered few converts. Thus, their ultimate goal of spreading Christianity had faltered – even been set back. Citing the theory of evolution, comparative religion, and the Lower and Higher Criticism of the Bible, Bliss argued that the modern missionary “respects all that is good” in, say, Buddhism and Islam. At the same time that a modern missionary’s Christian view of the world was “so superior to all other views as to make it infinitely worth while [sic] to proclaim this view to the uttermost parts of the earth,” he was also enjoined to understand that the soul of all individuals held “traces of the divine image” and that Christianity was not “the sole channel through which the divine and saving truth has been conveyed.” In pushing individual and social regeneration, missionaries were to be demonstrations of the model set forth by Jesus Christ, offering discipleship over sect: “He wished men to come to Him, not as a shrine, but as a door; not as a goal, but as a highway; not as a memorial tablet, but as a window through which they could see God and Self and Man and Life and Opportunity.”¹⁷²

In making such statements, Bliss was indicating not only the practical problems that missionaries in the region encountered and adjusted to, he unveiled himself theologically as a Christian moderate in his views on missionary objectives and of other religions: proclaiming Christianity’s superiority but acknowledging God’s presence and

¹⁷² Quotations from pp. 666, 667, 670. Indeed, Bliss argues, if Jesus had been born in a different place, his clothing, language, and the parables He used would have been different – adapted, if you will, to time and place: p. 671.
the existence of religious truths within other faiths.\textsuperscript{173} The “moderate” theology Bliss espoused, detailed in more depth below, was indicative of how a swathe of mainline Protestant missionaries – like their constituencies at home – were questioning conventional orthodoxies, working within contemporary culture and science, and embracing elements of the Social Gospel.

For the first Protestant missionaries to the Middle East in the early decades of the 1800s, a millenarian faith that a return of Jews to the Holy Land would prompt Christ’s return, propelled them to take up the banner of Protestant evangelists.\textsuperscript{174} Evangelical revivals like the Second Great Awakening, emphasizing immanent redemption, helped ignite renewed missionary fervor in the early 1800s that could not be contained within American borders. An example of the urgency to save souls abroad, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was established in 1810 with the maxim that “Only the extension of Christian love could bring nearer to humankind the millennium that would wipe out poverty, injustice, and oppression.”\textsuperscript{175} The founders originally thought that conversion abroad would be relatively easy\textsuperscript{176} – a misguided self-

\textsuperscript{173} I use the term “moderate” with Grant Wacker’s categorizations in mind. See more below.


\textsuperscript{175} Reverand Samuel Hopkins, cited in Oren, Power, Faith, and Fantasy, pp. 87-88.

confidence that would put into relief the adjustments made to their original objectives when this proved to be a very difficult task.

Stemming from debates over work with Native Americans, there was very real tension between the impulses to evangelize and civilize. Mission theorists “debated incessantly” about whether or not it was the task of missionaries to transmit American culture. Should natives be civilized as a prerequisite for conversion? Could elements be constructively transmitted and others omitted? Not at all convinced that aspects of American culture such as materialism and slavery were what they wanted to transfer, the ABCFM’s primary objectives were individual conversion – on creating “evidence of a religious life” – and the building of revitalized local churches. Rufus Anderson, the ABCFM’s corresponding secretary from 1832 to 1866, set out a “Three-Self” policy

177 This desire to redeem the world was partnered by a desire among missionaries to redeem their own failures among Native American Indians, particularly amidst the tragedy of Indian removal under Andrew Jackson. Makdisi: Puritan minister Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia Christi Americana* retells the conquest of America, expounding upon the ability of American Protestantism to change the world through missionary activity. While theological rigidity characterized his account, he also sought to preserve a sense of the benevolence of early missionaries to the Indians. Makdisi argues that early nineteenth century missionaries sought to correct the failures at home and looked to overseas missions to “vindicate the ideals of mission” in areas “untainted” by the settler colonialism that complicated domestic efforts (p. 31). See also John A. Andrew, *From Revivals to Removal: Jeremiah Evarts, the Cherokee Nation, and the Search for the Soul of America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992). Evarts helped lead American missionary opposition to the removal and forced displacement of Indians. And: Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell UP 2015)

178 Elenor H. Tejirian, “Faith of Our Fathers: Missionaries and NGOs: The Transition,” in Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, eds., *Altruism and Imperialism* (New York: Middle East Institute, 2002), p. 297; Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, p. 14. Tejirian points to a “Christ-culture” dialectic in the missionary conundrum over whether Christian values were fundamental to, and therefore inseparable from, American culture; the question being: whether or not spreading Christianity inherently meant spreading American culture. This divide was present from the beginning of Christian missionary work, illustrated in the insistence of some early Catholic missionaries to adapt to native customs whereas American Puritans saw civilizing natives as required for proper conversion. She suggests that, today, secular NGOs represent the “civilizational” side of this dialectic, replacing the work of mainline Protestant missionaries, while the “Christ” side is largely the provenance of fundamentalist Christian missionaries. “Faith of Our Fathers,” pp. 296-297.

(self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating) that sought to create local institutional self-reliance that would “foster the development of indigenous Christianity.”

Within these guidelines, the establishment of schools (or the teaching of science or provision of vocational training) was not to be a bid to westernize but an instrumental means to entice potential converts. From primary to higher education, schools were an early priority in America missionary work in the region, providing missionaries with a home base, an easy avenue for moral and Biblical instruction (and placement of printing presses), and recruiting centers that would train native assistants and preachers to make this self-reliance a reality. Teaching local languages, and translating the Bible into those languages, was an important educational goal and the Board disapproved of teaching English. According to men such as Anderson, education was vital to evangelism but was to be used only for this purpose; otherwise, education that would make natives like the missionaries could “weaken their cultural bonds with their society, which would no longer enable them to communicate easily with their own people,” while draining limited financial resources away from effecting individual conversion. Missionaries were to be spiritual catalysts only: planting the seeds of conversion and church leadership and then exiting the scene.

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180 Yetkiner, “Bebek Seminary,” p. 64.

181 It should be noted that I do not want to draw too distinct of a line between premillennialism and postmillennialism in missionary work; even those who argued for a focus on individual conversion, not cultural renewal, could see in the printing press, for example, an instrument of God. Quandt, “Secularization of Postmillennialism,” p. 393.


However, the earliest missionaries to the Middle East, supported by the ABCFM, quickly encountered unfavorable regional realities. With the aid of British missionaries, they began their sojourn in Smyrna in Anatolia and traveled across the region to get a handle on where to set up missionary stations. These men and their successors (including women) bought local clothing, paid for Greek and Arabic lessons, established a school, distributed Bible tracts, and received a printing press. But they entered the region at a time of unrest within the Ottoman Empire, with internal uprisings (such as that of the Greeks in the 1820s) and European encroachment (such as the French occupation of Algeria in the early 1830s) creating a modernizing tug-of-war among Ottoman officials. According to Ottoman law, people could freely convert to Islam but subjects were forbidden from leaving it. Lacking the colonial power of their British counterparts, American missionaries therefore began working among local Christian groups whom they also viewed as morally impoverished and in need of revival. By 1830 the pattern of working primarily among Middle East Christians had been established.

Other tensions began to open up between objectives and experiences on the ground. Despite the ABCFM’s desire not to educate natives “out” of their local cultures, for some missionaries in the field, the genie was already out of the bottle; they viewed it as their duty to help locals navigate the effects of western cultural contact, especially the spiritual poverty of materialism and secularism. Moreover, a focus on conversion alone had its own unintended consequences. Protestant missionaries often antagonized local

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Christian communities whose very existence within the larger Muslim cultural and political empire rested on a delicate balance of religious autonomy and unequal citizenship. Maronite leaders in the Levant, for instance, were angry with the missionaries for threatening the fragile etiquette of coexistence, fearing the consequences if their religious community was destabilized at a time of unrest within the empire.\textsuperscript{186} Thus, missionaries were confronted with the uncomfortable fact that converted individuals were being ostracized from their religious and cultural communities.

To meet these challenges, a number of missionaries began to adapt, creating debate and division within missionary ranks. Many tried to adopt wider education curriculums and provide health, industrial, and/or agricultural expertise. Some even took on a non-sectarian emphasis in their work to help allay fears from local families, communities, and political authorities. Rather than cultural abstinence, many began to take seriously the religious and cultural communities among which they worked and advocated for guided change. For example, Cyrus Hamlin established the Bebek Seminary in Istanbul for the purposes outlined by the Board – to train assistants and preachers. However, Armenian converts were excommunicated by the Armenian Apostolic Church while their own communities ostracized them; Hamlin therefore realized that those who remained in the seminary needed to be cared for now that his evangelizing had extricated them from their communal and cultural roots. Accordingly, he started a flour mill, bakery, and laundry business to help the students earn money. He also adjusted his curriculum to provide more practical instruction. The Board became

\textsuperscript{186} See: Makdisi, \textit{Artillery of Heaven}, p. 31.
displeased with Hamlin’s new directions, claiming he was too secular and money-minded and was working more to Americanize rather than Christianize the students. Hamlin resigned in frustration and in 1863 founded Robert College in Istanbul which maintained loose Christian ties but followed his broader educational objectives.  

Thus, as a new revivalist missionary fervor took hold in the 1870s, an urge to engage more fully with and guide social change in other societies and the international system was increasing. The responses mirrored, and in many ways intersected with, theological trends at home although missionary experiences were of great importance in their own right. Still, by the late 1800s those looking to adjust could draw on support found not only in the Social Gospel but also two other overlapping historical trends: humanitarianism and internationalism.

Many missionaries became active in the peace movement, which by the early 1900s contained many Progressives and wealthy philanthropists. With their drive to reform international relations, peace activists argued that war was becoming an

\begin{flushleft}
\underline{187} Yetkiner, “Bebek Seminary.” See also the example of Mary Mills Patrick and the Constantinople Girls School: Carolyn Goffman, “From Religious to American Proselytism,” in American Missionaries and the Middle East.


\underline{189} I follow Ian Tyrrell’s argument that the Social Gospel was not simply an “outwardly expanding” influence and that missionary experiences were a “separate source of such ideas”; parallel developments within missionary work abroad presaged and then intersected with the rise of the Social Gospel. Tyrrell, Reforming the World, p. 96.

\underline{190} This being the age of Andrew Carnegie’s peace activism and the formation of the Nobel Peace Prize.
\end{flushleft}
anachronism in an increasingly interdependent and rational world. Moreover, the World Peace Foundation, founded by publisher and philanthropist Edwin Ginn in 1910, sought to move peace activism in more Progressive directions by introducing business-like efficiency and focusing on mass peace education. Figures within the YMCA and the ABCFM served on the World Peace Foundation’s board of directors. Missionaries could also draw on a view of salvation that included material aid as well as spiritual guidance to those in need. This modern humanitarianism evinced a concern for the root causes of suffering and need abroad, beyond one’s immediate or even national communities. Missionaries were part of this movement and reflected its impulses in responding to suffering in the 1890s, such as the famine in Russia (1891-1892) and the Armenian massacres (1895-1896). What began as “auxilliary[es] to missionary endeavours,” were becoming, for some, part and parcel of what it meant to “do” missionary work.

Similarly, the Student Volunteer Movement arose in the fervor of the 1870s seeking conversion abroad but by the 1890s had begun to round out its proselytizing with

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191 See British activist Norman Angell’s *The Great Illusion* (1910). Angell’s work was popular in American peace literature with its argument that increased economic interdependence was raising the costs of going to war, thereby making warfare increasingly unlikely.


an increasing emphasis on services provision, education, and social action.\textsuperscript{195} The YMCA, in particular, “foresaw a need to adapt their methods to the changing attitude of their target audiences” and thus began to find their niche, less in “Christianizing” and more in “modernizing,” citing a goal of “gradualist Western change.” It engaged in cultural and religious translation, arguing that YMCA values were “the Western counterpart of that ancient and honoured tradition, the Confucian ethic,” through “linked concepts of morality as the core of a great society.”\textsuperscript{196} Even within their direct evangelizing work, they adopted Americanizing elements such as modern buildings and amenities, statistics, business-like efficiency, and an abiding concern with outcomes.

Part of the shifts in missionary practices was the adoption of agricultural extension. The use of evangelical and missionary metaphors by historians of Seaman Knapp and agricultural extension are more apt than most historians perhaps realize.\textsuperscript{197} Although individual cases existed of missions providing agricultural instruction, their occurrences began to increase in the late 1800s along with the broader missionary concern for material well-being.\textsuperscript{198} In 1876, for instance, trained agriculturalists made their way to missionary stations in Japan and Africa. And, by the first decade of the

\textsuperscript{195} Tyrell, \textit{Reforming the World}, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{196} Tyrell, \textit{Reforming the World}, p. 93

\textsuperscript{197} If, for instance, the county agent lived among the farmers he served, sometimes “helped with the chores, assisted a farmer to regain control of an unruly bull, or entertained the baby,” and was “truly an itinerant teacher,” then the farmer himself became a “missionary for scientific agriculture” who would proselytize to his neighbors. Quotations from Scott, \textit{Reluctant Farmer}, p. 227 and Sealandor, \textit{Private Wealth} p. 48, respectively.

\textsuperscript{198} Rural reform at home had its own basis in theology. Josiah Strong himself had evinced an anti-urban bias in his own Social Gospel-ing, the city becoming a standard-bearer of American moral decay that magnified the other social problems of intemperance, immigration, socialism, and wealth disparities. Quandt, “Secularization of Postmillennialism,” p. 398.
1910s, rural revitalization in the United States “had an immediate impact on the missionary societies,” although controversially. Missionaries established agricultural colleges in places such as China and India; most notable for its direct influence on the approaches of NEF was the American Farm School in Greece founded by Congregationalist missionary Dr. John Henry House.\(^{199}\) Moreover, at the 1928 International Missionary Conference, “agricultural missions were strongly endorsed” and American agricultural reform advocates argued that missions should have rural reconstruction units serving villages.\(^{200}\) Indeed, both John Mott of the YMCA and John H. Reisner, a missionary and dean of the College of Agriculture in Nanking, asked Cornell University to offer a short course for missionaries. In 1930, therefore, it began offering agricultural courses for veteran missionaries, teaching “how to teach citizens to bolster crops and improve their communities.” By 1941, the short course’s popularity prompted the establishment of a full, one-year course.\(^{201}\)

Missionary opinion was split regarding American involvement in formal colonialism in the Caribbean and Pacific and then World War I. They shared this ambivalence with the wider Progressive movement, although in the end, many


\(^{200}\) The brief sketch in this paragraph taken from Gary R. Hess, “American Agricultural Missionaries and Efforts at Economic Improvement in India,” *Agricultural History* 42, No. 1 (January 1968), p. 23 (of 23-34). One of the most well-known was Allahabad Agricultural Institute in India, founded by Presbyterian missionary Sam Higginbottom. Hess uses the work of Benjamin Hunnicutt and William Watkins Reid, *The Story of Agricultural Missions* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada) as well as personal correspondence with Reisner.

missionaries and Progressives worked to further both out of similar concerns for Christianizing and reforming the international order. Indeed, particularly during World War I, many missionaries helped extend Progressive reform to the international stage as they worked with and alongside Woodrow Wilson’s version of internationalism.202

At the same time, World War I came as a shock. It upended the optimism of Progressive activists that the world was marching towards progress and peace. And for missionaries in the Near East, the war similarly dismantled their confidence in the building of a liberal, democratic Ottoman “nation” which the coming to power of the Young Turks in 1908 had prompted.203 Moreover, the aftermath of the war’s senseless, technology-driven slaughter gave pause to Western cultural, religious, and technological optimism which then coalesced with intensified nationalist sentiment in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and nativist faith revivals.204 Missionaries, who had front-row seats to these early twentieth century dramas, helped their domestic constituencies more consistently and seriously consider other peoples and faiths and the modern trends of the age, bringing a questioning of the social orientation of missions to the fore.

202 Richard M. Gamble, The War for Righteousness: Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2003). It is no surprise, then, that given the American exceptionalism that missionaries advanced, but also the work they were performing, that Wilson seized upon them as levers for the type of internationalist, progressive change he envisioned would bring peace and stability. Tyrrell, p. 201-208. On the international links with domestic Progressivism, see: Dawley, Reforming the World.


204 Woodrow Wilson’s promotion of internationalist idealism had engendered great hopes among the non-Western peoples around the globe – hopes that were dashed as European powers carved out new slices of empire and re-imposed their rule over others. Erez Manela, The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism (New York: Oxford UP, 2007).
Thus, just as Rufus Anderson’s concerns about transmitting Western culture and his insistence on local self-reliance and sustainability were being given renewed importance, both direct experience of and theological reflection on other religions prompted a potentially-devastating line of questioning: if the difference between Christianity and other faiths was absolute, “did that mean that the missionary was to uproot indigenous faiths regardless of the consequences?” If the difference was one of degree, “did that mean that the missionary was to present the Christian message as a better but not necessarily exclusive solution to mankind’s spiritual needs?”

Historian Grant Wacker divides Christian responses (domestic and missionary) into Conservative, Moderate, and Liberal categories. For Conservatives, representing a sizable minority of American Protestants, Christianity was both unique and exclusive, offering the sole avenue to salvation. For Liberals, a small but vocal minority, Christianity was neither unique nor exclusive, although it was a better option than the others. Moderates, representing the Protestant majority (and the likes of Howard Bliss), “tried to have it both ways, holding that Christianity was superior to all other faiths, and therefore the loftiest road to salvation, but not necessarily the only one.”

Before 1930, all could be considered part of the Protestant mainstream.

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207 Throughout the rest of this chapter, I capitalize these categories to distinguish them.

By the 1920s, however, American Protestant Christianity was “at the Crossroads” and the missionary enterprise was in a state of crisis. At home, theological differences splintered the mainline churches, exemplified by the fundamentalist break from the modernist mainstream. After the 1920s, the Moderate view had solidly become the norm and was moving in more Liberal directions although the larger trend in missionary work is reflected in the fact that Conservatives broke away and established their own institutions, notably coming to represent four-fifths of active missionaries in the field by 1960. While the YMCA and YWCA continued their trend toward social service provision, which had by this time eclipsed direct evangelism, the theological reverberations from home cracked the Student Volunteer Movement over questions of proselytism/social services and imposing culture and faith on foreign people. The shifts in attitude between the 1910 and 1928 International Missionary Conferences are also illustrative. In 1910, Moderates had argued against an iconoclastic attitude toward other religions as “radically unwise and unjust” although they “cheered about the ‘grandeur’ of Christianity marching to the ‘conquest of the five great religions of the modern world.’” By 1928, they acknowledged at the outset that the “‘perplexities on this subject’ were so troubling that a fresh inquiry was ‘urgently needed.’”

In turning to the next section, on the transition from NER to NEF, this questioning of the goals and methods of missionary activity would play a central role. In making the

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change, NER officials melded competing impulses within American missionary education: an emphasis on reaching the masses by creating local leadership; the importance of outside assistance with local self-reliance; and a concern for Western-guided societal improvement with an appreciation for local cultures. Thus, to classify Protestant missionaries as either “altruistic” or “cultural imperialists” is a mistake; they worked complexly within “the twin teleologies of developmentalism and nationalism.”

These orientations dovetailed with NEF’s turn to the enterprise of scientific philanthropy, with its emphasis on rural revitalization through Progressive education and agricultural extension.

“Growing Together”: NEF and the Lure of Rural Development

Western education in the Near East was at a crossroads, Paul Monroe wrote in the 1920s. New challenges such as xenophobic nationalism and racial agitation were rising alongside the “inevitable march” of the nation-state as the modern political organization. The latter development meant that an opportunity existed for Progressive educators to exert positive influence on the educational – and therefore social, economic, and political – systems of emerging nations. The peoples of “the East,” he suggested, were reaching out for “democratic ideas and practices.” Western educators could help provide these

along with guidance in the areas of efficiency, the “harmonious cooperation of several national and religious groups,” and community-building through education. Monroe, the Director of the International Institute of Education at Teacher’s College, Columbia University, thus looked to internationalize modern educational theory and practice to help mold “national” cultures abroad, thereby both easing the tension associated with the transition to modern nation-states and harmonizing the globe by helping “East and West” to “grow together.”

In making his arguments, Monroe not only brandished his Progressive credentials, he also hoped to renew, bolster, and reframe missionary education. In his view, mission educators were particularly well-placed to take advantage of the new global environment and could help nudge nation-building abroad in democratic, holistic, and human-focused directions. While they could not compete with new public schools systems in terms of quantity, they could strive for influence by demonstrating the quality of Progressive education, most notably the link between communal uplift and religiously-neutral “character-building” for individuals: “the superiority of a life of reason, of faith, and of right conduct – of the unity of life, physical, economic, social, spiritual.”

To have this

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214 Monroe, “Western Education in Moslem Lands,” p. 130. Given his progressive credentials, he not only surveyed education in the Philippines for the American War Department but was also, along with John Dewey, called upon by foreign governments to survey and advise them on the establishment of public school systems that would mold “national” cultures.

215 Monroe, “Western Education in Moslem Lands,” p. 135. He added: While native homes, religions, and cultures could supply natives with “strong moral traits” and “social motives,” mission education helped provide “the vital organic union of these factors which constitutes character.”
impact, however, Monroe warned that mission educators had to: adapt themselves to local political circumstances; overcome their racial prejudice; and do away with their conscious or unconscious predilection for American cultural proselytism. “[S]o long as this mission education remains wholly alien, so long does it miss its main purpose of entering fully into the life of the people, thus ceasing to be wholly Western or alien, but becoming a common product and possession.”

The activity of Protestant missionaries and philanthropists in the 1920s was indicative of a wider trend in U.S. economic and cultural expansion in the interwar period, undergird by a liberal developmentalism in which U.S. interests were seen to coincide with efforts by nonstate actors to spread American notions of peace, prosperity, and democracy around the globe. Like John Dewey and others, Monroe was enlisted by foreign countries in the 1920s and 1930s to advise them on the establishment of public school systems. Critically, however, NER also hired Monroe in the early 1920s to study their educational programming as part of a wider trend in the direction of professionalization and scientific philanthropy. This section focuses on the contentious transition from NER to NEF. Advocates of the shift, such as Monroe, acted as weavers, interlacing the themes explored in this chapter to determine the course of rural development: Progressive education and agricultural extension under the umbrella of scientific philanthropy within a milieu of theological and missionary shifts.

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NER was not a missionary organization, per se, but a relief organization with strong missionary and philanthropic ties. American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau’s suggestion to the U.S. State Department that a committee be formed to save Armenians from genocide bore fruit as businessman-philanthropist and devout Presbyterian Cleveland H. Dodge gathered together Charles Crane,218 James Barton (Foreign Secretary) of ABCFM, the secretaries of the Presbyterian, Reformed, and Methodist mission boards, representatives of the YMCA, FCC, and, not long after, the Jewish emergency Relief Commission and a member from both the Catholic and Episcopal hierarchies.219 Aside from Cleveland Dodge, the importance of domestic philanthropists was further illustrated in the likely role the Rockefeller Foundation played in consolidating the handful of separately emerging relief organizations in 1915. After a number of name changes, Congress incorporated the organization as Near East Relief in 1919.220

As the organization began to structure its relief efforts, men like James Barton were critical. NER depended on the use of missionary buildings and missionary personnel in the field while channeling some of its collected donations through various

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218 Crane was an Arabist, friend and adviser to Woodrow Wilson, and was integral to the commission that studied the Middle East after WWI: the King-Crane Commission documented the Arab desire for independence and the halting of Jewish immigration, but it also advocated for the creation of mandates.


220 See: Tejirian, “Faith of Our Fathers,” p. 300, who cites Daniel, *American Philanthropy Near East*, p. 150 and an interview with Richard Robarts, Executive Director of the NEF in 2000. The other two including Syrian-Palestine Relief Fund (1914) and the Persian War Relief Fund (1915). After their merger with what was originally titled American Committee on Armenian Relief, the title became the Armenian Committee, then the American Committee on Armenian and Syrian Relief, then American Committee for Relief in the Near East; finally coming to rest on Near East Relief in 1919. Tejirian, “Faith of Our Fathers,” p. 302.
mission boards. Although coming to work with a conglomeration of religious sects, the primary focus of NER’ efforts were Armenians who were suffering genocide and displacement at the hands of the Ottomans. It was to save this “ancient Christian civilization” that Morgenthau, backed by missionary field reports of the violence, called for American aid.\(^{221}\) By the estimation of its own staff, NER would eventually save over 1 million lives, rescue and educate 132,000 children, feed 12.5 million people, and medically treat some 6 million individuals.\(^{222}\)

By February 1920, NER reorganized itself to deal with ongoing needs as the war ended. Throughout 1920 and 1921, NER’s Executive Committee hoped to withdraw from its main relief activities for adults, turning over its operations to local governments and permanent agencies, and focus on their ongoing work with the largely Armenian orphans in their care who they hoped to repatriate to a new Armenian nation-state and guided by U.S. tutelage within the new League of Nations mandate system.

Political turmoil wracked the region, including the rise of Kemal Attaturk’s Turkey as a new nation-state from the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire.\(^{223}\) Amidst inflamed and often xenophobic nationalistic fervor, mission schools had to accept new educational restrictions.\(^{224}\) While most agreed that schools should stay open only if they

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\(^{222}\) 1933 Progress Report, p. 7, Rockefeller Archives Center (Sleepy Hallow, NY), Near East Foundation Records AC2010.002 (Meeting Minutes, Dockets, Annual Reports), Box 2 (hereafter RAC 002). Figures included in the report.

\(^{223}\) As well as ongoing issues following the Russian Revolution and the French takeover of Syria.

\(^{224}\) A nationalist sentiment American missionaries had played no small role in, could often turn xenophobic and suspicious of outside – especially Western – influences. Even if American missionary presence was deemed less problematic to governing authorities, the danger of allowing exceptions opened
continued to provide spiritual benefits to their students, they differed on whether formal religious instruction was fundamental in this regard. More immediately important, however, the U.S. failed to secure control of the proposed Armenian state under the new League of Nation mandate system, to the chagrin of NER personnel and regional missionaries. Armenia’s existence was quickly extinguished as Turkish forces under Attaturk carved out would-be Armenian territory and the rest was absorbed into Bolshevist Russia. Any serious long-term planning now stalled and NER was forced to acknowledge that regional political circumstances were changing and that if work of any sort was to continue, it had to adjust to the new nationalistic and political realities. As the prospect of long-term care of orphans loomed, some began to envision a social transformative role for NER – “previously the purview of mission schools,” who were finding their own efforts stymied.

Three other factors were critical. First, steep declines in fund-raising by 1923 gave greater momentum to a rethinking of the organization’s goals and future. Second, an unacceptable possibility for less-benign European colonial influences. Within the rising nationalist sentiment, many states sought to assimilate minority populations and feared that mission schools served the opposite effect. In Persia, regulations were tougher for missionaries, as new nationalistic laws required mission schools to follow state guidelines which required that all Muslim students receive instruction in the Koran and Islamic law. Schools either had to close, move, or stay and obey, divesting symbols of their more overt American foreign presence.

225 Daniel, American Philanthropy Near East, pp. 172-173. Daniel explores the American adjustment in Chapter 8. In large part a product of the driving out of Armenians, of the approximately 24,000 students enrolled in mission schools in Anatolia in 1912, only 2,800 remained by 1923. As mission boards debated the relative merits of maintaining schools if religious instruction to Muslim students was prohibited, many acquiesced, although the Turkish arrest of three missionaries and the closing of their school for failure to follow the directive provided a practical incentive to observe the laws.


227 General Secretary Charles Vickery’s Golden Rule Sunday campaign, launched in 1923, was very popular but ultimately unsuccessful in long-term fund-raising; and whose ever-more sensationalist

Third, in a reflection of the organization’s scientific philanthropic links, the ongoing turmoil in the region brought out a growing consensus among NER staff that relief was not enough – they began to push for rural reconstruction, as it was then called. “Cooperation is more compelling than force, as service is more charitable than charity; and philanthropy is best realized in assistance to self-help,” Monroe argued.\footnote{Paul Monroe, “Education and Near East Relief,” Essays in Comparative Education, p. 121. This essay was a report Monroe made to NER in 1924 on its educational programming.}

He was joined by men such as Barclay Acheson, a Presbyterian clergyman and instructor at Syrian Protestant College (AUB) who held numerous NER posts in the 1920s, who wrote that “unthinking generosity might do as much harm as good.”\footnote{Quoted by Shaloma Gauthier and David Rodogno, “Near East Relief’s Caucasus Branch Operation (1919-1920),” Research Report, RAC (2011).}

These were progressive sentiments, but they also came on the back of the shock of World War I. Samuel T. Dutton, Columbia professor, one-time school Superintendent, and Secretary of the WPF, had written in 1914 that the war had signaled “the beginning
of a new epoch in the history of the foundation [WPF].”\(^{231}\) An NER study from the 1920s indicated that the war had “rocked civilization to its foundations.”\(^{232}\) Acting as a surveyor for NER, Dutton wrote a report as early as 1918 on reconstruction in Turkey after the war. From the vantage point of these peace activists, progressives, and educators, reconstruction after the war made sense within a brand of internationalism that favored not world government but a “properly organized family of nations.”\(^{233}\) Preventing the outbreak of future wars required not only international cooperation but also: nation-building that eased social, ethnic, and religious tensions, promoted economic equality, democratic ways of life, and self-governance; the use of public funds for social and economic programming, not arms and armies; a revitalization of rural areas; and above all, mass education. Accordingly, NER began to move away from conventional relief and elements of missionary educational practices.

This transition was neither preordained nor unopposed. NER hosted a conference in Constantinople in November 1924 that was critical in determining the organization’s future. NER gathered together representatives from its networks including presidents of regional American colleges and missionaries. They discussed the possibility of conducting a survey to assess local conditions and services and add to their knowledge of local societies and the agencies ministering to them. However, factions began to emerge. If some wanted to convert NER into a large ecumenical mission board, for others, the

\(^{231}\) Cited in Filene, “WPF and Progressivism,” p. 491.


\(^{233}\) Filene, citing a Reverend Edward Cummings sermon at the Boston South Congregationalist Church in 1909, “WPF and Progressivism,” p. 496.
best option was to focus on transforming their orphan charges into a new generation of Christian leaders in the Near East, the vanguard of a regional revitalization: “a super service organization that would transform the Near East single-handedly.” Such an approach did not exactly dovetail with either the financial state of the organization nor the Progressive philanthropic approach to social change then gaining ground among a growing segment of NER staff.

Many missionaries from the beginning of NER’s efforts in the region had drawn attention to the state of indigenous agriculture and NER affiliates had recommended reconstruction – if by governments and not NER. And this rethinking process was not confined to NER; as noted above, the International Missionary Conference in 1928 recommended that missions include or extend agricultural work. Kenyon Butterfield, a domestic rural reform advocate, agricultural specialist, and agricultural advisor to the ABCFM, recommended in 1930 that missions include rural reconstruction units for villages. Butterfield’s ABCFM connections gave him access to NER’s James Barton who in turn admitted in 1925 that with Butterfield’s insistence, he was becoming a “crank on the subject of the rural approach.” The primary mission boards (ABCFM and Presbyterian) were reluctant to engage in such rural reconstruction as they were still


235 See, for example, George White’s proposal in *Reconstruction in Turkey: A Series of Reports Compiled for the American Committee of Armenian and Syrian Relief* (New York, 1918), pp. 132-169. Barton had commissioned reports to be made in 1917 so as to make the information “available as a basis for reconstruction,” p. 3.


trying to end their relief programs and get back to their educational and evangelizing missions. Consistent with the theological tensions of the 1920s, they were also divided internally on the value of agricultural work.

But momentum was moving in the reconstruction direction. Advisors such as Monroe and Thomas Jesse Jones, a sociologist, “race expert,” and rural education advocate, were suggesting ways of addressing local agricultural deficiencies grounded in holistic agricultural extension and Progressive education. NER adopted Monroe’s recommendations in 1924, calling for orphaned children under their care to be restored to family life with relatives as quickly as feasible; be given health, hygiene, and sanitation instruction; and that their schooling be “less formal,” paired with free play and games, linked to their lives outside of school, and oriented toward “self-reliance, freedom of self-expression, habits of co-operation and fair play.” 238 It also pushed for programming based on Jones’ “four essentials of civilization,” a crystallization of holistic thinking: physical welfare; the ability to control one’s environment, especially through technology; home life; and recreational, physical, and spiritual welfare. 239 And by 1926, the organization had begun providing practical instruction – small crafts for girls, scientific agriculture for

238 NER Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, September 30, 1924, RAC 002, Box 1, NER Minutes, 1924-1925.

239 Thomas Jesse Jones, Essentials of Civilization: A Study of Social Values (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1929), xxiv-xxv. In his own words, Jones tried to boil down the sociological essence of a constructive, healthy civilization: “Permanent and effective civilizations must be rooted in justice, in contentment, and in opportunities for all the people all the time.” Jones also shared the self-help emphasis common among progressives: “Sound charity aims to guide the needy to self-support, and still more to remove the conditions that caused the misfortune” but done so in un-intrusive, stimulating roles rather than overbearing impositions. Cited in Daniel, American Philanthropy Near East, pp. 193-195.
boys – that would allow them to be self-sufficient members of small rural villages: lives they likely would have led if the war had not intervened so tragically.  

These deliberations took place within the theological environment outlined in the previous section. The practice of providing relief aid reinforced theological leanings. After 1922, NER’s work was mostly confined to the fringes of the former Ottoman Empire, and the organization had therefore begun to work more fully with diverse, non-Armenian populations. So for instance, although ecumenicalism had been an NER hallmark from the beginning, the war-time evisceration of “Islam” in its fund-raising campaigns for Armenians dropped out completely afterwards. While it had not yet begun to work with Muslims, a turn the NEF would make, it still had to contend with the politics of providing what Jones called “spiritual care.” As early as 1923, NER noted its desire to include not only self-support but “the problem of character building and religious nurture” among the orphans. But what did this mean in practice?

In a 1921 letter, Walter George Smith – NER’s Catholic professionalizer – asked NER to consider providing an allowance to Franciscan Sisters in Urfa operating an orphanage who had largely been cut off from funding sources. Reluctant to turn over their charges to the American Protestants because they would not receive a Catholic education, they had also asked to take charge of a handful of Catholic children currently housed at the American orphanage. The Superintendent refused on the grounds that all children were treated alike. Smith remarked: “Of course they are all treated alike, but as


241 NER Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 16, 1923, RAC 002, Box 1, NER Minutes 1924-1925.
the service in the Near East Relief Stations are Protestant services, this made an important difference.”

The context for this discussion was an ongoing dispute between NER and Protestant missionary personnel on the one hand and French missionaries and Catholic ecclesiastic authorities in Syria on the other regarding care for Catholic refugees. American Catholics had initially supported NER, but this began to waver as reports of neglect of Catholic refugees and orphans from French and regional Catholic hierarchies filtered into American news reports. NER personnel – and Smith – disputed this claim, but American Catholic distrust of Protestantism ran deep and Catholic contributions to NER began to dry up. The Pope himself would become involved, leading eventually to the establishment of Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), a separate, Catholic-led relief organization. In making his plea on the Sisters’ behalf, therefore, Smith referenced the NER precedent of offering such aid to Jewish and Armenian orphanages. He added: “There ought to be a rule, strictly enforced, that where a Gregorian, Jewish, Catholic or Protestant Institution is caring for orphans of its own faith, that equal subsidies per capital be paid to them, and that was the rule as I remember it . . .” Smith acknowledged that it could not be expected for devout Protestants to easily smooth over tensions with the Catholics but that such a policy should be publicly

242 Letter from Walter George Smith to Charles Vickery, February 5, 1921, RAC 002, Box 1, NER Minutes 1920-1921.

243 Thus, Smith’s appointment was not only a bid for needed professionalization, it was also a bid to demonstrate the organization’s ecumenical character.
proclaimed and enforced “both because it [is] right and because it [is] expedient to be absolutely fair and impartial.”

Smith’s letter and NER’s conflicts with Catholics orient us towards both the evolution in theological thinking among mainline Protestants and missionaries and the practical experiences that reinforced them. Indeed, a non-sectarian approach would come to be strict policy under NEF. Although its task was not to proselytize as the mission boards affiliated with it did, NER officials were convinced of the need to provide religious instruction (especially for orphans) as part of a holistic package of care. However, as NER juggled a coalition at home and worked with diverse partners on the ground, the question of religious instruction was a fraught one. Smith’s advocating on behalf of Catholic perspectives illustrates that to become non-sectarian did not necessarily entail intentional secularization but rather a pragmatic adjustment to pluralistic contexts in order to continue to provide spiritual support. Although this forgoing of proselytism can be seen within the vein of religiously-neutral service organizations such as Rotary International (and some philanthropists) adopting the humanitarian and service orientation of missionaries while emptying them of Christian symbolism and content, such a move did not necessarily forestall religious care. And for the explicitly religious among NER staff, theological ground of Moderate-Liberal strains proved fertile in this regard: a non-sectarian approach fitting a strain of missionary

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244 Letter from Walter George Smith to Charles Vickery, February 5, 1921, RAC 002, Box 1, NER Minutes 1920-1921.

245 Tyrrell, Reforming the World, p. 228.
reform which advocated discussions of morality at a non-sectarian level, in ways that would resonate across religions.

Consistent with the theological milieu of the times, NER’s future direction proved fractious and, in the end, the forces of professionalism and expertise, social science and the Social Gospel, Progressive education and agricultural extension, prevailed. The regional survey contentiously agreed to at the 1924 conference crystallized the thinking that led NER to reorient itself to scientific philanthropy. Survey work began in 1926 and was completed in 1927. Stacked with academic and professional experts, the survey’s report unsurprisingly reiterated and reinforced the growing voices for rural development: the surveyors hoped to establish American philanthropy in the Near East on a scientific basis, with business-like management and efficiency, with long-term social and economic goals.

Conclusion

The report confirmed NER’s growing consensus. The way was now paved for the creation of NEF, incorporated in 1930. The inclusion of “foundation” in its title reflected the scientific philanthropic values of other social-change oriented foundations and their emphasis on long-term visions of social progress within an “ever-widening circles” approach. NEF moved firmly in its new directions, using nation-building from

\[\text{Limberg, “Transforming Near East Relief,” p. 10.}\]

\[\text{Much work was left to be done with the orphans and remaining investments of NER, and that organization remained active until its congressional incorporation ran out in the 1940s.}\]

\[\text{Paul Monroe, having worked with the Rockefeller Foundation, oriented attention to the example that the RF provided for NEF in its work in Mexico. Expert teams in agriculture, health, sanitation, recreation, and education worked with rural communities to promote self-sustaining communal}\]
the bottom up, beginning with the village schools and farm fields, as a form of international peacebuilding. The style of rural development it adopted was also a multilevel, communitarian, self-help, and human-resources-based approach to sustainable nation-building in which outside interventions were to be minimal, cooperative, and catalytic, not overbearing and imposing. Through education, humans were the basis of long-term social change; technology was critical, but it was subordinate to a holistic and self-help view of human development. Institutional and governing capacity were also vital, but were to be enhanced by directly connecting them to the needs of the rural villagers.

These views reflected the practical realities of a post-World War I Middle East and a nation-building brand of internationalism. But they also echoed: a Dewey-ian emphasis on self-governance; the larger Progressive faith that participatory democracy could be squared with the growing place of expertise, technology and the state in the lives of a country’s citizens; and the influence of holistic agricultural extension efforts, steeped in Jones’ “four essentials of civilization.” This meant adoption of such models as Knapp’s demonstration method and county agents, the Danish Folk School, and agricultural missions such as the American Farm School in Greece. Finally, acting as the glue which held these elements together was a Christian missiology that emphasized change. For the Rockefeller Foundation’s (RF) work in Mexico, see Nick Cullather’s The Hungry World, Chapter 2. This particular emphasis on self-help was consistent with the scientific philanthropy espoused by not just the RF, but others explored by Judith Sealander. Private Wealth, Public Life. Tejirian emphasizes the importance of the RF to the NEF’s outlook and practices. “Faith of Our Fathers.”
respecting and growing local faiths while providing an example of Christ-like Christian service.  

This dovetailing of theological and philanthropic trends in the rural development work of NEF would be further on display in the 1930s as the world once again careened toward a global confrontation. The need for rural development as a force for global peace continued to be intertwined with Moderate Protestant theological thought that linked together the challenge of world religions to “secularism and alien political ideologies such as fascism and communism.” And it was upon the same internal tensions and debates that marked the origins of Progressive education, agricultural extension, scientific philanthropy, and missionary activity that NEF built its brand of rural development that would collide with the growing conflict between Arabs and Zionists in mandate Palestine.

249 The transition from NER to NEF is increasingly being studied but I seek to nuance recent claims that the shift was “self-secularizing.” My goal is not to dispute that the transition involved secularization but rather to point out why many devout Christians within NER could have abetted it without seeing it as such. Thus, I do not think that to be a non-sectarian organization can be conflated with being a secular organization and self-help and self-reliance emphases were hardly the province of secular humanitarians. Rather, given the context provided in this chapter, the transition from NER to NEF makes more sense when viewed as shifts in a Moderate-Liberal Protestant take on how missionaries should interact with peoples of other cultures and faiths. Sarah Miglio, “The Near Eastern Front of the Great War and the Self-Secularization of Christian Humanitarian Work” in Remembering Armageddon: Religion and the First World War, ed. Philip Jenkins (ISR Books, Baylor Univ, 2014); Tejirian, “Faith of Our Fathers,” p. 314; Gauthier and Rodogno, “NER Caucus Branch,” pp. 6-7.

250 Wacker, “Protestant Awakening,” p. 262. This was the conclusion of perhaps the most famous – and controversial – missionary-related survey of the era: Re-Thinking Missions: a Layman’s Report (1932) by professor of philosophy and Congregational William Ernest Hocking. He reaffirmed the importance of missions as exemplars of the teachings and actions of Jesus Christ, but suggested that “false religion” – say, materialism or secularism – were the enemy, not other “highly developed” world religions. Ibid., pp. 259-260.
CHAPTER 3:

“RADIATING CENTERS OF INFLUENCE”: AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN
MANDATE PALESTINE, 1930-1936

Introduction

“I came to the apprehensive conclusion that the Arab rural culture in its tribal and village community forms was in grave danger of being shaken down to its foundation by the onslaught of modernization,” reflected Afif I. Tannous. In light of his time spent in rural development work in the Middle East, he was concerned that the village peasants and tribes were the most vulnerable and likely to be neglected in decision-making processes. “Would the people of the village and the tribe truly participate in the process of development, or would it all be designed and imposed by the elite on top?” he asked. “Would the envisaged agricultural development eventually include agrarian reform for the benefit of the deprived peasants, or would the chasm between them and the highly privileged large landlords widen further?”

Tannous, an Arab himself, articulated the preferred orientation of a strand of mid-twentieth century rural reform: building socioeconomic development through techniques based in local culture and practices. Born and raised in an Arab Christian farming village in North Lebanon in 1905, Tannous’s education was heavily influenced by American

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251 Afif I. Tannous, Village Roots and Beyond: Memoirs of Afif I. Tannous (Lebanon: Dar Nelson, 2004), quotations from pp. 217 and 214, respectively. He noted: “Anchoring the structure of nationalism and development in Islamic countries on a secular base is a worthy goal for possible future attainment. In the meantime, national development, if it is to embody participatory democracy must be reconciled with and move forward from the Islamic base, where most of the people are.” p. 288.
Protestant missionaries: from the local village school to his attendance at the American Boys High School in Tripoli and his higher education at the American University of Beirut (AUB). After a stint with the British Colonial Government of Sudan, Tannous returned to his alma mater where the British and the NEF recruited him for their rural village teacher training project at the Khadoorie Agricultural School at Tulkarem in Palestine from 1930 to 1935. Tannous’s life trajectory encapsulates the many connections at play in this chapter: American missionary work, British colonial rule, and the application of rural development in the Middle East.

With the NEF as the primary muscle, and Tannous’s life as narrative tissue, I use a comparative look at American and British development efforts on the Khadoorie project to highlight rural development’s transnational connections. Khadoorie was one of NEF’s first development projects after the transition from NER. In particular, NEF partnered with Humphrey Bowman, Director Education in Palestine, who similarly advocated adapted education. The former Director of Education in the Sudan remarked upon the contentious nature of education policies in the colonies in 1923, writing that “In the East, education is above all others the subject on which the whole world draws knife . . .”

The Khadoorie project was a microcosm of swirling transnational thought on rural reform and humanitarianism in which debates over the proper forms of formal education had taken center stage and seeped into British colonial reform, influencing conceptions of


253 James Currie Testimonial, Middle East Center Archive (Oxford, UK), Humphrey Bowman Papers (GB165-0034), Box 2, File 1 (hereafter, MECA 0034).
trusteeship in the post-World War I era. American and British missionary connections were critical in linking the NEF to British officials, both directly with Bowman at Khadoorie and within the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies (ACEC), an advisory body to the Colonial Office which advocated adapted education.

The backdrop to the Khadoorie project was British rule within a growing Arab-Zionist conflict. The British occupied Jerusalem in December 1917. Thus began a thirty-year period of British colonial rule, ending with British withdrawal in 1948. A civil administration replaced the military one in 1920 and the British officially held Palestine as a mandate territory from 1922 onwards. Along with other parts of the Middle East, the British occupied what would become Palestine during the waning days of the World War I, rolling back crumbling Ottoman forces. Over the course of British rule, the Arab-Zionist tensions would be central, marked by political intractability as well as sporadic violence, including riots in 1929 and the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. Aside from colonial self-interest, the British had taken control on the back of conflicting deals with Jewish Zionist groups and Arab leadership – supporting Zionism as well as Arab independence – which would lead to insuperable difficulties in terms of governance in the years ahead. The British also became the ruling power during a time of social and economic change among the Arabs of Palestine, shifts extending back to Ottoman rule in the 1800s, of which villages would be a central player in the events ahead.

Beginning in 1930, the Khadoorie project was part of an effort to dispel the violence that had erupted in 1929. British efforts regarding rural development in Palestine fit a larger colonial logic of maintaining rule – if the Palestinian countryside could be “bettered” through economic improvement, the people would be less likely to rebel. The
mandate system of which Palestine was a part allowed colonial rule to continue by providing concession to local welfare and nationalist sentiment. The NEF’s work buttressed British rule in Palestine and in general the agency’s leadership supported the mandate system. The transnational cooperation on rural development evinced at Khadoorie simultaneously reinforced colonial control while opening new spaces to critique that control.

The move toward partnership, inclusion, and respect for local practices and knowledge, to which the NEF was a vital contributor, both demonstrated the precarious nature of colonial power and provided Arab villagers a lever with which to try to pry apart colonial rule. Tannous’ position within the NEF-British project was evidence of the space that rural development opened up. Similarly, the 1936 Arab revolt in Palestine, of which Khadoorie students in Tulkarem took an active part, illustrated that Arab Palestinian cultivators could use rural development logics to oppose pro-Zionist policies based on a presumption of Arab backwardness – and that they could do so while maintaining a sense of Arab identity. Yet, rural development’s efficacy as an alternative to industrial modernization in rural areas – as the Khadoorie project was to illustrate – would be tested in the Arab-Zionist struggle in which Zionist settlements modernized their agricultural practices.

“Inexorable Forces”: Empire, Social Change, and the National Struggle in Palestine

In his memoirs, Tannous recalled his earliest memories of Arab Christian village life in Bishmizzine, Lebanon: a zest for life driven by the proximity of one’s manual labor to the production and consumption of food and the scarcity of water. He also
remembered feelings of security and identity that stemmed from extended family and the daily interactions of the village community – from births and baptisms to marriages and deaths to church processions and folk dances. In such experiences, traced in these memory fragments and intimate impressions, Tannous found what he described as “full living” and a “deeper quality of living.” Even as one’s family and village community “wanted and needed you as you did them,” the simplicity of this shared life gave one a “deeply satisfying sense of wholeness, relatedness, integration and contentment; feeling that your way of life is full, rewarding, permanent and secure, in spite of its occasional mishaps and frustrations.”

Undoubtedly tinted with a brush of nostalgia, Tannous emphasizes communal support and a simple lifestyle over the difficulties of subsistence living. He nevertheless juxtaposes life as he remembered it as a young boy with coming changes. Driven by the introduction of Western-style market economics and transformations in transportation and communications technology, such changes were already latent in returning emigrant community members, English-language primers from the American-run village school, and the arrival of the silk industry. Tannous noted the “inexorable forces” of a rushing, impersonal modern life that would “shatter” the village’s pillars of family, land, church and community – its “protective shell” upon which a sense of “security, integrated living and permanence” had been anchored.

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254 Tannous, Village Roots, citations from: pp. 29, 31, 26, 32.

255 Tannous, Village Roots, p. 33.
Ottoman reforms after the 1860s had dramatic effects on Palestinian society. The stability of the Ottoman Empire rested in no small part on its *millet* system, a sociopolitical configuration which granted certain rights and measured autonomous status to religious minorities. European colonialism and emerging nationalist sentiment, though, threatened this basis of Ottoman control. As the Empire grappled with modern forces, the search for unifying measures—Ottomanism, Islamism, Turkism—would be a regular fixture within governing circles. During the *Tanzimat* era (1838-1876) in late Ottoman history, officials came to adopt a variety of social, political, and economic measures to enhance state control. By this time, many of the inhabitants of the area had withdrawn into the hill country in the present-day West Bank, building settlements designed for protection from raiding Bedouins. This lack of security was part of a general lack of administrative capacity, and the Ottomans ruled indirectly through rural shaykhs, or village headmen who typically inherited the position. The shaykhs wielded considerable cultural and political power in societies in which village communities and family networks provided mutual aid and support. By the 1860s, however, Ottoman authorities sought to centralize their control over the empire and extract more economic muscle from its territories in a bid to keep pace with the Western powers.

Changes in land-tenure laws, in particular, had vast consequences. The effect of bureaucratically moving away from communal landholdings to registered, individual plots was to increase the power of a rising class of urban notables who came into

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256 For an account emphasizing later debates over decentralizing and centralizing supporters, see: Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (1997).
possession of large swaths of land in the rural areas. In the countryside Ottoman reforms broke the power of the shaykhs by creating the position of village *mukhtar* as a way to centralize Ottoman control. The peasants, or *fellaheen*, in particular were disadvantaged by these changes. Facing new constrictions on the ability to farm land, they were required now to pay taxes in cash rather than in kind. They were thus increasingly drawn into the vagaries of global markets and driven to moneylenders – often the same urban elite – which led to the added burden of trenchant indebtedness. Meanwhile, increased security helped lead to the beginning of a population boom: village institutions strained under the population pressures; growing families on decreasing amounts of land led to land shortages and surplus village labor; and individual village self-sufficiency became increasingly difficult to maintain.257

In the realm of educational reform, Ottoman officials had to grapple with the empire’s incredibly diverse communities. Ottoman officials oriented educational reform towards inculcating an Ottoman identity that respected communal diversity but identified with the Ottoman state. The Educational Act of 1869, for instance, made schooling nominally compulsory in the hopes of using centrally-controlled education to reach “the most remote regions of the empire.” Even as they centralized, these reforms were to extend equal rights to all citizens and incorporate them into the same apparatus so as to stall foreign intrusions and ease ethnonationalist divisions.258


Such efforts, however, were stymied not only by lack of financial and institutional capacities, but also by European interference asking for certain privileges for favored minority groups and by geographic and demographic diversity which made reaching certain segments of populations difficult. Many prominent non-Muslim populations maintained legally-separate and recognized schooling systems of relatively high caliber: Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, for example. Tension therefore evolved between convention – the millet system – and the new centralizing impulses even as the Ottomans sought to make the new policies inclusive and less of break with past practice. One historian argues that in light of these circumstances, centralizing educational policy at the local level were often counterproductive, reinforcing emergent ethnonationalisms rather than replacing them with loyal Ottoman citizenship.259

As the British took power, they built on Ottoman foundations even as they attempted to distinguish their own “enlightened” form of rule from their predecessors. The British inherited a compulsory school system that was unevenly applied; minorities largely maintained separate, private schooling institutions while the Muslim majority continued to lack adequate facilities. These conditions would largely continue during the British mandate, given the relative lack of funding made available for education. Private schools (especially for Christian sects) were allowed to continue while the British assumed responsibility for a public system of education for the predominantly Muslim Arab population. Within Ottoman precedent, Jewish Zionists were allowed to build and maintain a largely autonomous public school system. Out of expediency, and within the

259 Evered, Empire and Education, p. 3.
framework of indirect rule, the British also continued to rule through the Ottoman system of mukhtars while building local partnerships with the urban notables.

The British also inherited an Arab Palestinian countryside under duress as well as a mobilizing Zionist movement. Dealing with both proved an intractable problem – one the British deepened rather than solved. In accordance with the Balfour Declaration, the British mandate in Palestine was to help secure a Jewish “homeland,” a purposefully vague term that would lead to contradictions in British administrative policies as government officials struggled to make concrete decisions based on a shifting objective. They lifted Ottoman restrictions on Jewish immigration, ushering in an even more volatile era that saw Arab-Zionist tension and inter-communal violence increase.

Zionism in its political form had its roots among Jews from Eastern Europe in the late 1800s and was influenced by the rising ideology of nationalism. Proponents of Zionism blended the religious and spiritual idea of a “return” to their ancestral homelands with political, geographic, and ethnic dimensions. Jewish scholars have often traced the spiritual roots of Zionism to the Middle Ages, but Zionism in its late Nineteenth Century form argued for a physical return to the land of the Jewish Diaspora and the formation of a Jewish nation-state as the ultimately fulfillment of biblical injunctions. Furthermore, there was a growing fear of the possibility of assimilation of the Jewish Diaspora that

would liquidate the Jews as a separate, united ethnicity. A nation-state in Palestine would help preserve the Jewish identity.\textsuperscript{261}

Land was a central, if not the primary factor, in the struggle between Zionism and Arab Palestinians across the 1900s. Particularly after the Ottoman reforms, land was a critical nexus of economic and political power in Palestine. For the urban notables, it was their major asset, and through sales to Zionist groups, their ticket for investments in the expanding citrus industry in Palestine’s maritime plain along the Mediterranean. For the fellahen, land pressure amidst economic and demographic changes as well as in the instability of land tenure put a premium on their attachment to the land and their subsistence agricultural way of life. For Zionists, the goal of a homeland in Palestine required both immigration and land purchases for settlements. The early waves (\textit{aliya}) of Zionist settlers were driven by an ethos of returning to the land – of creating self-supporting Jews working the soil. These Zionists hoped to improve the social and economic vitality of Jews by forsaking the “diaspora Jew,” marked by urban living and commerce-related trades.\textsuperscript{262} Thus, even the Jewish Zionists at the turn of the century were reacting in part to Western urban-industrialism and sought revival in rural living and agriculture. In particular, land sales by Arab urban notables to Zionist groups tended to displace the Arab farmers and tenants; successive waves of Zionist settlers wished to ensure Jewish labor on the land and thus did not keep the Arab inhabitants. Such a


process only further put pressure on Arab farmers and helped create landless class of fellaheen.\(^\text{263}\)

British officials in London viewed Palestine as a strategic necessity in England’s presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, Colonial Office and Treasury policies favored administering the empire with the least possible expense and burden on the English tax-payer. Therefore, considerable more expense was levied on securing Palestine’s security and investment in infrastructure than on social and economic investments for the Arab and Jewish communities. The top officials within the Palestine Government had to work within these priorities.\(^\text{264}\) For the British, then, Jewish immigration helped fuel development and modernization, bolstering Palestine’s economic viability.\(^\text{265}\) They also saw it as beneficial for the stability of colonial rule to work with Palestine’s Arab political leadership, which predominantly had ties to the land. Many within this leadership cadre, including absentee landlords, profited from land sales to Jewish entities. Jewish desire for land and Arab elite desire for capital went hand-in-hand. Thus, extensive limitation of land transfers from Arab to Jewish hands was not a top British priority. The British did wish to avoid mass land dispossession among the fellaheen – a moral concern for some top officials in the British Government in Palestine – it was also a political liability and a potential financial burden. What resulted was that


protecting the rights of Arab cultivators became a compromise solution, rather than an outright ending of land sales.266

The British bid to make empire profitable and the desire for political stability were often in tension: the introduction of capitalism and the use of Jewish forces for modernization undermined the British desire to work through local culture and social mechanisms. Thus, as Arab communal life changed in many villages, the new political and economic demands they began making could not be fulfilled, either by existing village structures or the colonial state since the British had inadequately provided the economic, political, or administrative capacities to absorb these changes; changes they had had introduced and, alternately, tried to prevent and encourage.267

Many Arabs distrusted British control over their education, apprehensive that it benefited Zionism. Calls for similar autonomy went unheeded, likely as one Arab observer suggested, because such control would likely lead to increased nationalistic antagonism that threatened the Mandate – British rule as well as the Balfour Declaration’s call to establish a Jewish homeland.268 Many of the British viewed the Jews as “modern,” being largely of European provenance. The attitude of the British toward the Arabs was much more paternalistic, due either to racist and cultural assumptions or to a humanitarian sympathy for Arabs as victims of modern forces.

266 Stein, “Legal Protection.”


After World War I, “[British] Public interest lay not in whether to have an empire but how best to govern it and in whose interests.” Especially in light of the trusteeship concept and the mandate system, “Should Britain promote the transformation of colonial society into a modern western type of civilization, and if so at what speed? Or should traditional society be preserved, purged of its grosser abuses such as cannibalism or slavery, so that it might survive until the native people were able to rule themselves?”

As set out in Lord Lugard’s influential *Dual Mandate*, many in the British empire took to the idea that governance of the colonies should benefit both the world at large and the native inhabitants themselves – and that the latter required protecting traditional ways and approaching inevitable change gradually. Such a view played into racist and culturally prejudiced Western views of non-whites as inherently inferior and often led to a protectionist approach that sought to preserve a static ideal of “traditional society.” But it also lent itself to those readier to admit that local peoples could “develop.” In any case, the desire to protect local societies was at tension with the notion of British superiority in which it would guide these same societies to modern nation-statehood and full independence. Similarly, a gradual approach to locally-appropriate change lent itself to colonial political stability, ensuring British rule went unchallenged, even as it could evince genuine humanitarian concerns of responsibility for tearing apart other societies.

After World War I, this sense of obligation was enshrined in the League of Nations concept of “trusteeship.” The new entity, a symbol of internationalist sentiment,

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posited that European colonial powers, through the mandates system, were to use their positions to improve the lives of the peoples under their control and “ready” them for self-government. Not coincidentally, this period was also when British colonial governments embarked on “indirect rule,” seeking to devolve a significant portion of governing responsibility upon the peoples they were controlling. Its ideal aim was to use existing power structures and means of administration and justice, allowing the colonial administration to intervene “as little as possible, or only indirectly.”\textsuperscript{270} As noted, trusteeship and indirect rule would be guiding principles in the new British mandates of Palestine.

Despite wider U.S sentiment against formal colonialism, many Americans supported the concept of trusteeship and the UN mandate system. The Crane Commission which had surveyed the region and registered Arab sentiment that, although very much against mandates (and Zionist immigration), they would be more willing to accept American over British or French control. NER itself, backed by the opinion of many regional missionaries associated with the agency and with its wartime experience assisting the Armenian people, had lobbied U.S. President Woodrow Wilson to secure an American mandate over a new, proposed Armenian nation-state. The leadership of its successor, NEF, similarly saw no contradiction between supporting the mandate system (and it would in Palestine) and in lambasting European nations for using other societies as pawns to build their own power.\textsuperscript{271}


\textsuperscript{271} Daniels, \textit{American Philanthropy in the Near East}.  

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NEF used its work among Armenians as a platform for development work among Arabs. Displaced Armenians, and the many orphans in NER’s care, needed to be educated in ways that simultaneously preserved their Armenian cultural heritage and that paved their way toward assimilated citizenship in their new, adopted lands. As NEF transitioned from NER, it began working in places where it already had a presence – Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Palestine – but expanded from working with Armenian refugees to other peoples. Thus, in Syria and Palestine, NEF broadened existing projects and created new ones to address what it saw as the needs of Arabs. Here it also faced the reality of navigating the new European mandatory governments. In Palestine, the NEF found willing partners among many top-level officials within the British colonial government.

Driven by colonial experiences in India and Africa, detailed below, the British had become concerned about the political stability of its empire as modern forces and its own educational policies fractured local societies. Notably, the NEF also linked this rending of rural cultural fabric to destabilization and the propensity for areas to slip into violence and upheaval. If a society completely lost its social and cultural mooring, it would be left adrift to either disintegrate upon the rocks of modern life or pirate from dangerous, alien ideologies. Thus, it was easy for American voluntary groups like the NEF, pushing nation-building and development as forms of humanitarianism, to partner with British authorities.

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“Aping the City School”: Adapted Education

“I could see how the British official would feel fulfilled by identifying with his colonial government and serving its purposes; I could see how my Sudanese colleagues and friends . . . would be satisfied to serve their home country the best they could under the colonial system, biding their time and hoping for the dawn of the day of emancipation,” recalled Tannous. “But I fitted not into either category; I was the hired expatriate whose professional services were needed, but who really did not belong in the heart of the establishment.” Rather, he continued, “I had to go where I could find in my work some of the deeper meanings I had learned at the American High School in Tripoli and AUB [American University of Beirut].”

Having worked in Sudan, Tannous was a known element with British authorities. NEF was also familiar with him because he was an alumni of AUB. Originally the Syrian Protestant College, American Congregationalist missionary Daniel Bliss founded AUB in 1866. American businessman William Dodge, a co-founder of the Young Men’s Christian Association, helped Bliss form a Board of Trustees. Cleveland Dodge, William’s son and friend of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, helped create Near East Relief. But, critically from the British and American perspective, Tannous was also an Arab who spoke both Arabic and English and was familiar with rural village life and customs. Tannous had also returned to his alma mater, becoming involved in village improvement work among fellow Arabs. It was in this capacity that Tannous took a lead

273 Tannous, Village Roots, pp. 126-127.
role in the Palestine project because knowledge of local ways was critical to the new joint British-American approach to socioeconomic development.

In Palestine, the NEF would rail against teachers and schools in rural areas that were “apizing the city school” or drawing upon conventional academic pedagogies and attitudes towards manual labor that they argued were unsuitable for educating village children. Instead, a report noted, “the idea of returning to the same type of community from which they have come is ingrained day in and day out.” Thomas Jesse Jones, a member of NEF’s Program Committee which oversaw all the organization’s projects, helped to pioneer an “adapted” approach to education. Immigrating as a child to the United States from Wales, Jones began his academic career with a dissertation on the social welfare of immigrants in New York City. Immersed in social Progressivism, what followed was a life-long interest in promoting his vision of racial harmony and economic equality.

Jones’ remedy drew on a convergence of philanthropic interest in impoverished rural areas with the rise of agricultural extension and vocational training as methods to combat it. “Learning by doing” had been Seaman Knapp’s motto and it was his holistic and practical approach to extension that many other prominent institutions and philanthropies followed, folding in the manual training-style of education developed at the Hampton Institute to promote higher living standards and economic self-sufficiency among freed blacks after the Civil War. Jones wondered if it was “mere luck or a kind


Providence” that led him to Hampton to conduct research in the South just as John Rockefeller’s General Education Board began its work with agricultural extension with Southern farmers. Jones’ solution was thus adapted education – a practical, locally-rooted form of education that was based on the needs of the students’ immediate community. Cultural preservation was a critical element, as was agricultural or vocational training which Jones privileged over more conventional but alienating “literary” or academic training. The latter, he argued, did not hold the immediate potential for personal and communal uplift and it drew youth to urban areas, away from their hometowns and cultural traditions. In advocating adapted education, Jones genuinely believed he was rebalancing the socioeconomic scales and contributing to racial harmony, although others, such as the prolific W.E.B. DuBois, strongly disagreed.

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276 Thomas Jesse Jones, *Essentials of Civilization: A Study in Social Values* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1929), p. xv-xii. Jones described the GEB’s work as “cooperation with the Southern people,” both white and black, and said that they helped “the people and their governments, schools and churches, business organizations and professional men, missions and philanthropy” to “discover the other and unite for the common good.” Jones tracked this intellectual debt to Samuel Armstrong, a former officer in the Union Army during the American Civil War who became principal of the Hampton Institute in 1868. Noting his missionary father’s model with the indigenous population in Hawaii, Armstrong set out to provide an educational curriculum that would raise living standards and help the newly freed slaves to be self-supporting: pp. xv-xxii. See also: Robert Francis Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited: Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Hampton Institute, 1839-1893* (University of Tennessee Press, 1999) and Molin Paulette Fairbanks, “‘Training the Hand, the Head, and the Heart’: Indian Education at Hampton Institute” *Minnesota History* 51, No. 3 (Fall 1988), pp. 82-98.

277 Larger debates over the issue of education for black Americans: Jones’ philosophy ran him up against the prolific W.E.B. DuBois. The contrasting visions of black uplift and quest for racial equality for African Americans as advocated, on the one hand, by DuBois, and on the other, by Booker T. Washington, are well known. Jones’ philosophy and approach to racial uplift dovetailed with that of Washington, and indeed, Jones was affiliated with the Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes. Jones and DuBois both hoped they could work together as they had the same ultimate goals in mind, but their pedagogical differences prevented this and were the source of often contentious exchanges between them. Their disagreements, however, have often been overdrawn by scholars. Both men acknowledged that the two extremes of academic education and vocational education were, by themselves, insufficient and that a combination of both were needed; the disagreement, therefore, lay in where to place primary emphasis. W.E.B. DuBois, *Dusk at Dawn* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1940).
Education Director of the Phelps-Stokes fund, founded in 1911, which continued these circulating attitudes toward education and socioeconomic improvement for rural areas. As part of his interest in racial harmony, Jones helped lead a Phelps-Stokes mission to investigate African education in the early 1920s.

Such models caught the attention of European colonial powers, who saw in them transferrable methods of administration and control.\textsuperscript{278} For the British in Africa, the example of India loomed large. The Indian rebellion in 1857-58 loosened the hold that advocates of extensive, Western-based reform, had on education which followed the conventional “literary” model. By the turn of the century, critics argued that growing political unrest was due to educational policies that created an Indian Western-educated elite detached from their own society, angered at the lack of white collar employment in the colonial bureaucracy and burning with nationalist, anti-colonial passions. Across the British Empire by the 1920s, then, the perception was that too many natives were being trained as clerical support for trade and administration in urban centers and this had the double complication of being politically unwise for the stability of the British Empire and in loosening the communal and social bonds of the African peoples themselves.\textsuperscript{279}

The importance of British missionary Dr. J. H. Oldham in advocating a Progressive educational focus for rural development emerged in this context. Oldham’s

\textsuperscript{278} Andrew Zimmermann’s work has begun to explicate this connection, tracking the cooperative work of Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute (Washington notably being a graduate of the Hampton Institute) with German African colonies. Andrew Zimmerman, Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South (Princeton University Press, 2013).

\textsuperscript{279} Michael Adas, Machines as the Measure of Men, Chapter 5; Arthur Mayhew, Education in India, 1935-1920 (1926); Penelope Hetherington, British Paternalism in Africa, 1920-1940 (Frank Cass, 1978).
background is illustrative of the transnational missionary currents which had such an impact on the formation of the NEF. He was born in India and became a missionary as a young man, convinced that an Indian church could best win converts to Christianity. He spoke Urdu, met John R. Mott as part of the Student Volunteer Missionary Union and served in India with the Scottish YMCA. He promoted missionary ecumenicalism, helping to organize the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 and was critical to the founding of the International Missionary Council. After World War I, he called for greater humility and renewal within Western Christianity and, based on his growing recognition of the local impact of global economic and social forces, he urged Christian missionaries to respond to the post-war world with a new sense of commitment to addressing issues like poverty. He became particularly concerned with Africa, writing:

> The problem with which we are confronted in Africa is one of the great issues of history. Have we eyes to see its immense significance? Shall the African peoples be enabled to develop their latent powers, to cultivate their peculiar gifts and so enrich the life of humanity by their distinctive contributions? Or shall they be depressed and degraded and made the tool of others, the instrument of their gain, the victim of their greed and lust? 280

In this capacity, Oldham became involved in the thinking of American Progressive figures and took great interest in the Phelps-Stokes mission to Africa. For Oldham, education for all was key to any conceptualization of trusteeship, being the root of

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economic and social development by expanding “the human factor in the life of mankind.”

One of his biographers appropriately characterized Oldham as having a “gift as a catalyst”. His role in the creation of the ACEC owed much to both his connections with the halls of power in London and with his American missionary connections. He visited centers for the education of African Americans in the United States and met Thomas Jesse Jones in England in 1919. Impressed with Jones, they remained in contact thereafter. He also was influenced by the work of liberal missionary philosopher William Ernest Hocking. Using Rockefeller money, Oldham helped create the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. Part of his role within the International Missionary Council after 1920 was to explore the future of missionary education after the war, given the context of expanding state education systems. In this, Oldham found himself in agreement with the ideas of another soon-to-be NEF stalwart and American Progressive educator, Paul Monroe. Monroe argued that missionary educators should cooperate among themselves and with the new state systems, but should retain a niche position as experimenters, innovators, and models of quality since they could not compete now in terms of quantity.

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Oldham agreed. He therefore set out to help craft a British colonial policy that was amenable and with which missionaries could actually cooperate. During the war, he had been a prominent advocate of protecting missionary institutions and in his capacity was a frequent visitor among the offices of Whitehall, the Colonial Office, and the India Office. Drawing on these connections, he found an ally in Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, William G. A. Ormsby-Gore. Ormsby-Gore was of the opinion that trusteeship required greater attention to educational development in the colonies and that education had an important role to play in political, economic, and social development more generally. He therefore took note when the Phelps-Stokes Fund set out to study education in Africa, as did Oldham who secured a commitment by the Phelps-Stokes Fund to include British West Africa in their study. Oldham in fact invited Jones as well as Dr. Anson Phelps-Stokes to preliminary, unofficial meetings with African territorial governors as a way to build support for an advisory committee on education.

Together, Ormsby-Gore and Oldham helped create the momentum that led to the creation of the ACEC, which was guided by the thought of men like Jones and Monroe. In an early memorandum Oldham drafted, he emphasized cooperation and partnership – among government, missionaries, settler communities, and African communities themselves. He also emphasized the critical importance of developing human resources through education as a counterpoint to a focus on material resources. And in proposing an advisory body, Oldham emphasized adapted education when he wrote: “[The] emphasis


on the practical side of education has nothing whatever to do with . . . [the] means of keeping [Africans] in an inferior and subordinate position. . . . what is proposed is sincerely advocated as the most effective means of enabling the community as a whole to make real progress.” Indeed, he added, this was “in harmony with the most progressive educational thought and policy in the West.” 286 This last assessment was correct.

With the Phelps-Stokes reports paving the way, the British colonial policy of adaptation was first outlined officially in a 1925 report of the newly formed Education Advisory Committee within the Colonial Office: a memo called “Education Policy in British Tropical Africa” stated that education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of native peoples. It acknowledged that the colonial governments would need to be the primary catalysts, funders, and providers of general direction, but that they were not to order or control local initiative. Rather, they were to facilitate it and “allow for the widest variety of African initiative, independent effort, and self-help.” 287 Notes historian Clive Whitehead: “It was the educational corollary to the concept of indirect rule.” 288

The policy was an expression of colonial humanitarianism, drawing on domestic and colonial experiences. The Committee advised a form of education that combined social responsibility and individual freedom: individualism needed for economic


287 Clatworthy, British Colonial Education Policy, p. 190.

prosperity and a sense of cooperation and community needed to check its excesses. As one scholar has remarked: “The Committee recognized that the impact of Western civilization was tending to encourage the unregulated individualism which was destructive to the best elements in communal life.”

To correct for these domestic trends being played out in the colonies, the adapted education policy was part humanist, part political expediency.

Indeed, by 1930, the British were feeling a new sense of urgency for change in Palestine. The fellaheen had long opposed Jewish immigration and the Zionist role in their ongoing struggles to make a living. They, like Palestinian Arabs more generally, harbored suspicion about Zionist intentions and feared not only their livelihoods but a new form of foreign rule. The tinder of this discontent was set alight by a series of incidents involving Jewish access to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Fearing the loss of control of one of the holiest sites in Islam, the Temple Mount, a revolt broke out in 1929 that saw Arabs attack Jews, fanning out from Jerusalem into other areas. The Shaw Commission, which investigated the violence and its causes, reported that at least 133 Jews and 116 Arabs had been killed, with hundreds more suffering injury.

The Shaw Commission, and the John-Hopes Simpson Report which followed it, placed heavy blame on Jewish immigration for the state of Arab discontent. They advised modifications to the immigration policy as well as a more concentrated and effective effort to address social and economic conditions in Arab villages. Sir John Hopes-

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Simpson’s report in particular argued that agricultural development among the fellahaen was critical and that its advancement rested upon education. The most recent session of the UN’s Permanent Mandates Commission in Geneva leveled stiff critiques at the British laissez faire governing policy in Palestine. Determined to deflect the heat and demonstrate its commitment to Arab welfare, the British Government in Palestine increased its focus on Arab agricultural development because of the predominance of agriculture among Palestinians as a whole. While credit cooperative societies became one major leg of this new focus, aiming to address the crippling debt problem among Arab fellahaen in Palestine, education became another emphasis. Nonetheless, it took actual unrest and political instability for more resources to be granted to education and the economic conditions among the peasants. The situation had at least been tolerable while Arabs remained quiet – only when disturbances took place, and British governance threatened, was the administration spurred to act.

291 Minutes in file, British National Archives (Kew, UK) (hereafter, NAK), CO 733/481/15.


293 Similarly, in the wake of the 1936 Arab revolt and renewed critiques, the 1937 Peel Commission noted that if the fellahaen continued to feel as though economic forces were against them, they might to turn to political or even violent actions. On the other hand, if “they felt themselves to be gaining ground economically” they might “divert much of their vigour into a campaign of self-improvement, social and economic, and the charge of neglect which is now brought (however unjustifiably) against the Palestinian Administration would be excluded.” Palestine Royal Commission Report, Cmd. No. 5479 (London, 1937), p. 277.

Aided by the unrest and these recommendations, Bowman was able to promote a modest school expansion scheme across the mid-1930s, establishing schools and providing teachers in an effort to meet the incredible demand for Arab education, especially in the villages. To his credit, Bowman was aware of and criticized the lack of overall attention paid to education, especially in rural areas (especially regarding funding). He and others were also consistently aware that tremendous demand existed on the part of rural Arab villages to build or expand their educational facilities – a demand that Bowman and the Education Department were continually unable to meet. Against this backdrop of Arab violence and colonial response, the Khadoorie Agricultural Schools came into being, along with the NEF’s support of rural education through teacher training.

Consistently described as dependable, effective, and personable, Bowman was educated at Eton and Oxford and was a lecturer in history before joining the colonial service. Between 1903 and 1913, he served in education positions in Egypt and Sudan. After the war, he became Director of Education in Iraq, serving between 1918 and 1920. He then took up the same post in Palestine in 1920. He also attended the Imperial Education Conference on behalf of the Palestinian Government in 1923, just after the issuance of the first Phelps-Stokes Report on Education in Africa and after Oldham had

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295 On reports of the demand, see for instance: Minutes in file, NAK, CO 733/481/15. Historians have confirmed this observation, see: Miller, “Administration,” pp. 133-134.

296 See the testimonials on Bowman’s behalf in MECA 0034, Box, File 1. Testimonials were submitted from Herbert Samuel (then High Commissioner in Palestine), James Currie (former Director of Education in Sudan), and Gertrude Bell (former Oriental Secretary to the High Commissioner of Iraq).

297 Record of Service, MECA 0034, Box 2, File 1.
set in motion the beginnings of the creation of the ACEC.\textsuperscript{298} As early as 1906 during his time in Egypt, Bowman wrote that “I am taking to heart the lesson of India,” that is “without discouraging higher education, I am doing all I can to push forward both elementary and technical education. I want all the next generation . . . to be able to read and write. Also, I want to create as many carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, etc., as I possibly can.”\textsuperscript{299} And in a retrospective from 1939, he noted that in many Western countries “there seems to be a regrettable tendency for people to leave the rural districts and migrate to the towns.” In India “we had colleges and universities before village schools,” but in Egypt as well, “education began at the wrong end” and that the great masses of the Egyptian fellaheen [peasantry] are still illiterate, in spite of forty years of British guidance.\textsuperscript{300}

Bowman displayed similar sentiments in the struggle over the bequest of Sir Ellis Khadoorie, an Iraqi Jew. Determined to keep Jewish and Arab education along their separate paths – a position he justified as simple pragmatism\textsuperscript{301} – the bequest became implicated in the national strife between the Arab and Jewish communities and the British role in supporting separate but unequal nation-building projects. The Palestine Government created two agricultural schools, one for Jews and one for Arabs.

\textsuperscript{298} Record of Service, MECA 0034, Box 2, File 1. He attended again in 1927.


\textsuperscript{300} Humphrey Bowman, “Rural Education in the Near and Middle East,” \textit{Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society} 26, No. 3 (1939), p. 402.

\textsuperscript{301} Bowman Testimony to Palestine Royal Commission, November 27, 1936, pp. 18-19, MECA, 0034, Box 2, File 2.
school, created in Tulkarem, opened in 1930; the Jewish school, Mt. Tabor, 1934-1935. However, the Jewish school, as with the rest of the Jewish education system, operated relatively autonomously while the Arab school in Tulkarem operated as Government-run public school.

Primary authority for the Tulkarem school was unclear and differences of opinion between the Agricultural Department and the Education Department over the orientation of the Khadoorie school curriculum in the early 1930s illustrate competing development approaches. The Agricultural Department’s plan was to use Khadoorie as both a training center for agricultural officers who would enter the employ of the Department and as a way to groom the sons of large land-owners, the “‘gentleman-farmers’ stratum of society” for managing and developing their estates. Bowman disagreed, arguing that such a class was largely a mirage and that the school should be used to help small farmers through practical training. Education staff would continue to critique the agricultural elements of the school, seeing its “elaborate equipment” as being inappropriate and its level of study as too high to be of practical use to most Arab farmers. After the Colonial Secretary’s agricultural advisor, F. A. Stockdale, visited Palestine and Trans-Jordan in 1935, he reported his own feeling that the use of tractors and expensive equipment for ventures like fruit preservation were “far too elaborate” and “too far ahead of the requirements of the pupils.” He advocated more specialized training that was of immediate value to the pupils when they returned home: a more modest education could be provided for fruit canning in the home and the “free use” of tractors on the school’s farm may make financial sense, but not development sense. Most of the students would, once returning home, “be compelled, for financial reasons, to continue with animal
traction for agricultural operations.” The one-year course for fellaheen was abolished and replaced with what the Education staff considered a more appropriate and immediately practical longer-term course that included two years of agricultural instruction. For those who qualified, a third year of pedagogical training was provided at Khadoorie’s “Rural Teacher’s Training College.” Even in the early 1940s, Education staff were wary of Agricultural Department staff with “little knowledge of Palestine but great optimism” and maintained that “the school is too expensively equipped and housed to serve any useful purpose at present” and that “the trained rural teachers are more widely effective than the Agricultural Department inspectors in directing improvements and should be regarded as the inspector’s local, resident, agents.”

The compromise solution to the Khadoorie curriculum in 1930 was to introduce two classes, one of the gentleman-farmer class, or those children of “townsmen with a financial interest in the land” and one of the children of fellaheen who could afford the school’s fees. Classrooms and boarding facilities were proportioned accordingly. Amidst this compromise came the offer from the NEF for a teacher training project at Khadoorie. Bowman secured NEF funding through Bayard Dodge at AUB. By June 1930, Bowman remarked that he and his wife had become “good and intimate” friends

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with the Dodges and paid them annual visits in Beirut.\textsuperscript{306} Bowman met Paul Monroe and other NEF figures in April 1930, Monroe having promised “to help us with some funds from the Near East Relief in connection with rural education.” He showed them around Nablus and Tulkarem, visiting village schools. Bowman reported that Monroe and his party were “delighted” by what they saw, favorably comparing the state of rural education in Palestine with other parts of the region. Bowman was obviously pleased with their assessment, noting that “it is encouraging to hear this from a man like Monroe, who is accepted as one of the [foremost] educationalists of the world and who has seen education in nearly every country, East and West.”\textsuperscript{307}

In agreement between Bowman and Jones of the NEF, the project at Khadoorie revolved around the Jeanes School model developed by Virginia Randolph, a graduate of the Hampton Institute. Randolph developed a model that sought to reach farming families and communities through school teachers. Local teachers were brought together and trained at the same institution using a combination of conventional school subjects and a strong dose of training in agriculture – coursework included working with crops, soils, tools, and fertilizers. The teachers would then return to their local communities and inculcate in farm children a love of rural life, manual labor, an appreciation of their local culture, and, critically, methods of agriculture that would help raise living standards.\textsuperscript{308}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{306} Bowman Diary Entry, June 22, 1930 and May 31, 1931, MECA 0034, Box 4A.
\item \textsuperscript{307} Bowman Diary Entry, April 5, 1930, MECA 0034, Box 4A.
\item \textsuperscript{308} George Edmund Haynes, “Negro Technicians in American Progress,” \textit{The Journal of Negro Education} 8, No. 1 (January 1939), p. 53. Created through the Jeanes Foundation (established 1907), also known as the Negro Rural School Fund. Its founder, Anna T. Jeanes, a Quaker from Philadelphia, sought to use her family’s wealth to help improve the education system of African Americans.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The Jeanes School model was a favorite of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and unsurprisingly given its work in Africa, the British were themselves quite familiar with it. The small grant provided by the NEF fit the needs of the British administration, as perceived by Bowman: to expand rural education for Arab villages, including a heavy agricultural extension component, amidst a tense political situation and a dearth of government resources and teachers. For good reason the former Director of Education in the Sudan, under whom Bowman had worked, noted that Bowman was “accustomed to work with scanty resources, and to extract the full value from every sovereign entrusted to him.”309

“For the Betterment of Rural Life”: The Village School Teacher Project, Khadoorie at Tulkarem

“I went from village to village,” recalled Tannous of his time in Palestinian villages, “sleeping in a different place every night or two, in the simple homes of the peasants or in the village school building on a makeshift bed.” Drawing upon his experiences growing up in rural Lebanon, Tannous commented: “we lived with them, talked their language, appreciated the values of their culture, showed them respect, and appealed to them through motives they understood.” Palestinian peasants were not “ignorant, lethargic, and unwilling to change” and he became convinced that “the center of gravity for future development of the Middle East lay in its village community.”310

309 James Currie Testimonial, MECA 0034, Box 2, File 1.
310 Tannous, Village Roots, pp. 130, 132, 133.
Like Bowman, Tannous had served in colonial service in Sudan. At the time of the start of the project, which ran from 1930-1935, Tannous had recently returned and was working for AUB’s Rural Life Institute. NEF seconded Tannous to work on the Khadoorie teacher training project. Reflecting the close connections being made in the shared project of rural development for Arab Palestinians, the NEF reported in 1933 that “The program of rural work in Palestine is so geared-in with the government machinery that it might almost be called a government program financed by the Near East Foundation.”\(^{311}\) Bowman’s replacement as Director of Education noted in the early 1940s that “No private benefaction in Palestine has ever been turned to a more useful purpose.”\(^{312}\)

In Palestine, the rural teachers who received agricultural training were expected to return to their villages and to engage in agricultural extension amongst both their students and the village at large. A key component of the project was the pairing of training with supervision of the teachers’ post-course work in the villages. Tannous was the primary agent in this regard, traveling from village to village, observing and making suggestions to the teachers while providing demonstrations of his own. In his recollections, Tannous elucidates his role as an itinerant county agent, a reflection of the exportation of the agricultural extension model, but he also draws attention to the methods and assumptions underlying the Palestine project: reaching the base level of Palestinian society – the village community – and approaching them with an attitude of respect.

\(^{311}\) NEF Progress Report 1933, p. 78, RAC 002, Box 2.

The NEF’s ultimate objective in Palestine was the same as it was elsewhere in the Near East: the “improvement of the economic, social, home and health conditions of the rural communities, for the betterment of rural life.” This was a holistic view of village communal improvement. In a 1934 report, Jones noted that NEF sought a “full round of life for all.” He elaborated: health and hygiene for individuals and communities, economic security through effective practices, happy homes “with rights and opportunities for childhood and womanhood,” a “brotherhood of co-operation” for national, racial, and religious groups, and, above all, the fullness of culture and spiritual faith. The holistic orientation and the contextualization of methods reflected NEF’s concern for the respect of the local people among whom they labored. The NEF version of development was to be a progressive corrective to emergency relief aid; it was an aspirational future that was more than a barebones provision of basic physical and economic needs, but a recognition of the social, cultural, and spiritual needs of the human person. In achieving these aims, Jones reiterated the twin approaches NEF took in its work: demonstrations, based on agricultural extension, and adaptation – which was to be achieved through a policy of “adaptation to the changing actualities of time and place and people.”

The NEF also had to, of course, contend with practical considerations. In deliberating on a possible project, the Program Committee considered three criteria: (1)

313 Report on Syria and Palestine, “Basic Project Reports, 1932,” p. 92, RAC 002, Box 3. The Director, J. Forrest Crawford, who finished his PhD from the University of California in 1932, expected both projects to run until “at least” July 1936.

314 NEF Report of 1934, “Economic Aspects of the Work,” November 1934, RAC 002, Box 2. These represented the “cures” for war that plagued humanity; the keys to peace within the human family.
organizational capacity: the NEF’s financial and personnel resources; (2) existing government capacity: the types of programs, agencies and attitudes for the rural population; and (3) local capacity: the cultural and socioeconomic conditions in the villages. Regarding the first consideration, the NEF struggled throughout the 1930s with financial resources – the support they had garnered during the war and immediately afterwards had waned over time and had continued its downward spiral as the United States entered the Great Depression. Indeed, one of the benefits of adopting agricultural extension and adaptation models was the promise of high impact for little input. Nonetheless, growing out of its commitments with Armenian refugees, the NEF found itself stretched thin across the Eastern Mediterranean basin.

As noted, the British Government in Palestine was equally as enthusiastic to promote the improvement of rural villages through educational schemes. However, they too lacked resources. Given the particularities of British colonial administration, each “colony” or “mandate” was to be self-sufficient, meaning revenue had to be largely internally generated – a task more difficult by the 1930s. If, for the NEF, the project was desirable and feasible because of British backstopping, existing infrastructure, and willing officials, British officials such as Bowman eagerly adopted the plan after securing a small funding grant from the NEF as well as the services of Tannous.

Given the combined lack of resources for development, the imperative to reach society’s most needy members, and the perceived need for the buy-in of local culture, the

315 References to financial concerns quite literally litter the meeting minutes and dockets of the organization during this period.
NEF posed the “village” as the primary site for development and eventual self-sufficiency. “All staff,” an NEF report noted, “understand thoroughly that the community is to be treated as a whole, eventually taking into account its health, economic, recreational and spiritual aspects.” But the NEF also worked off of an assessment of local capacity, giving primacy to the social and economic structures of “the Palestinian village community” which, in light of British capacities, made the Jeanes School model seem the most appropriate. In explaining the project, NEF reports frequently included this description of rural social structures:

The village schoolmaster . . . has been one of the . . . chief sources of all available village wisdom for centuries in the Near East. . . . Little or no outside intelligence on [agriculture] has funneled its way down to the villager. He has struggled alone by the trial and error method, without many ideas on trial procedure and with such advantages and disadvantages by way of traditions in agriculture as his ancestors bequeathed to him.

The problems were not helped, they surmised, by the fact that village school teachers considered themselves above the peasants – that is, manual labor was a social stigma and that a “sedentary life” gained one respect.

School teachers therefore had to be shed of their “impractical methods of teaching” and reoriented toward the “the basis of the Palestinian economic life”: the village. Revised teacher training would instill the value and dignity of manual labor and

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316 Progress Report 1933, p. 22, RCA002, Box 2.
317 NEF Annual Reports, 1931-1934, p. 34, RCA 002, Box 2.
318 NEF Annual Reports, 1931-1934, p. 34, RCA 002, Box 2.
319 Economic Report 1934, pp. 46, 6, RCA 002, Box 2.
academic subjects would be paired with “practical” training in agricultural methods. One official, asking the Kadoorie Agricultural School’s first batch of teachers about “real work in the fields,” was shown the blisters on their hands. As Mr. Heald, who directed the school, argued: “Should the children of the village schools only be taught that manual work is not degrading, then our labors will not have been in vain.” The NEF reiterated: Bowman “proposes to give the village schoolmaster another string to his bow as the leader of enlightenment in his community.”

The project kicked off with its first class of fifteen teachers who undertook the one-year course. Half of their time was spent on “training in practical problems outside the classroom,” including such activities as building a road and starting a school garden; the latter being one of the ways that agricultural extension was provided in rural villages. After a four-month training trip to NEF’s project in Macedonia, Tannous

320 NEF Annual Reports, 1931-1934, p. 35, RCA 002, Box 2.

321 NEF Annual Reports, 1931-1934, RCA 002, Box 2.

322 The number of trained teachers would reach 62 by 1934 (15 each from 1930-1933, and 17 during 1933-1934); Economic Report 1934, pp. 46, RCA 002, Box 2. There does seem to be some inconsistency with the number of teachers the first year; the earlier reports note 14 teachers – the late reports 15. An incentive for participating in the course was the receipt of a special certificate afterwards that exempted them from certain parts of promotion exams. After the course, they returned either to their original posts (from which they had received leave) or to “more important villages.”

323 Its pilot development project after the transition from Near East Relief and where, led by Dr. Harold B. Allen, they first adapted agricultural extension methods to the problems of Near East agriculture. Having had trouble gaining the complete cooperation of the Greek government, which under recommendations of the League of Nations began reducing its expenditures (and still struggling to absorb and resettle a flux of war refugees), the NEF opted for a grassroots extension program, rather than adopting the Jeanes School model (as it would in Palestine). The NEF agriculturalists had to win government backing, rather than beginning with it.
began his supervising work.\textsuperscript{324} Tannous’s first task was to construct a general plan for each village he visited.

The final product exemplified in concrete form his role as catalyst and the desire to promote self-help through adapted demonstrations and education. He allotted three days a week to conduct his supervisory tasks and the rest of the week for traveling. He began each visit by having a one-on-one discussion with the village teacher concerning his work and community problems. Tannous would then attend agricultural classes. He promoted common discussion of community problems that needed to be addressed by having school boys relate their studies to community life; he would visit the school garden and take part in the practical work alongside the teacher and students; he would invite villagers to attend a class with their children and see the work of the school garden. Tannous would then engage in general discussions with the school boys, pairing further discussion of community life and improvement with recreation in the form of games, songs, and story-telling. Tannous would meet with the village people themselves, discussing the need for and methods of improving life – using an assortment of “appealing talk,” posters and pictures.\textsuperscript{325}

He also recalled: “Travelling by donkey, horse, truck or car, depending on road conditions, I carried with me a small hand-cranked movie projector, through which I showed simple films related to the improvement and uplift of village life. That provided a sensational event for the people, who came to the ‘show’ in large crowds, to see, listen

\textsuperscript{324} Tannous, \textit{Village Roots}, p. 130. Along with two assistants: Ahmad Al-Qassim and Rashid Khadre.

\textsuperscript{325} Basic Project Reports 1932, p. 96, RAC 002, Box 3.
and talk.” The school teacher would also address the villagers about his work and its purposes. Both would then engage the villagers in discussions related to the problems of the village and the possibilities of solving them immediately or gradually; this could include setting down concrete objectives to be achieved by the village people with the teacher. Tannous would engage himself with demonstration work with both the village adults and the school boys: spraying, dusting, grafting, planting trees, and draining standing water from roads. He would complete his visit with a final meeting with the school teacher to debrief and help in planning based on their observations and village discussions.

The first year of work heavily emphasized the agricultural aspect, including Tannous’s follow up at the schools, combined with health work, which included Tannous leading “cleanliness campaigns” in the villages in which school boys would lead the villagers around the village, picking up refuse and cleaning the streets as a means to promote healthy living and hygiene. In the second year of the project, the NEF emphasized the extension aspect, and teachers worked out with Tannous “definite projects in agriculture, health, and recreation to be achieved during the year with local and government cooperation.”

At first, Tannous strove to visit each teacher in each village regularly, giving help and advice. However, he quickly realized that it took him fifteen weeks to visit fifteen

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326 Tannous, Village Roots, p. 130.

327 Basic Project Reports 1932, pp. 96-97, RAC 002, Box 3.

328 Progress Report 1933, p. 80, RAC 002, Box 2.
villages, which were scattered across Palestine – an unacceptable rate of productivity. He revised his task then around an altered version of an ever-widening circles model: beginning in the third year of the project, Tannous built programs around eight of the best teachers. The NEF reported in 1934: “They have come to be the central pivot around which are being developed model villages, calling upon all the community rural agencies for aid”. The British Government cooperated, including district medical officers and inspectors of health, agricultural inspectors, educational inspectors, and the registrar of cooperative societies. The government also created the position of supervisor of school gardens; using the logic of needing local buy-in, they designed the job to be held by an Arab man that the NEF would train and who would work in concert with Tannous.

In designing this work, Tannous and the NEF operated with an implicit theory of change that I call “ever-widening circles.” “It is clear that the center or cornerstone of the entire project is the village school, which is a center of community life and serves as the base and distribution of new ideas to the peasants,” noted a 1933 NEF report. The approach centered on moving outwards from individual local leaders to the immediate village community and then on to other villages, until the catalyzing influence had permeated the entire nation and its various levels of government. Besides the NEF and the British government, the Palestine project’s immediate external catalysts were the

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331 Progress Report 1933, p. 78, RAC 002, Box 2.
Kadoorie Agricultural School and Tannous. Both represented what the organization frequently conceptualized as “radiating centers of useful influence” which could be overlapping and had dual registers: geographic locations and human agents.\textsuperscript{332} Kadoorie was the geographic location which collected rural school teachers and dispersed agricultural knowledge and love of rural life. Tannous, as human agent, reinforced the work of the school in his supervising role: “he is teaching Arab Village school teachers how to be a force in the community and they are teaching this to their pupils.”\textsuperscript{333} Together, these “radiating centers” would create subsequent centers that would then themselves radiate influence, effecting change over wider, more diffuse areas, thus carrying on the work organically with a snowballing, locally-led momentum.

The village school teachers, who the NEF argued were already village leaders, would influence the village children at the village school, who then radiate influence to their immediate families and the adult population of the village. “Upon the students rests the responsibility of passing on to their own people the methods of agriculture, health, social intercourse, and recreation which they themselves have learned and practiced.”\textsuperscript{334} As with the Armenian orphans under Near East Relief, children were critical in the designs to build national leadership. Just as the teachers themselves had gathered at Kadoorie, village children would gather at the school to receive similar instruction. These

\textsuperscript{332} See for instance: Annual Reports, 1931-1934, p. 31, RAC 002, Box 2.

\textsuperscript{333} Projects in Syria and Palestine, June 1932, p.44, RAC 002, Box 2, Annual Reports 1931-1934.

\textsuperscript{334} Progress Report 1933, p. 8, RAC 002, Box 2. “The important thing is that he [Tannous] is teaching Arab Village school teachers how to be a force in the community and they are teaching this to their pupils,” noted an NEF report. Projects in Syria and Palestine, June 1932, p.44, RAC, NEF Records, AC2010.002, Box 2, Annual Reports 1931-1934.
human agents, following their teachers, were to be leaders who would help guide the project in its goal of eliciting local initiative (and filtering upwards influence upon their parents). “A small bit of leaven leavens the whole. One boy who has been taught two or three new practices will influence the practices of his whole village. The neighboring village copies, and its neighbor does the same.”

To reiterate, the NEF saw itself building up specific village communities through local leadership. There was a reason that pupils in NEF-sponsored agricultural schools “must be planning on returning to work on [their] farm.” This new generation of local leadership would guide the “retarded countries” of the Near East to their “proper place in the progress of the world.” And progress, the NEF envisioned, was holistic: “elevating of the standards of living – social, economic, and spiritual, in each community as a whole; it works through the individual as a part of a community . . . in order that social consciousness of the responsibility of a community for the health and happiness of its individual members may be aroused.”

This theory of change, although grounded firmly in work in local villages, was not confined to this level alone. Part of the NEF’s assessment for any possible project was to get a handle on government attitudes, programs, and capacities for rural areas. Nation-building was explicit in its work with Armenian refugees, and in its development projects the NEF strove to work with state entities in the hopes that the government

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335 Progress Report 1933, p. 9, RAC 002, Box 2.


would be influenced by positive results and provide a catalytic role of its own by adopting NEF-like policies. Indeed, in Palestine the Kadoorie Agricultural School was government-run and the NEF had the good fortune to share similar outlooks on rural development and methods with the British authorities. Finally, the NEF itself, as an organization, would be a radiating center of influence that would “stimulate for others to emulate.”\footnote{Economic Report 1934, Forward, RAC 002, Box 2.} This included not only the host governments, but other states and agencies working inside and outside other countries.

The NEF provided details on two of the “model villages”: Suffuria and Beit Dajan. In Suffuria, the NEF noted that: villagers were encouraged to move manure heaps to the fields to be used as fertilizer, their places being filled by vegetable gardens and cleaner streets; the villagers organized a village bakery in which local women would take their raised dough to the community baker to be baked (this replaced individual home ovens in which manure was used as heating fuel – “a most insanitary procedure”); they organized a village library at the school, to which each pupil contributed a few books; night classes were held through the winter months (aimed at adult literacy); they organized first aid officers consisting of a group of boys trained by the district doctor to provide eye treatments to stop the spread of trachoma (widespread in Palestinian villages); and they organized a credit cooperative society. In relation to agricultural work: the teacher led the village in a pesticide spraying campaign, planting citrus trees, starting a school garden, building a model poultry house, and selected two farmers to take a short
course in bee keeping at the government agricultural experiment station at Acre.339 In Beit Dajan, similar activities occurred with the addition of: first aid officers consisting of thirty to forty boy scouts, along with the wife of the local village teacher being in charge of organizing the women340; and the promotion of general recreation. These efforts included “group games, special place for playground, two neighboring Moslem schools sending fifteen boys each to learn games and take them back to their village”.341 The NEF noted that its work with women and children was the “weak spot” in its Palestine project. Bowman proposed, contingent on continued NEF financial support, that 20-24 village girls be sent to a school for training along similar lines as the agricultural schooling model: they would be given a two-year course with emphasis on “the domestic arts, crafts and practical nursing” and then would return to their villages to diffuse their new knowledge through newly established schools for girls. Consistent with the self-help philosophy, and the British Government’s lack of resources for education, families would pay part of the training fees while the village as a whole would cover part of the program costs; the NEF would cover the remainder.342

As the NEF struggled with its own financial issues across the 1930s, they were forced to end their grant for the project in 1935. Without the money, the British found it difficult to find and pay substitute teachers in the villages while the normal schoolmasters were in training at Khadoorie. Other educational officials had also criticized the project’s

340 Economic report 1934, p. 49, RAC 002, Box 2.
341 Economic report 1934, p. 48, RAC 002, Box 2.
342 Economic report 1934, p. 49, RAC 002, Box 2.
one-year curriculum as being too short, given the pedagogical and holistic rural development emphasis being assigned to the village teachers. The state of public Arab education in Palestine at the time is implicit in later observations that the fifteen teachers per year enrollment quickly produced an “annual drain on the village teaching staff” that “was being seriously felt” while within the short span of the project’s existence, “the supply of young existing teachers who showed sufficient energy and promise to warrant training was drying up”. Thus, even as the NEF project proceeded, Education officers sought more permanent means of making the school useful beyond the limited scope of Agricultural Department schemes. By 1933, a new system was being put into place and would, after the end of the NEF grant and Tannous work in 1935, become the primary mechanism of training rural village teachers. Rather than draw teachers from their village posts, the new system, all operated out of Khadoorie, recruited agricultural students from the agricultural school to a one-year training position at a Rural Teacher’s Training Center. These teachers were especially sought after for villages that had begun school gardens.

345 Annual Report, Chapter XIX: Education, 1938, Section 17, NAK CO 733/399/23. The British would continue the role of supervision that the NEF had taken on and suggested a possible future point of cooperation down the line: “training of young women to meet the dire need existing for education of girls.” NEF Annual Report 1934-1935, p. 46, RAC 002, Box 4.
“To Get Along Peaceably Together”: Old Tropes and New Spaces

In a report on the Khadoorie project, a 1932 NEF annual report argued that “Mr. Tannous is capitalizing [on] the Easterner’s crowd psychology most effectively in Village Cleanliness Parades that clean up as they go!”

In making the transition from Near East Relief to NEF, the organization had sought to make “relief” unnecessary; to work toward permanent solutions to war and displacement. In pursuing this goal, they adopted nation-building as an internationalist path toward global equality. In looking toward “being local,” therefore, NEF sought to reorient East-West relations away from economic domination toward cooperation, partnership, and exchange. Yet, as the quotation above illustrates, NEF and British officials remained within older patterns of racial and cultural paternalism, embracing trusteeship and the mandate system to guide non-Western peoples toward political independence and self-governance. These tensions had real consequences. The local approach of rural development did not, in the end, build a Palestinian nation-state in the face of Zionism but it did open new spaces with which to resist and confront both Zionism and British rule.

NEF officials strove explicitly to not be ignorant of local cultures and to respect the people and their methods – otherwise, improvement efforts would fail. This seeming paradox echoed in the statement that “The canniness of the rural peoples has a good reason back of it. They are not to be stampeded like mentally deficient children.”

NEF personnel viewed “the local” somewhat instrumentally, perhaps, but it was both genuine

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346 Projects in Syria and Palestine, June 1932, p. 44, RAC 002, Box 2, Annual Reports 1931-1934.

347 See, for example: Progress Report 1933, p. 6; quotation from p. 7, RAC 002, Box 2.
in its desire to help others and it reflected a changing attitude about hegemonic Western superiority.

In arguments couched in the rhetoric of internationalism, particularly in the 1930s as the global Depression and rise of totalitarian leaders gave the world a noticeably smaller feel, the NEF articulated a sense of imbalance in relations between outsiders and insiders in the region. Reflecting their belief that the lack of nation-statehood made the region’s people the pawns of Western machinations, the NEF argued that “[i]f the small Near Eastern countries can be made stable economically and therefore free of their dependence on European powers, the one time [sic] cradle of western civilization will cease to be the cradle of wars.” The NEF also linked the region’s socioeconomic health with peace: “The world cannot be well while part of it is sick with infectious diseases, economic as well as bodily.”

Laird W. Archer, NEF’s Foreign Director, included the United States in this analysis. Equality among nations, particularly economic equality, was the sure path to world peace. “No social structure since the dawn of history,” he noted, “has remained where there has been a privileged few exploiting the great masses.” In a line of argument that would presage policymakers’ security and economic rationales for Harry Truman’s Point Four technical assistance program in 1949, Archer argued that America would be better off if other countries could obtain living standards comparable to those of the United States. Archer held that American standards either had to come down or the rest of the non-Western world’s had to come up: “the only hope of keeping our balanced

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living is to give to the underprivileged of the world the necessities of decent living.” Archer attributed this to God’s “encompassing scheme of things for this world”: to help someone else was to help yourself.\(^{349}\) On the one hand, more prosperous nation-states abroad would be more stable and less prone to violence, meaning the United States would be less likely to be drawn into foreign wars. On the other hand, more economically prosperous global neighbors would benefit the U.S. materially and financially – by helping to open up markets and increase trade. Economic equality was thus mutually beneficial. NEF’s concern for local peoples was in part a vision of relations in which non-Western peoples would not be under the thumb of Western powers: if they could adjust to modern forms of political, social, and economic organization and reach a level of economic achievement that would enable them to be self-sufficient.\(^{350}\)

One report stated: “[NEF] seeks to develop the indigenous potentialities of each country, to show the people how they may help themselves.” They were not, moreover, interested in “transplanting foreign cultures” which, applied like a veneer, “will crack and wear off with time.”\(^{351}\) To guard against provisioning a superficial façade, officials like Archer and Jones advocated a local, adapted, self-help approach. Thus, the ways in which this aid was given was also important. Like agricultural extension, the NEF’s theory of

\(^{349}\) “Rural Life Conference of the NEF in Cooperation with the Thessalonica Agricultural and Industrial Institute,” March 12-21, 1932 (Salonica, Greece), pp. 16-18, RAC AC2009.104, Box 70. On West debt to East, see: Jones’ Forward in: Economic Report 1934, RAC 002, Box 2.

\(^{350}\) The NEF argued that differences across nations was based on environment – not intelligence or aptitude (that is, biological factors). “Rural Life Conference of the NEF in Cooperation with the Thessalonica Agricultural and Industrial Institute,” March 12-21, 1932 (Selsonica Greece), p. 18, RAC AC2009.104, Box 70.

\(^{351}\) Progress Report 1933, p. 7, RAC 002, Box 2.
change began with an understanding of roles for insiders and outsiders (givers and receivers). As noted by scholars of humanitarianism, the very act of giving aid, of providing service to others, is always already marked by an imbalance in power relations: the outsider has the means and wherewithal to provide the aid while the insider, being in need, is beholden to the demands and wishes of the giver. The NEF recognized this reality and strove to provide aid that would correct this and not merely paper it over. They understood that lasting, sustainable change could not be imposed by the outside but had to be accepted by those on the inside – it had to have a cultural resonance that made it acceptable. Imposed change with models based in alien cultural values was a recipe for failure. “If the work is not supported locally, it will never become sufficiently a part of the community life to be completely assimilated and flourish independent of foreign aid.”

To implement aid this way, NEF required their American personnel to study the language of the people with whom they served. “Already the majority speak one or more languages of the Near East.” And simply importing American methods wholesale, for example, would be counterproductive: “some of the best modern practices in agriculture are not as good for the Near East farmer as the ones he has been using, which we may call backward.” Farm machinery, then, was often deemed unworkable in NEF projects, despite its concurrent proliferation within the United States.

352 Barnett, Empire of Humanity, especially p. 34.
353 Progress Report 1933, p. 21, RAC 002, Box 2.
354 Progress Report 1933, p. 22, RAC 002, Box 2.
355 Fitzgerald, Every Farm a Factory.
communities, like those of Palestine, the land an extended family worked was often spread out over many small plots throughout the village. Systems of land tenure and use were too diffuse, NEF personnel argued, in contrast to the relatively consolidated and large private landholdings of U.S. farmers. It did not make sense to import tractors to be used on such small, diffuse holdings. Nor did this make sense in terms of sustainability and cultural appropriateness – a community with small resources could not be expected to upkeep a piece of machinery (nor were parts or fuel likely to be in ready supply).

This was why experimentation – adaptation – was so critical for the NEF and it meant that the NEF did have some understanding of local conditions, if not a complete one. “[I]t may not be the system of farming which will have to be changed,” one NEF official noted, “but the American concept of practices suitable to that system.” The answer, rather, rested on more appropriate techniques and equipment that could be easily taught and then disseminated among community members themselves. Which was why Palestinian school teachers trained at the Kadoorie Agricultural School during the project returned to their villages not with tractors but with “seeds, tools, and fencing for a demonstration school garden.”

Nevertheless, was “being local,” having cultural sensitivity, and approaching social change gradually, effective in the context of the Arab-Zionist conflict? The NEF believed the peasants could change their habits and practices. “It cannot be expected that age-old practices can be revolutionized over night”; indeed, only “[s]lowly, very slowly changes must take place” which required “patience, endless patience.” For the NEF, new

356 Village Schoolmaster Project, p. 34, RAC 002, Box 2, Annual Reports 1931-1934.
ways were clearly needed to replace “age-old” ones: “Just to get the edge of the plow into the furrow will be doing a great deal,” a report argued. Yet, for as much attention as the NEF devoted to working within local knowledge and cultures, the organization and its American personnel often remained within older, paternalistic understandings of Middle East peoples, even as they strained against them. One of the more prominent of such tropes, and one that would continue into the post-1945 period, was that: “Centuries have rolled over these places and they have seen little change.” This unveils an Orientalist residue, a skewed understanding of the region’s history in which, aside from the recent contact with European colonialism, Islamic societies had been left unchanged since the dynamism of the Middle Ages. Such a view obscured previous changes wrought by global economic expansion and Ottoman reforms in the late 1800s.

Detractors have fairly critiqued both the “adaptation” model of education and the American foundation-led drive to promote social progress in other lands as paternalistic at best or deliberate imperialism at worst. Moreover, though they acknowledged that not every Western agricultural innovation suited Near East communities, a Western yardstick remained a primary measuring tool of social and economic conditions (being, unsurprisingly, their primary point of reference). Near East personnel frequently remarked upon the primitiveness of the region’s admittedly varied agricultural methods – inefficient and lacking productive capacity, therefore making them inadequate to alone

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357 Progress Report 1933, p. 6, RAC 002, Box 2.

help raise living standards. Moreover, the very concepts of social progress and rising economic standards of living the NEF envisioned were staunchly Western-centric.

Reflecting this thinking, the NEF’s Program Committee considered working with Jews in addition to Arabs in Palestine. Meeting minutes from one mid-1930s report noted: “It was the consensus of opinion that we should be careful not to get mixed up in it, if we wished to do work for Arabs. Mr. Acheson stated that by raising the standards of the Arabs we made it more possible for the two races – Jews and Arabs – to get along peaceably together.”359 Archer noted in 1936, after NEF had withdrawn from the project, that the continuance of the teacher training project by the British Government would help to ease the “racial” conflict between Arabs and Jews: “Any contribution toward better agricultural methods undoubtedly is a step toward relieving the low standard of life which adds to Arab unrest and envy of better organized Jewish farm economy.”360 Such views reflected a missionary sympathy for Arabs rooted in decades of intimate contact; the flipside, however, was the operating assumption that Jews in Palestine, mostly of European descent, were more “modern” than the Arabs and thus in less need of assistance.

The dilemma, then, was that political advocacy would negate the NEF’s ability to operate among Arabs in Palestine. NEF, after all, billed itself as a nonpolitical organization dedicated to rural improvement. But in taking this position, the NEF failed to concretely consider their efforts within the larger political context of Arab-Zionist

359 Program Committee Minutes 1930-1940, RAC 002, Box 2.
relations. The NEF erred less in their belief that social and economic equality can be an important, even necessary, condition for peace between conflicting communities.\footnote{Michelle I. Gawerc provides a useful summary of the literature on this topic. See: “Peacebuilding: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives” Peace \& Change 31, No. 4 (October 2006), p. 448.} Rather, in pushing rural development after the 1929 riots – of which NEF surely was aware – the NEF adopted an economic rather than political approach to social change that played more to paternalistic notions of trusteeship and less to empowering Arabs in the face of Zionist power. In the end analysis, the efforts of the NEF in rural development could not complete with Jewish agriculture in productivity or economic potential; cultural sensitivity and gradual economic uplift did Arab peasants little in the face of Zionist political power and influence. This approach had the downside of not addressing one of the primary root causes of the conflict between Jews and Arabs – land. While the NEF focused on achieving social and economic parity as a way to get at the root causes of conflict, they refrained from one of the core aspects of this particular conflict: land sales that created a growing landless class of Arabs and further entrenched rural villages in intractable cycles of poverty.

Despite this stark reality in the face of a deepening protracted social conflict, rural development did open important new spaces. After finishing his first year on the project, Tannous wrote a report for Bowman on his activities and observations, including, he noted, certain criticisms of the project’s policies. He forgot about his report until one day he was summoned to the Palestine High Commissioner’s office. “I was flabbergasted, never having dreamed of such a possibility, but internally welcomed the occasion,”
Tannous recalled. Invited to dinner, Tannous had conversations with Wauchope and the Director of Agriculture. After discussion of his report, Wauchope asked the Director of Agriculture about the possibility of establishing credit cooperatives among Arab farmers. After the Director remarked that it would take generations for them to learn to cooperate, Tannous was asked his opinion, to which he replied that it could work if they were approached in the right way. Tannous recounts: “[Wauchope] said to me, ‘I agree with you!’ and turning to the Director, said, ‘I don’t agree with you!’” A short time later, Wauchope set up a government agency for the development of credit cooperatives – a move in line with Royal Commission recommendations.362

The fact that the High Commissioner met with Tannous at all – him not being part of established Arab leadership – is a measure of the importance that members of the British Government in Palestine placed on the new direction in agricultural education being adopted in British colonies in Africa and advocated by NEF in Palestine itself. In a letter from March 1933, Wauchope wrote: “I consider that the work done by Mr. Tannus [sic] and the expenditure of the grant on the training of schoolmasters in agriculture are both of the highest value to Palestine.” He noted that he had met Tannous, had visited Kadoorie several times, and been through the villages where the newly-trained teachers were operating. Impressed by what he saw, he commented: “It is therefore with all sincerity that I express to the Near East Foundation my warmest thanks for the generous

action in continuing their assistance”. The NEF proudly reprinted the letter in their 1933 Progress Report.363

Another example of new spaces included the events of the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt. Arab entreaties to Wauchope in 1935 to halt Jewish immigration and land sales and set up mechanisms for democratic governance reached a head when the Colonial Office advocated a compromise: reviving a Legislative Council with membership apportioned according to population ratios and religious affiliation. Zionist opposition encouraged the British Parliament to reject the measure in early 1936. News of Jewish immigration reaching an all-time high in 1935 then followed (the Jewish population doubled between 1932 and 1935, from 185,000 to 375,000).364 Arab anger and despair erupted into full revolt and a General Strike, especially in the countryside, by April 1936.365

The British reaction to the Arab revolt, which required bringing in nearly 20,000 troops, put on full display the tensions within British colonialism. Promoting local well-being and self-determination and ruling by local “consent” met forcefully the imperial desire to maintain power. “One 250lb or 500lb bomb in each village that speaks out of turn,” wrote the commanding British air officer in Palestine. “The only thing the Arab understands is the heavy hand, and, sooner or later, it will have to be applied.”366

363 Progress Report 1933, p. 79, RAC 002, Box 2.
Similarly, the tension within British ranks to fulfill the Jewish and Arab elements of the mandate – to create a “Jewish homeland” and to protect the rights and fulfill self-determination for the Arabs – was made manifest.

The revolt had a distinct rural character to it. Arab villagers were striking back at Zionist expansion and British policies that supported it. But the discontent spilled over to Arab elites as well. Villagers had been victimized by the Arab landowning elite during large land sales to Zionist organizations after which the Arab tenants and farmers were typically dismissed from the land entirely. “The wretched people who had earned a living, sometimes for many generations, on the land in question, found themselves forced out of their homes . . . without . . . their only means of earning bread,” one observer later remarked.367 And the Arab elite typically made up the cadre of Arab officers and personnel within the Palestine Government and its related agencies. In other words, if the rural areas had looked to conventional leadership to protect them and uphold their interests, this failure was all too real; both the Arab elite and the British government had prevented them from competing on equal terms with the Jews.

While rural development was in part a strategy to maintain political control, by giving ground both rhetorically and materially, it opened up space that Arabs exploited: Khadoorie students also participated in the revolt.368 The very students and teachers that


368 This was similar to the politicization of the Boy Scout movement in Palestine led by Bowman himself. As tensions exploded in 1936, British officials leveled serious charges against the Boy Scout troops which had become infused with militant nationalism and were said to be “subversive.” Bowman reluctantly called for all scouts to refrain from wearing their uniforms. John Harte, “Scouting in Mandate Palestine,” *Council for British Research in the Levant* 3 (2008), p. 51 (of 49-51).
were to allow the British to channel socioeconomic change under their colonial guidance were primary actors in a nationalistic reaction against Zionism and British rule. During his Peel Commission testimony in November 1936, Bowman admitted quite candidly that Arab teachers were purveyors of nationalism, “All from the highest to the lowest . . . without any exception.”369 The Khadoorie students were using the rural development ethos of nation-building by leveraging local Arab resources, practices, and knowledge for nationalistic purposes – paradoxically representing both a failure and success of British and NEF efforts.

In February 1936, the Palestine Post reported that Khadoorie students protested a land swap deal between the Palestine Government and the Jewish National Fund in which school land was exchanged for land for Bedouin settlement.370 It was clearly contradictory to have an agricultural school to provide teachers and technicians for rural development as a means of Palestinian Arab nation-building but then to alienate school holdings for the benefit of Zionism. The sin was compounded by the fact that surrounding Arab areas had contributed land and resources to the school before the Khadoorie bequest. The land swap was yet one more example of the expediency of British colonial decision-making.

In 1942, British officials noted that despite their desire to expand agricultural production


370 Palestine Post, February 24, 1936.
during World War II, “in [the Tulkarem] area it would be politically unwise to encourage encroachment by non-Arabs.”

By April, the students went on strike, adding political grievances to their list of complaints. They were then active in a larger protest in the town of Tulkarem which turned violent. Attempts by the British to secure cooperation in restoring order were rebuked and by October, the area became host to a Royal Tank Battalion as the area continued to be marked by banditry and small arms fire. By February, 1937, newspapers reported that sixty-two students (supposedly all but six) were dismissed from Khadoorie for their part in the general strike and the school closed. In response, the students lodged a formal complaint and consulted the Arab Higher Committee on possible legal action. They would also appeal to the Mufti and to the British Assistant District Commissioner to use their influence to have the school reopened. The students then issued a formal statement, clarifying their reasons for striking.

British authorities, displeased with the conduct of the students, made dramatic staff changes at Khadoorie. By the Fall of 1936, after the start of the revolt and after the Khadoorie students protested and went on strike themselves, Wauchope desired that Mr. Heald, the principle of the school, be replaced “at the earliest possible date.” Various reports from Education staff and the Colonial Office suggested that Heald was not a

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371 Letter from Palestine Liaison Office to Murray, MESC Cairo, December 18, 1942, NAK FO 922/97.

372 Palestine Post, April 23, April 26, June 4, October 11, November 30, 1936.

373 Palestine Post, February 14, 1937; May 13, 1938.

374 Palestine Post, August 20, 1937; August 13, 1937.
particularly effective educator, was kind but perhaps weak and tactless, and failed to maintain proper discipline in the school. One of his Arab staff was accused of “fomenting rebellion,” got dismissed, and fled the country. The Colonial Office struggled to understand Wauchope’s reasoning, commenting that Heald was well-liked by his Arab students and that he and his wife “have checked strike movements” at the school before. Nonetheless, “the High Commissioner would like to have a more forceful person in charge” and one official suggested that if “the Arab school is to compare with the school for Jews, a very live wire will be necessary for the charge of it.”

Wauchope was in favor of adapted education and enthusiastic about the possibilities of the Khadoorie school in Tulkarem, arguing to the Treasury in 1934 for a “need to extend the facilities which are at present available at Tulkarm for the agricultural education of Arabs, particularly in view of the arrangements for training students as village schoolmasters with an agricultural bias.” To achieve this expansion, he paid to add a wing to the school out of his own pocket. Thus, despite Wauchope’s own explicit interest in promoting agricultural improvement in Palestine and his interest in local conditions, the state of the school during the Revolt was likely untenable, and given previous doubts about Heald’s weaknesses, he had reason to dismiss Heald.

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376 See Stockdale Minute in file, NAK, CO 733/302/12.

377 Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister, March 1954, NAK T 161/1013/5.

378 Wauchope stated he wished to keep Heald on only as long it took to find a proper replacement and ensure that the new man selected had time to acquire “the requisite knowledge of Palestinian agriculture and its conditions”. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore, September 29, 1936, NAK CO 733/302/12.
In October 1937, 48 of the 60 dismissed students were readmitted, but in the meantime the agricultural curriculum had been “remodeled and given a more practical bias.” Thereafter, “no further breaches of discipline occurred.” That is, during a time of political disturbance, the administration doubled-down on adapted education. In August 1938, British military officers responding to the rebellion believed it essential to station 300 British troops in Tulkarem for the coming winter and requested that the troops be housed at the Khadoorie school for convenience. The troops occupied the school in October 1938, forcing it to close again, and it remained so until April 1941.

Conclusion

Despite its ultimate failure in Palestine, a focus on the local within rural development mattered. One of the primary tensions in the rural development work of the British mandate period was the objective of establishing the foundation of an Arab nation-state in Palestine but operating within a colonial logic of trusteeship that perpetuated British control. The new spaces opened up by rural development work therefore represented both a success and a failure. Even as the 1936 Revolt gave evidence

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379 MacMichael to Secretary of State for the Colonies, May 285, 1938, Section 4, NAK, CO 733/362/4.


381 MacMichael to Secretary of State for the Colonies, November 15, 1938, Section 15, NAK, CO 733/362/4.

382 Telegram from High Commissioner to Secretary of State for the Colonies, August 17, 1938, NAK CO 733/376/6.

of the failure of rural development, on economic and political grounds, it opened space that Arab villagers, school teachers, and agricultural students exploited to oppose Zionism and British rule.

Within the context of the mandate and the Arab-Zionist conflict, the British desire to work within the local, to respect traditional ways, worked to Arab disadvantage. Acknowledging the higher priorities given to security, law and order, and infrastructure investment largely for the benefit of the metropole, agricultural and education policies for Arab villages were too little, too late. Even as many British praised indigenous farming practices (the 1930 Simpson Commission, for instance\textsuperscript{384}), the “market was less sympathetic.” Providing small amounts of agricultural extension, adapted education for village children and school teachers, trying to ease debt burdens – and avoiding the political minefield of land sales which led in the first place to land pressure and tenancy – disadvantaged the Arabs vis a vis the Zionists. The “old fellah methods of farming could not complete,” not matter how suited they were to climate and soil or how much some British officials respected them.\textsuperscript{385}

The NEF was implicated in these results. The goals of the organization and its working with the British – a relationship forged by missionary connections – were not mutually exclusive, but marked a continuation of paternalistic, White-man’s-burden attitudes. The NEF bought into the idea of trusteeship and that outside, Western, efforts could (and should) spur and guide socioeconomic change. Even though the NEF


\textsuperscript{385} Alon Tal, Pollution in a Promised Land: An environmental History of Israel (Berkley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 49.
envisioned an end goal that was not continuation of British control, but Palestinian independence and self-sufficiency, NEF worked with British authorities to promote this vision. Moreover, NEF was acutely aware of the troubles descending on Europe in the 1930s. Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, part of what Laird Archer called “the winds of European intrigue,” had threatened to diplomatically wrench apart the countries in the Balkans. And, as Hitler took power in Germany and a new European conflict loomed on the horizon, NEF officials proclaimed an open sympathy with Britain as a member of “the forces seemingly working for peace.” If any discomfort of working with Britain as a colonial power existed, it was certainly dispelled amidst the NEF’s belief that its programming in the region was itself a force for peace, and the organization undertook another joint rural improvement project in British-controlled Cyprus.

For his part, Tannous’ tenure at Khadoorie ended with the elimination of NEF’s grant. Thereafter, he traveled to the United States for graduate training. Hoping to return to Lebanon as a faculty member at AUB, World War II intervened. Tannous got married and became a U.S. citizen. Aware of the dilemma of being viewed as neither fully American nor fully Arab, he once remarked that “maintaining a working balance between my two identities” was a “hurdle I had to clear.” However, persisting in his “dual identification and course of action for the benefit of both sides,” he felt assured in the


387 NEF Annual Report 1937-1938, p. 1, RAC 002, Box 4. The beginning negotiations over possible cooperation in Cyprus began in 1935 – the same year the Palestine project ended for NEF.

388 Laird reported in 1936: “America, as interpreted by her traditional and philanthropic good will, appears to hold the key to trusting hearts which see in our work no political penetration but a sympathetic partnership effort to restore trade and human well-being.” Annual Report 1935-1936, p. 1, RAC 002, Box 4.
“significance of my dual role in the solution of cross-cultural problems and facilitation of . . . projects.”

After the U.S. entered the war, Tannous volunteered for wartime service. He recalled that, with his knowledge of Arabic language and culture, he was convinced of being sent with the U.S. army on its way to invade North Africa when he got a call from the USDA’s Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations (FAR) in Washington, D.C. He arrived at FAR at the time that the U.S. was joining the Middle East Supply Center and as America’s conventional aloofness from Middle Eastern affairs was beginning to undergo a dramatic transition. Tannous’ entrance into government service (along with many other NEF veterans) represented the continuation of missionary influences as well as the movement of rural development into official American development thinking, despite the allure that modernization would have in the post-1945 context.

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389 Tannous, Village Roots, p. 233.
390 Tannous Oral Interview, pp. 5-6.
CHAPTER 4:

“WE ARE THE CATALYTIC AGENTS”:
RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMES OF AGE, 1940-1949

Introduction

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed to him, saying, ‘Come over into Macedonia and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.’” Harold B. Allen quoted this biblical passage (Acts 16:9-10) in the preface to his book Come Over into Macedonia.

Born in New York state, raised on a farm, and a product of Rutgers University, Allen served twelve years as the NEF’s Director of Education. A Progressive educator, Allen combined the thought of Thomas Jesse Jones and Paul Monroe as he began NEF’s first major, intentional project of development in a few dozen villages in Macedonia in the 1930s. Allen noted that the gospel the people of Macedonia needed was “the ‘Gospel of the Plow.’” Considering it an honor to have followed this call to service from 1928-1938, Allen insisted that when World War II ended, similar “prayers for help” would come not only from Macedonia but “from many other scorched parts of the earth as well.”

The book, published in 1943, was timely. Allen’s delineation of the rural development experience in the interwar period was to provide a “reference” for the

391 He earned both his BA and MA from Rutgers.

contemporary circumstances. In *Come Over Into Macedonia* he emphasized the NEF philosophy he thought should guide post-war reconstruction efforts: to “emphasize the slow, careful, and painstaking approach which must characterize all rural programs among people living under primitive conditions if sound progress is to be brought about; also the most effective system of securing permanent results is to help the people to help themselves.”

During and after World War II, Allen served in a number of official and non-state roles, proselytizing on behalf of rural development. Allen, like other NEF veterans like Tannous, found himself called upon for wartime service which then extended into post-war U.S. foreign aid.

Two narratives threads constitute this chapter. On one hand, I continue to track the lineage of rural development as it moved through World War II and afterwards and the ways it conflicted with or elided with modernization approaches. On the other hand, I look to the history of Palestine during this period, especially as events moved from World War II to the establishment of Israel in 1948. PVOs had to work in a changing relief and development landscape that was increasingly filled with bilateral and multilateral programming. The movement of NEF veterans into U.S. government agencies represented the incorporation of Progressive education and agricultural extension into the beginnings of a permanent U.S. overseas development presence, moving from the joint Anglo-American regulatory organization the MESC during World War II to Harry Truman’s Point Four foreign aid program in 1949. And the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service (ACVAFS), formed during the war as an

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393 Allen, *Come Over into Macedonia*, pp. xvi, xvii.
umbrella organization for PVOs to coordinate relief efforts with the government, is emblematic. ACVAFS adopted rural development while serving as an important mechanism for cooperation between PVOs and the U.S. foreign aid agencies.

Connecting these threads are three arguments. First, PVOs undergird the transition from British to American dominance in the region through development aid. The British displayed a concern with regional suspicions of their intentions and they grappled with how to shore up their waning influence. Despite cooperation during the MESC years, conflicting U.S. and British regional interests revolved around an axle of development, leading to separate foreign aid programs – the British Middle East Office (BMEO) and Point Four. PVOs like NEF and those within ACVAFS were critical to this process. Second, the extensive presence of missionaries in the Middle East and the educational and agricultural facilities they created dovetailed with the regional security concerns of U.S. policymakers. It was therefore no accident that, outside of Latin America where the U.S. Government already had established a technical assistance presence, Middle Eastern countries were the first to receive Point Four aid – a foreshadowing of the region’s importance for the emergence of American community development.

And third, I argue that 1948 was a critical year for American foreign aid just as it was for Middle East history. Even before Point Four came into existence, policymakers in the State Department began to challenge its nascent rural development orientation as insufficient economically and politically to meet the region’s diplomatic challenges. The wartime experience of the MESC demonstrated how situations of intensified urgency could draw out sharp differences between development approaches even as they allowed
for a remarkable plasticity.\textsuperscript{394} Similarly, the creation of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent Palestinian refugee crisis amidst a hardening Cold War dramatically intensified the struggle between modernization and rural development in the emerging foreign aid bureaucracies even as practitioners found ways of compromising. A watershed year for the region politically, 1948 also of course marked dramatic shifts in the nature of “rural life” for the Arab Palestinian refugees. The efforts of the MESC, and its failure after the war to create a regional Middle East Agricultural Council (MEAC), ultimately worked to the advantage of Zionism, helping lead to the nakba, or disaster, of the Palestinian refugee crisis. The legacies of the MESC’s work, and failures, continue to play out across the next chapters.

“No Brave New Worlds”: The Middle East Supply Center

Allen’s 1944 report, entitled “Rural Education and Welfare in the Middle East,” noted that the “inhabitants of a country represent its greatest potential resources” and that “[a]griculture and health and home welfare are as vital a part of the [rural educational] problem as the three R’s” and should be addressed in adapted, holistic ways.\textsuperscript{395} The report also contained what the British considered rather sharp criticism of Arab countries. The British officials felt ambivalent about this fact. They did not want to “annoy” regional

\textsuperscript{394} This builds on work that has begun to look beyond modernization theory or single models of American modernization. See Nicole Sackley, “Cosmopolitanism and the Uses of Tradition: Robert Redfield and Alternative Visions of Modernization During the Cold War,” Modern Intellectual History 9, No. 3 (November 2012), Daniel Immerwahr, Thinking Small, and Nick Cullather, The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

\textsuperscript{395} Harold B. Allen, “Rural Education and Welfare in the Middle East: A Report to the Director General, Middle East Supply Centre, September 1944” (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1946), pp. 2-3.
governments, one official scribbling that “There is no doubt that this report would be intensely resented for its very truthfulness.” But they also saw value in publishing “some plain speaking” about what they saw as the region’s major obstacles to development. Some took comfort that Allen, an American, would be offering his views as an independent expert, not as someone tied to the British government. Humphrey Bowman, though, insisted in a review that “It is a report of the utmost value,” and approvingly quoted a small section: “We of the West should not attempt to impose our form of government or our way of life on the East; nor should we measure their standards of living by our chosen yardsticks. In fact there are certain realms in which the slow-plodding peasant or the freedom-loving nomad has much to offer to the hurried Westerner.”

Allen was part of a three-man Scientific Advisory Mission to the Middle East from 1943-1944, tasked with making a study of the region’s actual agricultural research and educational capacities. The mission operated in cooperation with the MESC. The British established the MESC in 1941 as a response to wartime necessities. The German army’s swift submission of France, coupled with Italy’s alliance with Hitler, significantly complicated Britain’s supply lines and logistical support in the Mediterranean. Struggling to maintain a force in North Africa fighting to keep Axis troops from seizing the vital Suez Canal and threatening the Middle Eastern oil fields, Britain’s shipping situation quickly reached crisis proportions. Delays in the provision of arms and war material were

396 Handwritten letter from G.H. to E.E. Bailey [of the MESC], NAK FO 922/18.

397 Bowman Review in Current Literature (September 1946), p. 169; a copy found in MECA 0034, Box 2, File 6.
compounded by inadequate facilities in eastern Mediterranean ports and the ongoing importation of civilian goods.\textsuperscript{398}

Amidst these bewildering complexities, the British began implementing regional economic schemes. The Middle East version became the MESC. Taking lessons from World War I, British officials feared the consequences of prioritizing the war effort over civilian needs and demands – a potential recipe for social unrest that could threaten to unravel gains on the battlefield. The MESC therefore sought to, on the one hand, maximize shipping space and logistical lines critical to prosecute the war effort, and on the other hand, to ensure that civilian needs were met.\textsuperscript{399} Related was a wide-scale effort to make individual nations and mandates as self-supporting as possible. Initiatives included an intense drive to increase agricultural and industrial production through locally available means and resources.

The U.S. joined the MESC in 1942, bringing in NEF personnel because of their wide agricultural and educational experience in the region. This reality provided institutional space in nascent foreign aid bureaucracies for rural development thinking and creating the foundation for the later adoption of community development. The presence of Forrest Crawford – Tannous’ boss during his time in Palestine – at the MESC

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also likely greased the wheels of American-British cooperation. Having worked with the NEF, the British were aware of its presence in other countries in the region. Especially as the 1930s wore on, and tensions in Europe increased, the NEF’s presence was of British interest.\footnote{Letter from British Legation at Durazzo to Lord Halifax, April 1, 1938, NAK FO 371/22308 (3841). For instance, after the NEF moved its personnel out of Albania in 1938, the British legation sent word to Lord Halifax, “an event which I consider of sufficient importance to bring” to the FO’s attention. It expressed its concern that the evacuation (nominally for financial reasons) “marks a further stage in the gradual elimination from Albania of foreign influence other than of Italy.”}

Similarly, the NEF felt compelled to keep the British abreast of their own work.\footnote{Letter from Laird Archer to MERRA, August 20, 1943, NAK CO 1045/424. In August 1943, Laird Archer sent a letter to the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration, based out of Cairo, with information it had compiled for the Cairo Council of Voluntary Societies for Balkan Relief. This information included NEF’s relief and rehabilitation work in the past, present, and plans for the future as well as its personnel. (similar information was made available to the OFRR) But Archer also sent a copy to Christopher Cox of the British Colonial Office’s Department of Education. Archer noted the “cordial relations and cooperation in educational and agricultural projects in Palestine and Cyprus over a number of years.”} It was no coincidence, therefore, that a member of NEF joined the Scientific Advisory Mission as an agricultural education specialist as a complement to its two British members: Worthington and Dr. B.A. Keen. The British had specifically asked for Clayton Whipple – another NEF veteran with experience in the Balkans currently serving in the USDA’s FAR.\footnote{Letter to Landis, October 31, 1943, NAK FO 922/115. Making the request through Landis of the American Economic Mission, recalling the British-American cooperation on an earlier agricultural mission in 1942/43 in which the USDA’s Mr. Thibodeaux was included (working with Winant in MESC).} Dr. Keen, who had toured Bulgaria for the British in 1939 accompanied by Whipple, noted “He has spent many years with the Near East Foundation, whose work is very well known” and “I was very much impressed by his knowledge and capabilities.” Whipple would be “an admirable choice” if he were available, Keen added, and “personally I should greatly welcome his nomination.”\footnote{Keen to Murray, “American Representation on the Scientific Advisory Mission,” October 30, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.}
Perhaps because Whipple could not in fact be spared by the USDA, Allen was selected instead.

With the “shifting of the war to new and more distant theatres of operation” by 1942, the British began to more explicitly envision and plan for their post-war role in the region. The MESC became critical to these plans. As part of this planning, the Scientific Advisory Mission oriented its reports to not only the “scientific” but also the “economic and sociological aspects” of the region. In a synopsis of his report, Keen suggested that conditions in the region resembled the feudal system in England and that if the system of land tenure, whereby large landowners lived parasitically off of the toil of the peasants, was not corrected, “an agrarian revolution, possibly violent in character” could erupt. “There can be no radical changes” in such an entrenched system and that the best hope “is to introduce minor improvements that offer some hope of absorption . . .” Reflecting the colonial humanitarian ambiguity at its heart, this approach favored means that “will make for an evolutionary and not a revolutionary change.”

Rural development was to offer a path toward more equitable societies that sought to retain the integrity of local social and cultural patterns, while also offsetting the political and social instabilities which jeopardized the colonial project.

In short, the British hoped to leverage the MESC’s presence and influence into a permanent institutional expression. The British also sought to encourage the concrete

\[\text{\textsuperscript{404}}\text{“Agricultural Education and Research,” October 22, 1943, NAK FO 922/115 (8974 on)}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{405}}\text{“Middle East Economic Conference: The Scientific Advisory Mission to the MESC,” NAK, FO 921/347.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{406}}\text{“Middle East Economic Conference: The Scientific Advisory Mission to the MESC,” Appendix A, NAK, FO 921/347.}\]
signs of Arab officials moving in the direction of Arab unity in 1943, leveraging it to address common economic issues that would lead to regional prosperity and development; and they sought to do so by localizing agricultural education and research.

The planning for the 1944 winter Agricultural Conference is illustrative. Given the predominance of agriculture to the region’s economies as well as wartime production needs, the British were looking to establish a permanent institutional structure from which to promote agricultural development and were eager to get their ducks in a row before the conference during which they hoped to roll out suggestions to the Middle Eastern countries. In May 1943, the British Middle East War Council had broached the idea of establishing an agricultural college for the region “as part of a general drive to stimulate agricultural and technical education in the area.” It was a widely-shared opinion that existing facilities were simply inadequate – a growing but familiar critique of British colonial management since the 1920s.

MESC based its recommendations largely on a memorandum of official Dunstan Skilbeck: formerly Secretary of the Agricultural Education Association in the U.K. with some twenty-years’ experience in agricultural education work and who had spent over two years in the Middle East with the MESC. Skilbeck argued for “infinite patience and tact,” given that agricultural development was “no simple or straightforward problem”. The region, he continued, “is a conservative area, increasingly jealous of its various

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409 File No. 997 S, November 16, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.
national sovereignties and inherently suspicious of the gestures of the Western powers” and that “we would have an indigenous growth which would have infinitely better chances of survival in the Middle East soil than the rather exotic plant imported, suspected and, probably, unsuited to local conditions.”\textsuperscript{410}

Further discussion among Foreign Office (FO) and MESC personnel moved in favor not of a single, bricks-and-mortar college under British auspices – which would “immediately arouse suspicions in the minds of the Middle East countries”\textsuperscript{411} – but rather a combination of a MEAC and a related Foundation to serve the region’s needs for agricultural experimentation, research, education, “rural practical teaching,” and technical advice-sharing among the region’s countries.\textsuperscript{412} Nationalist sentiment, intra-Arab rivalry, and regional geographic diversities warned against a centralized Middle Eastern institute, at least until one had been established in each country so as not to build a foundation upon “shifting sands.”\textsuperscript{413}

Reflecting the themes of the African Research Survey, British officials noted the desirability of having a “channel through which technical advice and assistance would be given to help Middle East countries to help themselves,” based in agricultural research grounded in “close contact with the local problems to be studied,” and the favorability of an “annual contribution from which to make grants to stimulate local development”.\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{410} “Plans for the Development of Agricultural Education and Research in the Middle East,” by Dunstan Skilbeck, October 1, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.

\textsuperscript{411} “Agricultural Education and Research,” October 22, 1943, NAK FO 922/18.

\textsuperscript{412} Letter from Hamilton to Dunne, December 18, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.

\textsuperscript{413} F.W.H.S. to Croft, October 8, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.
These initiatives were to “avoid the difficulties past schemes of this nature have encountered,” and thus “must be indigenous and gradual” based on the premise that “permanence of any such scheme is dependent on local interest.” Another official referenced Aldous Huxley’s 1932 dystopian novel: “We want no Brave New Worlds in the Middle East. At least I don’t think the Middle Easterners do – if it means that the ‘Alphas’ are to be British and the Arabs are cast for the part of happy Gammas and Deltas.” It was possible “to over-estimate the attraction and acceptability of British or British-controlled institutions.”

The Middle East Agricultural Conference, held in February 1944, garnered significant support across the region’s representatives and created a potential constitution for the proposed MEAC. The conference’s report suggested not only technical cooperation for the advancement of agriculture, but also the conservation and development of agricultural resources and the provision of “increased facilities for the education of the farming community and the training of personnel.” And, it added further a suggestion that resonated with ACEC thinking that would soon crystallize into community development: “that agricultural progress is inseparably linked with the continued advancement of the agricultural population in all matters relating to their

414 Letter from Worthington to Croft, October 12, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.

415 Letter from Hamilton to Dunne, December 18, 1943; File No. 997 S, November 16, 1943; File No. 977, December 17, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.

416 Letter from JPB to MESC Director General, October 2, 1943, NAK FO 922/115. Although, the proposal, by Major Dunne, accompanied its proposal for commercial objectives and corporate involvement with the sense that “England must stand for progress and actively assist in raising the standard of agricultural practices” and that even corporations had to realize that they could not suck out mineral resources (or increase trade or halt British xenophobia) “unless the people of this region can seem some tangible benefit . . .” Memo from Dunne to Hamilton, September 20, 1943, NAK FO 922/115.
welfare, in particular, nutrition, health and education, and advocated policies aiming at raising rural standards of living.”

In Palestine, tension between Zionists and Arabs cooled during the war years. After the failure of a conference in London between Jews, Palestinian Arab representatives, and Arab states to come to a political settlement, the British put forth the White Paper of 1939. The policy implemented new restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine, gave the High Commissioner leeway in ending land sales to Jews, and declared the mandate objective of establishing a Jewish national home completed – a pragmatic series of decisions from the top of British government that catered to wider Arab opinion in the region in the hopes of ensuring stability during the war. However, British wartime decision-making in Palestine demonstrated how wartime urgency compelled officials to grapple with rural development and modernization. The result was a series of policies that generally favored Jewish over Arab development.

Perhaps guarding against MESC officials less sensitive than Skilbeck, a government memorandum on agricultural production in Palestine early in the war stressed the specificity of local conditions. It stated that deep plowing of the soil might certainly bring about immediate increases in productivity; in the long-run, however, such

417 Cited in the social and economic policy section of International Labour Review 49 (May 1944), p. 489.


419 See the recommendations of two MESC officials during a tour of Palestine in August 1942. Memorandum on Agricultural Production in Palestine, August 29, 1942, NAK FO 922/97. See also relatively stiff criticism of Colonial officer T.W. Davies on the what he argued was relative lethargy on the part of the Palestine administrators regarding being a on a war footing: Memorandum on Palestine, hand-dated November 1942, CO 852/490/6.
a practice would not be effective since it would contribute greatly to soil erosion. “It should be an accepted fact that what soil (or fertility) remains is due to the use of the nail-plough, a crude but effective implement.” The memo also noted the region-wide effort to improve varieties of cereal breeds but cautioned against the “dangerous,” premature replacing of indigenous varieties, “as our promising types have not yet been grown for periods sufficiently long to prove that they can stand up to all variations of climate and incidence of disease and pests.” And it suggested that although melon growing was being prohibited in order to grow more essential wartime food products, it could not be entirely banned as it was “the main source of food for the poorer Arab classes during its ripening season besides that much of the melon land is not suitable for other summer crops.”

The need to boost production amidst curtailed import capacities had particular relevance for the raising of livestock and poultry. Palestine imported over fifty percent of its meat requirements and as climate conditions made significant expansion difficult – the landscape lacking what observers called natural pasture land – intensification was desirable. The government had made efforts to increase the growing of green fodder crops and hay. For poultry farmers, the high price of cereals and the scarcity of fish and meat meals made the business difficult. The need was for protein concentrates and sources of Vitamin A that could be acquired or produced locally. Skilbeck, as the MESC’s assistant director of Agricultural Production, noted that molasses was being

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420 Memorandum on Agricultural Production in Palestine, August 29, 1942, pp. 2, 7, NAK FO 922/97.

421 Memorandum on Food Production in Palestine, ca. 1942, pp. 10, 2, NAK FO 922/97.
considered for cattle feed in late 1943,\textsuperscript{422} that in Egypt drying of alfalfa (lucerne or berseem) was being considered as a good high protein concentrate, and by 1944, certain drying instruments were being considered to help preserve potential feed options like alfalfa and clover. Local Palestinian agricultural officers, though, agreed with Skilbeck’s practical suggestion that importing machines for drying crops would be inefficient and that for practical reasons, sun-drying should be considered.\textsuperscript{423} Skilbeck noted to the Senior Agricultural Officer in Jerusalem that “I still think that there is a considerable possibility of sun-drying and, thereby, of substantially reducing costs of production.”\textsuperscript{424}

The impulse to use modern machinery to boost production, even amidst the necessity to improve local capacities and reduce imports, was strong. During the war, the Palestine Government decided to continue and expand its policy of extending to small holding farmers loans for agricultural improvement. The purchasing of seeds, the promotion of oil crops, legumes, and fodder production and provisions for intensive irrigation for vegetables and fodder crops also garnered relatively significant monetary support. Under war conditions, however, the clear priority was a category labeled “Deep tractor ploughing and the purchase of tractors.”\textsuperscript{425} In a visit on behalf of the American delegation to the MESC, another former NEF interloper, O.S. Morgan, of AUB, took a survey tour of Palestine and Transjordan. Morgan found himself at odds, advocating a

\textsuperscript{422} Skilbeck to War Supply Board, Jerusalem, December 31, 1943, NAK FO 922/97.

\textsuperscript{423} See files in NAK FO 922/97.

\textsuperscript{424} Skilbeck to Lowe, October 13, 1943, NAK FO 922/97.

\textsuperscript{425} Memorandum on Agricultural Production in Palestine, August 29, 1942, pp. 4, NAK FO 922/97.
slower, smaller rural development approach but feeling the pressure of “the demand for quick results”. Thus, even as he suggested that “a slow motion program might conceivably be a more constructive program for Transjordan than tractorization,” he suggested a tractor unit of five to ten tractors that would be mobile, moving from district to district in the hopes that large tracts of land “waiting exploitation” could be taken advantage of near the Transjordan-Syria border.426

Many Arab villagers benefited from economic conditions during the war, despite extensive regulatory schemes. Prices for vegetables and cereals remained high, although officials sought to replace seasonal gluts of vegetables with more urgent food crops. And by 1942, the Government had distributed over 400,000 day-old chicks to Arab farmers.427 Nonetheless, on balance, the urgency of prioritizing the war effort made it expedient to follow policies that tended to favor Zionists over Arabs. Given the wartime circumstances, the modern intensive, agricultural production methods and the prominence of Jewish institutions like the Rehovath extension station meant that Jews were intimately linked into the agricultural research and experimentation efforts of the British government during the early 1940s.428 This complemented its near monopoly on industrial production. One Colonial Office officer judged the progress of industrialization

426 From Morgan to Winant, December 28, 1942, NAK FO 922/97.
427 Memorandum on Food Production in Palestine, ca. 1942, p. 5, NAK FO 922/97.
428 See for instance, Lowe to Skilbeck, October 7, 1943 and Stedman-Davies to Skilbeck, May 31, 1943, NAK FO 922/97.
in Palestine up to 1942 to have been “impressive,” if “useless from the point of view of the war effort,” and noted the effort “was entirely Jewish and not at all Arab”.429

Knowledge of the local, a sympathy with Arab circumstances, became a justification for inaction due to wartime needs. In his report, Morgan concluded that “MESC could not at this time undertake much if any help for the hill country.” What help that could be provided, “a system of county-agent-supervising” would be desirable.430 A government report on food production in Palestine for the MESC noted that “The Arab system of keeping livestock is still very primitive.”431 The Jewish farmers tended to be the ones investing in animal husbandry and intensive poultry-raising, along “very modern” scientific, European lines.432 Indeed, Morgan noted that he visited many Jewish settlements and that where dairying and poultry-raising existed, “pleas were made for supplies of concentrate foods.”433 Regarding loans, for Arabs the Government prioritized tractors, deep plowing, and the purchasing of seeds. However, it seems unlikely that loans for tractors would have gone to the average, debt-burdened fellaheen. For Jews, the priorities had been loans for extending irrigation, intensive production of vegetables, fodder, and oil crops, and the raising of livestock and poultry.434 In general, the Government claimed that little could be done for Arab farmers; the operating assumption


430 From Morgan to Winant, December 28, 1942, NAK FO 922/97.

431 Memorandum on Food Production in Palestine, ca. 1942, p. 2, NAK FO 922/97.

432 See also the letter from Tenne, Ltd. To MESC, Cairo, December 27, 1943, NAK FO 922/97.

433 From Morgan to Winant, December 28, 1942, NAK FO 922/97.

434 Memorandum on Food Production in Palestine, ca. 1942, p. 5, NAK FO 922/97.
was that the investments needed to help the average Arab peasant intensify his holdings would be prohibitive, the loans likely unsound. Officials argued that what could be done to help boost agricultural production in the Arab sector was largely in the areas of helping Arab peasants better manage the fallow periods and in introducing “seeds of better yielding varieties or selections.” Even in this area, however, officials were pessimistic about the benefits: “The method of distributing the seed to farmers is well organized on the Jewish side” while Arabs who did receive seeds were among “the fortunate few”. Arab farmers, it argued, were “anxious to purchase or borrow” such seeds each year – no doubt eager to improve their own productivity – but that they did not rogue the planted areas for older, undesirable varieties. Thus, the new strain “soon loses its purity after one or two seasons.” The memo concluded therefore that “For the present we have to rely mainly on Jewish cooperation.”\(^{435}\) Indeed, the British would reap very little from their wider regional wartime efforts, thanks in part to American intransigence.

To “Discard Oppressive Imperialism”: Parting Ways?

In 1946, the USDA’s FAR sponsored an investigation of regional agriculture. Tannous was a key member, using his connections from AUB and its rural life work to visit dignitaries in capital cities as well “people in the villages.”\(^ {436}\) After papers of the mission “accidentally fell into his hands” during a Food and Agriculture Organization consultation in Greece, a British official alerted the British FO and passed them along. They had, he reported, been left in a desk drawer during the departure of American

\(^{435}\) Memorandum on Food Production in Palestine, ca. 1942, p. 6, NAK FO 922/97.

\(^{436}\) Tannous Oral History Interview, p. 11.
personnel. In turn, the FO made this known to the new British Middle East Office (BMEO) which was the remnants of the MESC and the British technical assistance presence in the region.\footnote{Letter from Waterlow to Crawford, March 12, 1947 (and attached, “Summary of Certain Recommendations made by the American Agricultural Mission to the Middle East,”), NAK FO 957/5. The letter includes the notice that they were showing the papers to the Alexander Gibb and Company [an engineering consulting firm].} The British agricultural attaché in Washington suggested to the FO that as far as he could discover, Tannous was the primary author of the report. “The final document,” a British officer noted, “will therefore probably be largely produced by the [USDA’s] Office of Foreign Relations on the basis of Tannaus’ [sic] suggestions and information, and the names of Harris and Buchanan [the other members] will be added to give it authority.”\footnote{Letter from Locke to Waterlow, April 17, 1947, NAK FO 957/5.} Even if such a claim was overexaggerated, the British had taken more than a passing interest in this tentative American thrust in bringing U.S. technical assistance to the region so soon after the end of the war.

To be sure, as the war progressed, the Americans were in no mood to scale back their growing power and influence in the region and looked to pursue their own economic and political interests. To capitalize on their unprecedented presence, within an environment marked by intensifying Arab nationalism, required a certain distancing from the U.S.’s wartime allies, Britain and France, especially as policymakers looked to the post-war context. Development aid provided an alluring avenue to present American influence as anti-colonial and mutually beneficial. Officials therefore looked to leverage the U.S.’s lack of a formal colonial history in the Middle East as well as the image of American “benevolence” cultivated by missionary and philanthropic groups. The U.S.
hoped to withdraw from the MESC at war’s end, against British wishes and interests; this parting of ways, though, was in reality an imperial transition undergirded by the genuine intentions of groups like NEF who hoped to promote socioeconomic improvement in the region. Without U.S. aid, British were confined to a smaller role in the region.

Trouble in the American-British relationship regarding the Middle East had begun during the war itself. British imperial actions – deposing Egypt’s King Farouk and then the nationalist, anti-British Rashid Ali regime in Iraq in 1941 – troubled American policymakers who saw such actions less in terms of wartime necessities and more as a jeopardization of allied war objectives and tainting American intentions in the region by association. British policy-making operated on the assumption of American disinterest in the region but the war prompted a dramatic increase of American involvement based on growing national interests, including oil consumption. American troops participated in the invasion of North Africa and army officers and technical personnel had undertaken modernization in Iran to help secure a route for lend-lease supplies to the Soviet Union. U.S. policymakers evinced a desire to capitalize on this unprecedented presence.

Part of the American effort was to promote their commitment to the Four Freedoms (of speech and worship and from want and fear) and the Atlantic Charter, especially self-determination. Policymakers in President Franklin Roosevelt’s administration were committed to demonstrating that America was different than the European colonial powers and that they would support full Arab independence. General Patrick Hurley, a special envoy sent by Roosevelt to Iran in 1943 to reassure the Shah of American support, was suspicious of British intentions. He reported that he feared that American association with British power would undermine the U.S.’s stated commitment
to self-determination. He urged Roosevelt to convince the British to “accept the
principles of liberty and democracy and discard the principles of oppressive
imperialism.”\textsuperscript{439} The State Department began calling upon available U.S. personnel with
Arabic skills and overseas experience, which called upon the legacies of missionaries. As
the U.S. courted Ibn Saud as a way to build Arab-American friendship while securing
vital access to oil reserves, the State Department called on Colonel William Eddy to
accompany the king’s sons Faisal and Khalid on a tour of the U.S. in the autumn of 1943.
Eddy was the son of Protestant missionaries. He was raised in Beirut and spoke multiple
dialects of Arabic.\textsuperscript{440} When one of the crown princes made a return visit in 1947, after the
war had ended, the State Department called upon Afif Tannous for similar reasons – he
spoke fluent Arabic and had Arab-American connections.\textsuperscript{441}

Different American approaches to using development as a way to supplant
European influence in the region mirrored domestic tensions between agrarian and
industrial logics. Across the first decades of the 1900s, agrarianism had been competing
with an industrial logic bent on making “every farm a factory”.\textsuperscript{442} As historian Sarah
Phillips argues, such tensions played out during the agricultural policies of the New Deal
although an agrarian liberalism predominated for much of the 1930s. By the end of the

\textsuperscript{439} O’Sullivan, \textit{FDR and the End of Empire}, pp. 61, 40, 85-86; quotation from p. 86.

\textsuperscript{440} O’Sullivan, \textit{FDR and the End of Empire}, 100; Eddy also served as the translator in the
historical meeting between Franklin Roosevelt and King Ibn Saud in 1945. On Eddy’s life, see the popular
biography by Thomas W. Lippman: \textit{Arabian Knight: Colonel Bill Eddy USMC and the Rise of American
Power in the Middle East} (Selwa Press, 2008).

\textsuperscript{441} Tannous Oral History Interview, pp. 12-13.

\textsuperscript{442} Deborah Fitzgerald, \textit{Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture} (New
decade and heading into World War II an “industrial liberalism” had taken hold, incorporating elements of this logic. Abetted by wartime production booms, the view of how to secure national economic recovery had shifted. No longer would the urban unemployed be moved back to the land and small farm holders provided assistance; industrial growth became the key, drawing away “excess” rural population, providing jobs and expected standards of living, and helping what remained of rural areas modernize through mechanization, industrial techniques, and fewer, larger farms.443

The TVA’s own trajectory demonstrated these changing emphases. A regional economic planning entity seeking rural economic growth, the TVA used a series of dams and storage units to help control flooding, produce cheap hydroelectric power, and provide irrigation channels. Consistent with the early New Deal, and despite its incredible scale, the TVA sought to provide assistance to farmers on the land while democratically incorporating local participation. But since its inception it had been beset by disagreements. For example, of its original three directors, two sought to preserve the South’s rural character and pushed to decentralize industry and revitalize local craft traditions. The third, David Lilienthal, disagreed. He famously argued that there could be no “turning back from the machine” and “I am against basket-weaving and all that it implies . . . We cannot prepare for the second coming of Daniel Boone.”444 By the end of the 1930s, Lilienthal’s industrial liberalism had won out, even as he argued that the TVA represented democracy’s response to totalitarian versions of modernization by combining


444 Cited by Phillips, *This Land, This Nation*, p. 93.
technocratic planning with democratic participation by local communities. These questions – and approaches – were not merely domestic problems. Dam-building and the incredible promise of cheap electricity as paths toward the comforts and prosperity of modernization were attractive to domestic and foreign populations alike and held out a promising model for dealing with the Palestinian refugee crisis after 1948.

Although sharing similar modernist assumptions about planning, progress, and technology, as well as the logic of mutually beneficial exchange, the rural development approach of NEF personnel working in the MESC sat at odds with the high-level thinking of a group of President Franklin Roosevelt’s postwar planners. Because of their lack of experience in the region, U.S. policymakers drew upon the New Deal’s public works programs. They envisioned using influxes of capital for large infrastructure projects as a way to assist the region’s peoples economically while cultivating a cadre of potentially “progressive” local leaders and winning political friendships. “They aimed to create a new order where the region . . . would look to Washington in the postwar era for commercial ties, political leadership, economic and developmental assistance, and military alliances.” For this to succeed, however, America required a distance from its

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445 Phillips calls Lilienthal an industrial liberal; for Lilienthal’s take on democratic modernization, see: Ekbladh, Great American Mission.

446 Ekbladh, Great American Mission; see also Cullather, Hungry World, Chapter 4.

wartime European colonial allies and the promotion of explicitly anti-colonial measures.  

This distancing took place within the MESC and in the U.S. exploration of separate development opportunities. America’s joining the MESC in 1942 had been a necessary evil for the British, buying them leverage and control even as it opened up the taps for an immense flow of American goods into the region. With an eye toward the post-war situation, American policymakers sought to end the MESC and its regulatory controls as soon as possible and introduce free trade. A series of missions and reports across the mid-1940s reiterated the American desire for free trade in the region partnered with independent governments (rather than colonial patsies) with which to do business. And although debates emerged over what should get primary emphasis, by 1945 policymakers saw in economic development a key to achieving American objectives (free trade, securing mineral and oil access, and geostrategic position) while also promoting stability, lessening the chances of war, and providing real benefits to the region’s people. Tannous’ investigation in 1946 was one example. The British would succumb to American pressure and the MESC closed its doors in November 1945.

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448 O’Sullivan, FDR and End of Empire; and Amikam Nachami, “It is a Matter of Getting the Mixture Right’: Britain’s Post-war Relations with America in the Middle East,” Journal of Contemporary History 18 (1983), pp. 117-119 (of 117-140).

449 Wilmington, MESC, pp. 74-76.

The British had held grand designs to establish the MEAC which would provide an avenue for Arab cooperation as well as continued British influence in the region; the British hoped to capitalize on Arab unity movements within the Arab world, securing a “more immediately practical idea of technical co-operation between all M.E. countries.” These hopes were dashed as Arab states chose to work through the new Arab League. The British held two meetings with Arab representatives after which a constitution for a MECA was adopted in April 1944. However, “although the principle of establishing a M.E. Council of Agriculture was apparently accepted and endorsed by all the Governments concerned,” negotiations for Arab government signatures ran amok.

Part of the problem, Dunstan Skilbeck reported, was that the MECA had not been established before the Preparatory Committee of the Arab Union – in other words, the MECA was not the building block of Arab unity but rather became subject to Arab politics. The MECA proposal also ran into the complication of the British Government refusing, on behalf of colonial governments in the region (like Palestine), to sign off on an Egyptian amendment that would have made Arabic rather than English the primary language of the MECA. To save face “as much as possible from the wreck,” the British officials concerned from the MESC helped dissolve the committee in charge of establishing the MECA. The move essentially left the future of Middle East agricultural


development cooperation to the emergent Arab League. Lack of U.S. cooperation compounded the problem.

What developed, then, were separate British and American technical assistance programs even as both agreed on development aid as a foreign policy tool that promised patronage and influence that was not overtly colonial. The BMEO emerged in 1945 as Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin’s attempt to continue a British technical presence in the Middle East after the war. Bevin called for a “peasants, not Pashas” policy in the Middle East, seeking to use technical assistance to boost socioeconomic development, bolster Britain’s image by ostensibly promoting “partnership” and “cooperation,” and thereby provide a base for a regional defense system. But the grand hopes of the plan proved illusory. A cable from the British Embassy in Egypt to the Foreign Office noted that caution was needed even for providing technical experts: “Any suggestion that we want to run their country for them will make them turn elsewhere for assistance.”

Given the state of anti-British sentiment in the region and the failure to continue the MESC, the British compromise – the BMEO – had to move as unobtrusively as possible.

Without the MESC as an institutional link to its postwar plans for the region, and now separated from American largesse, the British settled for what they thought they could afford in a region suspicious of its presence: a small, roving band of technicians.

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454 “Final Report on the Middle East Council of Agriculture,” April 1, 1945, p. 5, MECA 0204 Box 1, File 2.

455 This was consistent with the Labor government’s drawing back from pro-Zionist policies in face of wider British interests in the Arab Middle East.


dispensing technical assistance through the BMEO. This was an acknowledgement of their imperial limitations and an outgrowth of their “local turn” in colonial policy. The British accordingly were very aware of what they referred to as the “American Drive” into the Middle East.\textsuperscript{458} Despite the British technical presence preceding Truman’s Point Four aid program, they feared that the U.S. resources and engineers flooding the region were “taking ground” from the BMEO.\textsuperscript{459} Recognizing their inability to keep up with American capacities, the British tried to coordinate their own technical assistance efforts with the Americans in an effort to both maintain a form of control and to help guide the aid into truly constructive projects. Thus, Truman’s Point Four program represented both a challenge and spur to action on the part of the British and its BMEO.

“A Pocketful of Nickels”: Point Four

In a 1953 meeting with personnel from the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA), which administered the Point Four program, Allen advocated for more government contracts to voluntary agencies. He spoke on behalf of NEF and as a representative from the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service (ACVAFS), an umbrella organization that a number of PVOs founded in 1943 in order to streamline cooperation with the U.S. government and to better coordinate their own

\textsuperscript{458} NAK, FO 957/109.

\textsuperscript{459} See, for instance, the BMEO annual reports from 1952 and 1953: NAK, FO 957/178, FO 957/191. The BMEO even accused the American foreign aid program of trying to steal credit for the British village loans scheme on the West Bank in 1955 and in 1954 the FO asked the BMEO to “have a look around” in Saudi Arabia to see if the British had any opportunities to offer technical advice there after disputes between Arab officials and the American personnel. On the former, see: FO 371/121232; on the latter, see: FO 371/110109.
wartime relief efforts. And, in response to a discussion on how to align PVO abilities with TCA needs in technical assistance projects, noted “he wouldn’t want to seek out only those things which they [PVOs] could do better than TCA” but to undertake tasks PVOs were well-positioned to perform.\textsuperscript{460} Allen had also been on a study committee of PVO technical assistance projects undertaken by ACVAFS in 1951.\textsuperscript{461} Completing the circle, Allen further served on a board of consultants for the TCA, reporting to fellow NEF-veteran Clayton Whipple.\textsuperscript{462}

Building on the foundation created during the MESC years, the NEF and other agencies within ACVFS helped ensure the ongoing relevance of rural development. Specifically, rural development thinking and approaches dovetailed with the means and ends of Point Four as a Cold War strategy. Scholars discussing Point Four generally interpret it as an effort to secure raw materials and export markets; to safeguard U.S. foreign investments; to halt the spread of communism in the Third World; or as a waystation on the road to American modernization.\textsuperscript{463} I argue that in its original

\textsuperscript{460} Taken from minutes of “Working Group Meeting,” June 18, 1953, p. 2, attached to minutes of the “Meeting of Representatives of Private Non-Profit Agencies and TCA,” Rutgers Archives, ACVAFS, Box 49, State Department/Point 4/TCA Meetings with VolAg Reps.

\textsuperscript{461} See, for instance, “Technical Assistance and Projects Study: Statement of Purpose,” January 7, 1952, Rutgers Archives, ACVAFS, Box 114, Point 4 Committee Study Purpose of.

\textsuperscript{462} Memorandum from the Board of Consultants to the Food, Agriculture and Resources Development Staff, TCA to Clayton E. Whipple, Director of the Food, Agriculture and Resources Development Staff, February 28, 1952. Michigan State University Archives, John Hannah Papers, Collection UA 2.1.12, Box 80, Folder 39.

conception, Point Four was ultimately about Progressive education and viewed technical assistance through an “adapted” lens. Although Point Four was not confined to rural areas, original Point Four technical assistance was predominantly agrarian and Progressive. Administratively, TCA divided along functional lines, maintaining an Industry and Public Administration Division as well ones for Human and Educational Services and Agriculture and Natural Resources. At the same time that President Harry Truman could enthusiastically point to the New Deal’s TVA – “I see immense undeveloped rivers and valleys all over the world that would make TVA’s” – he could in another appearance enlist the approach of “one of our voluntary groups, the Near East Foundation.” These models could hardly be considered synonymous, and indeed clashed in many instances, but they could also coexist. It is notable, however, that Truman made reference to the TVA at the end of 1949, supplanted in June 1950 – when Point Four was implemented – by reference to NEF. Point Four policymakers would consciously drew on agricultural missionary legacies. The missionary presence in the Middle East was deep and relatively extensive and for a budding foreign aid bureaucracy, appealing in its expediency. In this way, the lineage of U.S. community development runs through the MESC and then Point Four’s expansion in the Middle East.


464 My argument is more in line with Amanda K. McVety’s claim that Point Four was “low modernist.” See: Enlightened Aid.

A surprise inclusion in his inaugural address in January 1949, Truman made the sharing of American know-how with the rest of the world a pillar of his foreign policy agenda; it was to be, he proclaimed, “a bold new program.” Being the fourth point on this list, the media quickly dubbed it “Point Four” and the name continued in popular and official usage. Point Four ensured that development assistance was “no longer a matter of haphazard and limited incident, but is now an established policy objective of the United States Government.” It was to be “a long-term program designed to maximize the use of the economic resources of other nations for their own growth and development,” facilitated by support from the U.S. “in magnitude appropriate to the process of gradual growth.”

Arising within a specific convergence of trends – new global power responsibilities, decolonization, and the rise of Cold War tensions – development was one way of reconciling such various foreign policy demands. In the immediate post-war

466 The other three that Truman outlined in his inaugural address on January 20, 1949, were: strengthening the United Nations (UN); continuing efforts to rebuild the world economy; and protecting “freedom-loving nations” from aggression. Quoted in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 268, Aiding Underdeveloped Areas Abroad (March 1950), p. 183.


469 Nick Cullather, “Development? Its History,” Diplomatic History, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Fall 2000), p. 651. American economic expansion dramatically increased the U.S. power in other region’s of the globe; such power was not the direct domination of specific territories of older imperialisms but a quieter version in which this power was masked by a “spaceless geography” that amounted to nationalistic internationalism. In other words, by seeking to nominally draw the world together by erasing boundaries, American policies enabled the ready expansion of its economic muscle (an American-dominated globalization). See: Neil Smith, American Empire: Roosevelt’s Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization (University of California Press, 2003).
years, American policymakers had memories of the failed peace after World War I and saw their global responsibilities as nothing less than ensuring a peaceful and prosperous world order. As conflict with the Soviet Union crystallized into Cold War, these objectives only increased in salience. With a legacy stretching back to World War I, policymakers believed that communism fed off of instability, especially hunger, disease, and ignorance. Before 1950, policymakers sought economic preponderance: by ensuring access to food, products, and natural resources, ensuring international trade, and hemming in communist economies, the fate of the “free world” and the American way of life would be secured. As with the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine’s aid to Greece and Turkey, early manifestations of containment policy, focusing on economics was a “calculated risk” that was far cheaper and more in line with American values than a large, military buildup – especially with a congress looking to reign in the national budget for fears of hurting the American economy. In looking to operationalize a permanent program of technical assistance, Mao Zedong’s communist victory in China in 1949 loomed large, illustrating the power – and vulnerability – of the globe’s rural areas where the majority of non-Western populations made their living.

Point Four was a continuation of economic containment but moved it from Europe to the non-Western world. Point Four technicians did engage in infrastructure projects and provided aid to industrial fields (port facilities, road building, research

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laboratories, government administration, etc.) but its primary emphases were those of rural development. Providing nation-building assistance to the rest of the world through a cooperative, shared-cost approach was highly desirable given its anti-colonial optics, its ability to meet tight budgets, reach beyond government bureaucracies down to the rural villages, and to offer an alternative, non-communist path to prosperity. Through Point Four, the Truman administration attempted to strike a balance between national interests and humanitarian concerns: development aid would improve lives and reduce poverty while winning friends, ensuring capitalist access, and forestalling communism’s spread.

The Institute of Inter-American Affairs (IIAA) provided an immediate, salient model of humanitarian nation-building. One of the U.S. government’s first substantial forays into overseas development, the IIAA was an important part of President Franklin Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy. Directed by Nelson A. Rockefeller, in the 1930s the institute strove to build stronger trading ties between the U.S. and the rest of the Western Hemisphere, providing cooperative technical assistance in fields such as health, sanitation, and agricultural vocational training. In its search to be economical and sustainable in the long-run, the IIAA demonstrated a rural development commitment to local context and self-help. The institute’s assumption was that people had to have a sense that they had a stake in projects and could use their own resources and personnel to prove the value of their work to the local governments and peoples. Therefore, the U.S. and the host country shared project costs, with the U.S. share diminishing over

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471 Rockefeller’s grandfather, who one historian labels “the greatest supporter of missionaries in his generation,” established the secular Rockefeller Foundation to continue and expand upon the efforts of individuals who “preached the gospel of modern science and medicine as well as that of Christ.” Claude C. Erb, “Prelude to Point Four: The Institute of Inter-American Affairs,” Diplomatic History, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1985), p. 253.
time. And, to allow American technicians to better understand local problems, the IIAA created an administrative unit called the *servicio* which was jointly staffed.

The IIAA also touted its approach as hands-on manual labor built on an educational approach and emphasizing human partnerships – the antithesis of distant bureaucratic white collar work. One official explained that the IIAA’s *servicio* model had “technicians of both countries work side by side . . . they get their hands dirty and work without white shirt and tie.” Indeed, this was:

> not the normal custom of the engineer, the agriculturalist, and the professionals in all parts of the world. Experience has shown, however, that training carried on in the environment where people are to work has definite advantages. Education in new techniques shows lasting results when these techniques can be assimilated and developed as part of the local tradition.472

Another official noted, “we cannot do a job for others; all we can do effectively is to help them to help themselves . . . the goods and the gold, and the strength of the state itself, depend ultimately upon men and women to develop and support them . . . [mass] Education is the indispensable key to unlocking a nation’s most valuable resource – its human resources.”473

The institute’s projects impressed Benjamin Hardy, who had worked for the IIAA in Brazil during World War II. Hardy had first suggested making U.S. technical


assistance available to the world and his idea became Point Four.⁴⁷⁴ In 1950, a State Department document labeled Point Four a “Plan for World-Wide Good Neighborliness,” illustrating the connections being made between the new program and technical assistance the Institute offered through the “Good Neighbor” policy.⁴⁷⁵ One TCA administrator noted that the Point Four program would bring a variety of American agents “into the most intimate daily relationships with thousands of foreign people”⁴⁷⁶ and another described it as “shirt-sleeve diplomacy” because it stressed building human relationships side-by-side in the field, at “grass roots levels,” rather than bureaucrats handing down directives from offices in capital cities.⁴⁷⁷ Secretary of State Dean Acheson noted later that the IIAA had “furnished the inspiration and proving ground” for Point Four’s worldwide technical cooperation program.⁴⁷⁸ Indeed, Point Four incorporated the IIAA as its Latin American arm and borrowed from its administrative mechanisms, designed to respect national sovereignty, including: servicios (called Joint Commissions in Point Four lingo) and having other countries officially request aid.⁴⁷⁹

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⁴⁷⁷ Jonathan Bingham, Shirtsleeve Diplomacy. See also his statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 2, 1952.


Point Four promoted rural development’s mixture of Progressive education, agricultural extension, and scientific philanthropy as well as its theory of change. A publication from 1951 stated that Point Four technical assistance would promote improvements “in ever-widening circles”. Indeed, Point Four was “intended to have an impact out of all proportion to its size,” was to be “a relatively low-cost, long-term undertaking,” and would have “a cumulative effect.” One official argued to an audience of land grant colleges that “[w]e are the catalytic agent. We contribute imagination, methods, and techniques which have served us so well. . . . But the accomplishment should be credited fully to the institutions, the agricultural leadership, and the farmers of the respective countries.”

In the service of cost-effectiveness while maximizing potential, Point Four promoted the importance of self-help, “the local,” and human relationships. Truman frequently spoke of the program in these terms and Acheson explicitly expressed that “Outside participation makes it possible for underdeveloped countries to do more for themselves” and that success for Point Four would be achieved by working with the common people, channeling the “energies of the masses” into a “constructive effort” that would prove that “world development can take place peacefully and with increasing

480 Capus M. Waynick, “Progress on Point 4,” Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 23, No. 586 (September 25, 1950), 493. His original address was to the Chamber of Commerce in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on September 14.


482 E. N. Holmgreen, “What’s Going on in MSA: A Technical Assistance Story,” Address to the Land-Grant College Meeting on Agricultural Services to Foreign Areas, February 11, 1952, p. 3, MSU Archives, Columbia Project Files, Collection UA 2.9.5.8., Box 230, Folder 85. Holmgreen was Director, Food and Agriculture Division of the MSA.
personal freedom.” He also argued in 1949 that “there are no stereotyped patterns of economic development, applicable to all or even to many countries” and that it does not suggest “planned stages and time periods”; rather, “development projects must take into account and, so far as possible, be adapted to local resources, attitudes, social and legal structures, customs and practices, and national aspirations.” A State Department rep argued that “it was useless to engage in the Point IV program without local participation” that there was “no thought of bestowing economic advantages and social welfare on various peoples of the world”.

Moreover, Point Four was primarily about education. As the administration and Department of State gathered information during the planning process, the technical assistance experience of the USDA held significant sway. One FAR official noted retrospectively: “it's interesting that in the very early stages it was the county agents and the vocational agriculture teachers who were sent abroad. . . . and maybe a pocketful of nickels.” And John Hannah, President of Michigan State University and Chairman of

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483 Truman noted that aid would be offered so as to “help the least fortunate of its members to help themselves.” Annals, p. 183 (see also Memoirs, pp. 231-232); FRUS, 1949, vol. 1, p. 783 (emphasis in original); FRUS, 1949, vol. 1, pp. 777-778.


485 A June 9, 1949 meeting with Mr. Leroy Stinebower, State Department official and US rep to the UN Economic and Social Council. Cited by Clark, Four Monographs, CDA, p. 5.

486 Bearing out the assertion that Point Four “represented an extension of the same populist educational philosophy” of land-grant colleges to the rest of the world. Ralph H. Smuckler, A University Turns to the World, (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003), pp. 4, 44.

487 Douglas Ensminger Oral History Interview, pp. 6-7.
the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities, extended the assistance of these institutions.\footnote{For the executive committee meetings of the ALGCSU, as well as Hannah’s letters and Truman’s reply, see MSU Archives, President Hannah Papers, Collection UA 2.1.12, Box 75, Folder 19.}

The appointment of Henry G. Bennett, formerly president of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, as Point Four’s director bear these emphases.\footnote{Hannah himself became a member of President Truman’s International Development Advisory Board.} Born in 1886, Bennett held a PhD from Columbia University, a hub of Progressive educational thought. His professional past included not only stints as a schools superintendent, but also prisoner rehabilitation programs, supporting agricultural extension services and 4-H clubs, and service as an agricultural consultant for the U.S. government in the 1940s.\footnote{He was a delegate to the 1945 FAO conference in Quebec, served on a mission that surveyed agricultural conditions in Germany in 1949, and in April 1950 he served on a US mission to Ethiopia.} Bennett was thus an apt choice; ACVAFS considered his appointment “most fortuitous” and noted favorably that “Dr. Bennett was an educator by profession.”\footnote{Clark, \textit{Four Monographs}, CDA, pp. 15, 16.} And he carried this emphasis into his administrative work. “You may think of me as a black sheep who has strayed from the educational field into a den of bureaucrats,” he announced at the American Vocational Association Convention in November 1951:

\begin{quote}
Believe me, I haven’t gone astray. No one who has ploughed the field of education can escape from it – or would wish to. For me, fortunately, no escape was necessary. The Point 4 Program is education, from first to last. It is in fact the essence of education: an adventure in the sharing of knowledge . . . We in Point 4 are engaged
\end{quote}
in clearing and cultivating a new corner of the educational field. It is pioneer work.492

“The technical cooperation program should utilize the techniques that have been perfected over a period of 90 years by the Department of Agriculture and the land-grant colleges, and by the many private organizations,” Bennett argued, adding “It is an extension of the methods devised and proven over the past 8 years in Latin America.”493

Bennett’s human-centered definition of technical assistance flowed from his practical, Progressive view of education. He described Point Four as a “technical cooperation program” designed “primarily [as] a program of teaching and demonstration.” It was a “down-to-earth program that deals directly with villages and with people – with people who are barefooted, diseased and hungry. . . [the problem] can be met not by large grants of funds, supplies or equipment but by helping people to develop simple improvements in methods and practices which they themselves will understand and carry forward.”494 Jonathan Bingham, acting administrator after Bennett’s untimely death, wrote to TCA staff that the U.S.’s role in foreign aid was to not be in control or administer programs for other countries; rather, “Fundamentally, our role is that of educators who have been asked to train, guide, advise, and assist. Only thus can our assistance be requested and accepted with dignity.”495

492 Cited by Clark, Four Monographs, CDA, p. 16.


495 Memo Draft from Bingham to TCA Staff, April 16, 1952, p. 3, Michigan State University Archives, John Hannah Papers, Collection UA 2.1.12, Box 80, Folder 39.
Given the allure of rural development and the humanitarian intent of Point Four, policymakers drew explicitly on the educational and agricultural legacies of missionaries. Thorp suggested in 1951 that because of missionaries, economic development assistance was “nothing new to the United States.”496 Bennett, after describing Point Four as a pioneering venture in education, added: “But we cannot claim to be the first on the scene. The missionaries began it, more than a hundred years ago. Almost everywhere you go in the service of Point 4 you can see the traces of their work. And what you see is good . . .”497 Stanley Andrews, Bennett’s successor at the TCA and former Director of FAR, commented that he visited missionaries on his worldwide inspection trips and “courted” their opinions. Douglas Ensminger, another FAR veteran, noted: “. . . very much of the missionary work was drawn on to document that the approaches they [Point Four administrators] were talking about would work.”498

This was not mere lip-service. Bennett hinted at the importance of the Middle East, especially because of its extensive missionary presence, when he discussed “a cooperative program with the American University of Beirut for the benefit of the Arab states”.499 Embodied by the NEF and the AUB, the Khadoorie Agricultural School at Tulkarem had connected American missionary efforts with those of the British colonial


497 Cited by Clark, Four Monographs, CDA, p. 16.


authorities. By the 1950s, this missiological lineage continued to bear fruit, as the AUB once again combined with an outside state power – the U.S. government’s aid agency – to advise locals (not only Palestinians, but now Jordanians and the Jordanian state) on the use of education to promote social and economic development. By the Fall 1954, AUB staff were consulting with Jordanian and American officials on how to buttress the curriculum and allow for expanded training in the U.S and at AUB for the school’s graduates.500

Latin America had the largest Point Four commitments in the early 1950s, due to the infrastructure laid down in the 1930s by the IIAA. Yet, aside from this hemisphere, the first countries to sign Point Four agreements were from the Middle East: by late 1951, TCA had agreements with Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, and Iran, while Iraq and Egypt would soon follow.501 By 1952, U.S field personnel in South Asia included 60 persons (45 in India) compared with 205 in the Near East and Africa.502 Security concerns were certainly a factor – policymakers were concerned about the Soviet threat to Iran while the region was among the first to decolonize from European control theoretically opening it up to potential communist influence. And of course, by 1950, the instability of the Palestinian refugee crisis and tensions between Israel and the Arab states added to these concerns

500 Project SA 278-62-063, Khadoorie Agricultural School, June 1, 1961, p. 3, MECA, MEDD (0203), Box 19, Book 2.
502 Summary Report of Point Four Country Programs (February 29, 1952), pp. 19, 7, MSU Archives, John Hannah Papers, Collection UA 2.1.12, Box 80, Folder 39. Other countries in South Asia included Afghanistan, Ceylon, Nepal, and Pakistan. The breakdown in the Near East and Africa was as follows: 11 in Egypt, 75 in Iran, 4 in Iraq, 6 in Israel, 3 in Jordan, 31 in Lebanon, 10 in Saudi Arabia, 50 in Liberia and 9 in Libya.
(discussed more below). Another factor was a division of labor between Point Four and the Economic Cooperation Administration, which oversaw the Marshall Plan in Europe and adopted some of the economic assistance to Asia. Yet, the cooperation between NEF and the U.S. aid agencies is noteworthy. As Syria refused Point Four assistance, TCA officials provided NEF with a grant to extend its program there in 1951;\textsuperscript{503} NEF accepted government funds for work in Jordan in the mid-1950s;\textsuperscript{504} and NEF worked intimately with Point Four personnel in Iran. The Point Four country director there would later comment that “its men freely shared with us the lessons they had learned . . . and helped us avoid many mistakes.” Moreover, NEF staff “served Point 4 as field liaison among . . . 350 villages” and participated in “all [of] our staff meetings.”\textsuperscript{505} In this way, the Point Four rural development presence in the Middle East built on the work of the MESC, continued to undermine British influence there, and laid the groundwork for the emergence of community development.

As with NEF, U.S. policymakers turned to PVOs more generally. Truman described Point Four as a “cooperative enterprise,” noting to congress that Point Four would be “an undertaking which will call upon private enterprise and voluntary organizations in the United States, as well as the Government . . .”\textsuperscript{506} After legislation

\textsuperscript{503} Summary Report of Point Four Country Programs (February 29, 1952), p. 18, MSU Archives, John Hannah Papers, Collection UA 2.1.12, Box 80, Folder 39.

\textsuperscript{504} See the files in “Community Development 1955-1956,” NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Jordan, Series 1269, Box 2.


\textsuperscript{506} Quoted in Annals, p. 184.
passed on June 5, 1950, Point Four staff sought the cooperation of PVOs immediately and formulated cooperation guidelines in October 1950. The TCA also established a board of consultants through which many PVOs gave counsel;\(^{507}\) Allen was part of this group.

PVOs returned the favor out of a combination of patriotic, religious and humanitarian convictions. As other scholars have noted, nongovernmental and church groups were among the strongest supporters of Point Four.\(^{508}\) Their drive to see Point Four succeed operated in no small part on an assumption – one shared by policymakers – that a world dominated by communism was a world inhospitable at best, downright intolerant at worse, to religious faith and practice.\(^{509}\) There also existed a hope that Point Four could become a truly humanitarian element of American foreign policy, extending their own forms of Christian obligations to serve others. A member of the American Friends Service Committee, for example, expressed the pride and excitement of PVOs after Truman’s announcement:

> Our country, of which we are mighty proud . . . was taking the lead in proposing to the world an investment in humanity that was far reaching, farsighted, and that would implement some of the heritage that Americans have always had for the dignity of the human being. It was a bold, new program and we began to look around immediately to determine how . . . it could be implemented.\(^{510}\)

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\(^{507}\) Fangmeier, “The Churches and Point IV,” p. 92.

\(^{508}\) Shenin, *America and the Third World*; Ekbladh asserts that alongside Point Four’s officializing of existing ideas and practices, it mobilized “groups already committed to the process,” *Great American Mission*, p. 79.


While groups like NEF had long been in the technical assistance business, World War II had prompted the creation of new agencies most of which focused on relief aid to Europe. During the 1940s rehabilitation tended to be oriented toward relief aid: using resources to provide employment or education, public health and sanitation, child care, cooperatives, vocational training, or literacy programs. An ACVAFS official noted in early 1950 that “Many voluntary agencies are now working in areas presently considered ‘Point IV’, and the Council staff feels that there is a strong upswing in concern by present member agencies” and that many “presently working on ‘Point IV’” were “not aware of it.”

Point Four did, however, spur a concerted effort on the part of voluntary agencies within ACVAFS to move more firmly in explicitly “development” directions. And the State Department encouraged it. As early as April 1949, Point Four and possible PVO involvement were discussed by ACVAFS members. By June, PVOs began rushing to assemble data on their overseas programs that was to be used by the State Department as background material in the administration’s pitch for concrete legislation for Point Four. And, in response to State Department wishes, ACVAFS established a Committee on Technical Assistance and Projects in May 1950. During the legislative process,

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512 This post-1945 move on the part of voluntary agencies from relief to development is a primary argument in Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, Chapter 6. See also the stats in Clark, *Four Monographs*, CDA, pp. 6.

513 Clark, *Four Monographs*, CDA, pp. 3-5.

514 Pre-Meeting of Technical Assistance and Project Committee, April 27, 1950, Rutgers Archives, ACVAFS, Box 115, Folder: Point Four Committee Meeting Minutes 1950. The new committee, notably, included representatives from not only the NEF, but also the AFSC, MCC, BSC, and CRS.
ACVAFS lobbied congress on behalf of a bill that included a provision for a citizens’ advisory board. ACVAFS moved to leverage this opening for input on the Point Four program and a series of meetings began between the agencies and State Department and TCA personnel during Point Four’s planning and implementation phases.

PVOs were also a practical source of experience that dovetailed with the needs of economic containment. The small-scale, low-cost, localized, self-help, and largely agrarian work of groups like NEF, the American Friends Service Committee, Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and YMCA/YWCA was particularly relevant for the Point Four program.

NEF, which joined ACVAFS at its founding in 1943, remained an important receptacle of experience for both PVOs and the government. In terms of cooperation, the work of NEF was a model the government repeatedly held up. Nelson Rockefeller, head of Point Four’s citizen advisory board, suggested to ACVAFS reps that the NEF’s work in Iran was an example of likely cases where PVOs might carry out technical assistance projects with government funds. And, undoubtedly under fortuitous circumstances, NEF became the first American PVO to sign a Point Four contract with the U.S. Government (January 31, 1951). Even in 1952, Point Four officials were still pointing


516 NEF’s contract was for community development work in Iran; this was possible because Iran was the first country to sign a Point Four agreement with the US government. Point Four aid required bilateral agreements and thus NEF benefited by working in a country that quickly signed an agreement. Clark, *Four Monographs*, CDA, pp. 15. Thereafter, contracts were signed with the Unitarian Service Committee (Israel), the AFSC (India), and the World Student Service Fund (India), all emphasizing community and education. Respectively, these projects were for: a medical training mission in cooperation with the WHO; rural welfare and community development; training of rural workers.
toward the “similar programs” of “private organizations such as the Near East Foundation” in rural villages. Moreover, in crafting a narrative about ACVAFS’ response to Point Four, an organizational history pointed to NEF’s earlier post-war turn from relief to self-help: “mass education of a simple, direct sort, carried to the people in their fields and their workshops. . . . It should accent ‘helping to do’ rather than ‘doing for’.”

Thomas J. McMahon, of the CNEWA, had written a 1945 review of Allen’s *Come Over into Macedonia* in which he praised NEF’s self-help approach and noted that amidst the world war’s “indescribable” conditions organizations would find “a blueprint for the future.”

ACVAFS’s Committee on Technical Assistance and Projects created a working group on agriculture and its report gave nods to the work of FAR and the IIAA, noting that “all too frequently industrialization and urbanization are urged as means of rectifying conditions in these agricultural-peasant economies . . . In the last analysis, improvement and development must begin, or at least run simultaneously, on the local and village level.” Change had to be holistic, long-term, locally-contextualized, human-centered, and aimed at the whole of village life starting with the farm families. Specific PVO roles in agricultural development included: sending personnel ready to work with rural communities on “a basis of friendship and cooperation”; on raising economic status

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through better breeds, seeds, and techniques; by promoting sanitation, health, and improved diets; by encouraging literacy and “education suitable to rural people”; by assisting local government agencies in bringing information to the people; by “fostering better attitudes toward needed changes, and by helping the people adjust to changes; by encouraging the formation of cooperatives and credit unions; and by assisting those youths who did decide to depart for urban centers or industrial work. Community development would owe its existence in no small part to the ongoing work of these PVOs and their efforts to maintain Point Four’s original orientation. But rural development would first have to survive the events of 1948.

“Idle, Destitute People”: Development and the Nakba

In a letter to the British Director of Education in Palestine in January 1948, Allen wrote that “our Palestine friends are very much in our minds these days.” He suggested that “all of us who are at all familiar with that part of the country are quite unhappy over recent developments and quite unsympathetic with some of the policies developed in high places – for what reasons I certainly do not know.” Although vague in his references, Allen was registering his displeasure with the U.S. government’s backing of partition for Palestine, made during a UN General Assembly session in October 1947. A year later, in


the wake of Israel’s establishment and the onset of the Palestinian refugee crisis, an NEF plea for donations suggested that “The passing years have constantly deepened the conviction that such an organization as Near East Foundation is indispensable in the process of bringing peace and stability to the Near East. No final settlement can be achieved by military and political means alone. There must be created the basis of peace and security among the rank and file of the people where they live.”523

While events in Asia – from Mao Zedong’s victory in China to the outbreak of the Korean War to the French debacle in Vietnam – were significant reasons for the U.S. to focus its energies on Asia, the foundation of Israel in 1948 is critical to an understanding of the evolution of American development policy in the early Cold War period. Even before Point Four came into existence, policymakers in the State Department began to challenge its nascent rural development orientation, claiming it was insufficient economically and politically to meet the diplomatic challenges unleashed in the region in 1948. In other words, the displacement of Palestinian Arabs and conflict between the new state of Israel and her Arab neighbors within a hardening Cold War provided modernizing visions with greater leverage to displace rural development thinking. Even as political intractability made development an alluring means of trying to achieve a settlement, foreign aid confusion and the increasingly political usages to which policymakers put American foreign aid only deepened the crisis and conflict between Israel and the Arab states. The Arab Palestinians found themselves in the cross-fire,

523 Form Letter by Laird Archer, January 1949, Rutgers Archives, ACVAFS, Box 32, Folder: NEF Correspondence.
pawns in larger regional and geopolitical battles as well as development ideological disagreements.

The question of Palestine became a thorn in the side of American-British postwar relations as peace in the region once again hinged on refugees – first Jewish, then Arab. The war had temporarily halted direct confrontation between the Zionist and Arab communities but tension had continued to build. The end of the war punctured the fragile stability. Realizing their tenuous position among the Arab states, the British government backpaddled on support for Zionism, (in)famously halting immigration to Palestine by the survivors of Hitler’s Holocaust. President Truman did not help the situation with his open calls for support to the beleaguered European Jewish community. Whatever plans the British held for Palestine’s place within their post-1945 development plans quickly dissolved amidst the virtual civil war that engulfed the mandate. With the British unable to shoulder domestic reconstruction while maintaining their colonial prowess, the maelstrom in Palestine became an unwanted responsibility. Becoming targets of both sides, and unable to square their dual objectives for the mandate with their desired role within the Middle East as a whole, the British laid the question of Palestine’s future at the door of the new United Nations in February 1947.


525 Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East*, p. 25. The cost of holding Palestine had begun to outweigh its strategic benefits. Terror attacks between May 1945 and May 1946 had killed 184 and wounded 371 British soldiers; by late 1946, the British had boosted their troop presence from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand – a move that Jewish militants responded to by bombing the King David Hotel and the British Officers Club in Jerusalem.
Truman and his White House advisers saw in supporting Zionism both political expediency (courting the American Jewish vote in the November 1948 presidential elections) and an expression of humanitarianism mixed with guilt for the fate of European Jewry. With the issue now in the UN, the American position supported partition at the General Assembly Vote in November 1947, allowing for a Jewish and an Arab state, against the wishes of the State Department. They, like their British counterparts, saw American interests best served by a close relationship with the region’s Arabs – a position threatened by support for Zionism. Amidst Arab anger and rising violence, the U.S. position began to move from partition to U.N. trusteeship in 1948, although the discussion became moot. The British announced in December 1947 that they were ending their mandate authority in May 1948 which only intensified the violence. As the last troops evacuated Palestine on May 15, the virtual civil war in Palestine became an overt one. The Jewish community in Palestine declared themselves an independent state.

With better preparation and more cohesion as a community, the Jews gained the upper hand against the Arab resistance. The war became regional as the neighboring Arab states then invaded Palestine to help defeat the Zionist forces. Hampered by internal rivalries and poor coordination, the Arab coalition was defeated. A UN ceasefire came into force, its boundaries becoming de facto borders. Egypt controlled the Gaza strip and Jordan the West Bank. The war produced a new humanitarian crisis: the displacement of

Scholarship on Truman’s policies toward Palestine after 1945 and his recognition of Israel have generally fallen into three categories: political motivation to win American Jewish votes, humanitarian concern for Jews after the Holocaust, and hybridization of these various concerns. For a policy historiography, see: Michael J. Cohen, “Truman and Palestine, 1945-1948: Revisionism, Politics, and Diplomacy,” *Modern Judaism* 2, No. 1 (February 1982).
over 800,000 Arab Palestinians who took up residence in refugee camps in neighboring Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. The topic of the causes of the crisis has been hotly debated, but Israel bears responsibility for the flight of many Arab Palestinians; indeed, many of the villages amidst which Tannous worked in the 1930s were effectively erased in 1948/49. The reality of the refugees would alter calculations for development aid and would be the locus of differences of thought on appropriate approaches.

In much Cold War scholarship, scholars analyze the Korean War as a pivotal event, seeming to validate U.S. policymakers’ worst fears about communist expansionism. North Korea’s act of aggression helped lead to the adoption of NSC-68 and the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. Containment, initially based on economic and psychological emphases, now involved increased military strength (at home and among allies) and a global stance against communism all around the world. A new Mutual Security Agency (MSA) was created to coordinate both economic and military assistance with economic aid now tied to military development. And, in 1952 legislation, congress stipulated that countries could only receive aid if they could offer some form of strategic assistance to the U.S.

Truman and advocates had hitched Point Four to a philosophy of change and development that stressed cooperative and intimate relationships and long-term, gradual change from within local conditions. This philosophy, with its “shirtsleeve” style, was


not amenable to the new sense of urgency permeating post-1950 Cold War policy circles in which short-term strategic imperatives trumped long-term humanitarian considerations. State Department officials, never terribly fond of the Point Four idea, sought to reorient foreign aid toward modernization projects that could be used for more practical, immediate political and security purposes.529

However, this shift against rural development began in the wake of 1948; the Korean War only accelerated the process. As the United Nations struggled to meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians scattered across refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Gaza, policymakers in Washington hoped for a quick settlement. The State Department originally favored repatriation – of having Arab refugees return to their homes and lands in Israel. Notably, however, by 1949 policymakers began to resign themselves to advocating a policy of resettlement, in which refugees would take up permanent residence in other Arab countries. The shift in policy came in the face of Israeli inflexibility on the question of repatriation; unable to exact concessions, the U.S. settled for resettlement, despite stiff resistance from the refugees themselves.530 The UN General Assembly voted in Resolution 194 in December 1948 for the right of refugees to repatriation or compensation. At a failed peace conference at Lausanne in April 1949, intractable positions had emerged: the Arab states represented (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt) insisted on repatriation while Israel refused, likely with a combination of security, economic, and ideological concerns, to countenance any


530 Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East*, Chapter 7.
large-scale repatriation plan. Continued stalemate between Israel and her Arab neighbors as well as the ongoing plight of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees made the region unstable and therefore potentially open to communist influence. The refugee crisis therefore became an acute site of security as well as humanitarian concern. George McGhee suggested to Congress in early 1950 that “The presence of three quarter of a million idle, destitute people . . . whose discontent increases with the passage of time, is the greatest threat to the security of the area which now exists.”

Within this context, development aid became a tool for peacemaking as well as the securing of national interests; and as the reality of trying to resettle hundreds of thousands of refugees came to the fore, rural development approaches seemed ill-suited, both on humanitarian and political grounds. Modernization aid was the way forward. Thus, even before Point Four became a reality, its rural development orientation was being challenged in the wake of the Palestinian refugee crisis. Large public works programs, infrastructure projects, and the model of the TVA – given that water in the region was a perennial concern for any form of resettlement – became prominent. As one Palestinian agricultural official put it in 1942: “Moisture, or the lack of it, is the controlling factor.” Outside of the areas where water was readily available, “the farmer

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must regulate his sowings according to the amount of water that is, or he hopes will be, available.”

It bears remembering that Point Four was never just about technical assistance; its compliment was capital investment. A mix of rural reconstruction practices and contemporary economic thought, the theory was that countries could only absorb capital (for goods, equipment, factories, etc.) if they had the know-how and trained manpower to absorb it. Although many commentators agreed that both were necessary for economic growth, differences existed over which should have primacy. The embodiment of the modernization emphasis was the “impact project.” Rather than using the cumulative effect of many small projects over a longer period of time, the impact project was grounded in two ideas: first, spectacular projects would so awe local peoples that they would more quickly adopt modern values and ways of life and second, that economic prosperity could be achieved much faster. What mattered, in the end, were results – not carefully-guided processes of human development.

In a 1961 report on the history of U.S. support for Khadoorie, the writers frankly admitted the stunted progress of the school. These failings were due in no small part, they concluded, to errors in judgment, lack of cooperation among planners, and exploding budget costs amidst expanding (and competing) visions for what the school should and could accomplish. Planning had fallen victim not only to bureaucratic squabbles but also impact project thinking on the part of certain American technicians, boosted by similarly grand visions of Jordanian counterparts. These included the unnecessary purchase of a

533 Memorandum on Food Production in Palestine, ca. 1942, p. 1, NAK FO 922/97.
“seven-foot self-propelled” combine harvester in which community participation in harvesting without such an expensive purchase was seemingly overlooked while “the terrain does not lend itself to either extensive production of grain or the easy operation of a combine.” A science laboratory was originally planned in simple terms with a modest budget of $100,000, but quickly “mushroomed” into a $250,000 structure “entirely beyond the needs of the junior college” but without any concomitant planning to establish a four-year, degree-granting college to fit.534

George McGhee, with the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, later recalled that he “never thought much” of the original Point Four approach. “The application of technological advances alone without capital and organization has very limited impact. . . . What I sought to do . . . was to attempt to enlarge this concept to a more substantial scale that would have practical effects.”535 Bennett came to the defense of Point Four’s origins. In 1951, he noted that “[w]e hear a great deal today about ‘impact’ programs.” Comparing technical cooperation to David’s slingshot against Goliath – a “delicate precision instrument” – he argued that “If David had been equipped with a sixteen-inch cannon, he probably would have missed Goliath altogether. In like fashion, if the Point Four Program were in a position today to give away a billion dollars’ worth of capital goods . . . it would produce no enduring results.”536 In December 1951, during a visit to Iran, Bennett, along with his wife and a number of other high-level TCA

534 Project SA 278-62-063, Khadoorie Agricultural School, June 1, 1961, p. 21, MECA, MEDD (0203), Box 19, Book 2.

535 McGhee Oral History Interview, 43-45.

staff, perished in a plane crash. His death was a body blow to Point Four and although his replacement, Stanley Andrews, former director of FAR, continued along Bennett’s lines, he lacked Bennett’s political and administrative acumen. Yet, the TCA’s advisory board, consisting of the likes of Harold B. Allen, Monsignor L.G. Ligutti of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and John H. Reisner of Agricultural Missions, Inc., sent a memo to Clayton Whipple as Director of the Agricultural and Resources Development Staff of the TCA indicating that they stood with Bennett’s philosophy on Point Four aid and wanted to reiterate that even as pressure mounted and appropriations increased, “the TCA program . . . should be confined to the originally stated objective of helping people to help themselves, rather than to be utilized as an expedient to attain political and/or military policy objectives.”

Clear differences existed between Point Four and TVA approaches. Two examples demonstrate this claim. In the first, Truman appointed Edwin A. Locke, Jr., who had worked previously in Saudi Arabia investing capital for Chase National Bank, as a regional U.S. Economic and Technical Assistance Administrator to help coordinate assistance. After surveying the scene, Locke argued that Point Four aid was not having the impact desired. Out of a sense of urgency for the sake of the refugees and wider Arab sentiment, he called for “a more significant infusion of development capital” and made recommendations for nine possible projects, all of the “impact variety” – dams, large-scale irrigation, modernization of ports. Locke drew ire from Point Four staff on the

537 Memo from Board of Consultants to Clayton E. Whipple, February 28, 1952, Michigan State University Archives, John Hannah Papers, Collection UA 2.1.12, Box 80, Folder 39 (emphasis in original).

ground and the differences in development policy came to a head at a meeting between Point Four officials and State Department staff in Washington D.C.\textsuperscript{539} Similarly, disputes erupted over plans to harness the water resources of the Jordan Valley. Israel was anxious to secure access, given the state of war with her Arab neighbors. Other Arab states, most notably Jordan, wished to ensure their fair share. And of course, for UNRWA and the U.S. and British governments, any refugee resettlement plan would have to account for water resources. The TVA model held out an alluring option, given its potential to provide both development assistance (through irrigation and hydroelectric power) and a diplomatic wedge to get countries to the bargaining table. Plans to use the Jordan River for development and resettlement of refugees encountered conflicting approaches, between the agrarian liberals who favored land reform and wished to focus on creating and assisting small land-holding farmers and the industrial liberals who favored modernizing agriculture as a way to boost national productivity and ease a country like Jordan off budget subsidies.\textsuperscript{540}

President Dwight Eisenhower appointed Eric Johnston, a businessman, to find a solution to disputes over the Jordan Valley’s water resources, especially the Jordan River’s largest tributary, the Yarmouk, running through Syria, Jordan, and Israel. Over a two-year period between 1953 and 1955, Johnston made four visits to the region in the

\textsuperscript{539} On Locke’s mission, see: Kingston, “Ambassador for the Arabs.” Citations here from pp. 34-36. A smaller, $25 million fund was created for “more moderately demanding projects” which were to be drawn up in cooperation with the Point Four country directors; ibid., pp. 40-41.

\textsuperscript{540} Nathan Citino, “The Ghosts of Development: The United States and Jordan’s East Ghor Canal,” \textit{Journal of Cold War Studies} 16, No. 4 (Fall 2014), pp. 159-188.
hopes of creating a unified development plan involving Israel and the Arab states.\textsuperscript{541} The Johnston Plan, argues historian Nathan Citino, melded both approaches. Enough water diverted from the Yarmouk river through an East Ghor Canal could provide irrigation to around 175,000 people, mostly Palestinian refugees while boosting GNP by a factor of five. However, Citino suggests, he “gave priority to the creation of yeoman farmers over fostering efficient agriculture.”\textsuperscript{542}

Furthermore, Afif Tannous found himself working alongside Gordon Clapp in 1948. Both were members of the UN Economic Survey Mission to the Middle East as part of the UN’s short-lived Palestine Conciliation Commission which sought to help resolve the conflict between Israel and the Arab states. The Economic Survey Mission was tasked with advising on economic development possibilities for the region with an eye toward the Palestinian refugees. The UN appointed Clapp, of the TVA’s board of directors, to head it. “[H]e was a wonderful leader. I developed a beautiful association with him,” recalled Tannous about Clapp. Tannous further related that Clapp informed him to use his connections to talk with the refugees: “Now you go ahead on your own. I'll be talking to them too but I want you to talk and see how they react to our mission.’ We did.”\textsuperscript{543}

Like its members – Tannous, previously with the NEF, and Clapp, of the TVA – the Economic Survey Mission’s final report held conclusions that were a hybrid of


\textsuperscript{543} Tannous Oral History Interview, pp. 12, 13.
development styles. Clapp remarked that the mission had originally hoped “that several large development projects . . . could be recommended for immediate exploitation by large capital outlays.” They decided however that this could not be so as the people and governments were simply not ready. “To press forward on such a course is to pursue folly and frustration and thereby delay sound economic growth.”544 Higher standards of living “cannot be bestowed by one upon another like a gift. An improved economy does not come in a neat package sold or given away in the market place.” A primary guiding principle should be to “Help to those who have the will to help themselves . . .” Given the urgency of the situation, a start was desperately needed, but the political and technical circumstances led the report writers to advocate a slow, cautious approach using pilot projects as demonstrations that would build vital human technical and administrative capacities that would benefit larger, future projects and would stimulate action in neighboring countries. The report noted: “The cumulative educational effect of the many small facets in a single unified development project would influence social, economic and administrative practices in neighbouring lands.” It admitted: this “may not seem ambitious; in the judgment of the Mission they fit the realities of the present situation” by providing, for a small sum, the beginnings of building up natural resources and human experience by training “Men and Governments” who “learn by doing.” It also argued, with likely influence from Tannous, that “one should be slow to condemn the peasant who eschews a tractor for a nailboard plow” since “the different values for which human

beings expend their energies illustrate the lack of agreement on the validity of purely material standards as a measure of advancement – or even of content.”

And yet, given the area’s climate and geography, the recommended projects were all based on utilizing the region’s primary water resources, particularly through dams.

Conclusion

In September 1954, PVO representatives met with the International Development Advisory Board – the citizens advisory body that had begun under Point Four. The topic of the conference was to discuss the U.S. aid government’s use of PVOs in community development programs. The Executive Director and Executive Committee members of International Voluntary Service (IVS) – a PVO acting explicitly as a mechanism of cooperation with the U.S. foreign aid agencies – were in attendance. Their meeting minutes note: “All agreed that it seemed to be the judgment of those in attendance at the conference that the part of the voluntary agencies in the overall [foreign aid] program was worthy of a larger place than had been given to it and that [the advisory body] would put

545 UNESMME Final Report, pp. 9, 5, 6.

546 UNESMME Final Report, pp. 2, 1; quotation from p. 1. Nor did this mean that industrialization or agricultural modernization should be foregone – rather, modernized agriculture “would allow for industrial crops as well as foodstuffs” and would be the basis upon which future industrialization would ultimately rest. Notably, the ESM received from the countries it visited lists of various development projects they desired or thought would help the most. Typical were plans for land reclamation through large-scale irrigation, production of electricity through water power, and the opening up of foreign investment in things like cement mills, soap factories, or phosphate production. As desirable as these types of projects were – and would contribute to needed foreign credit – there simply was not capital to implement them. Ibid., pp. 3-5.
forth an honest effort to see that this impression was carried to the proper policy-making officials in FOA [the Foreign Operations Administration].”

IVS, formed in 1953, straddled the divide between Point Four and community development in their early work. One of their first projects was in the West Bank assisting Palestinian refugees. The young men recruited would struggle with what one State Department representative told ACVAFS members was the “necessity for transmitting techniques without transmitting cultural patterns; the program must not be used to impose our cultural patterns on other countries.”

The failed project of Arab Unity along with the end of MESC’s efforts to provide the foundation for region-wide agricultural cooperation and exchange together had disastrous consequences for the Palestine people. In Palestine in particular, the inability to cooperate on agricultural development included a failure to substantially aid Palestinians Arabs in the downward spiral toward open civil war after 1945. Musa ‘Alami, a Palestinian notable and former British mandate official in Palestine, had been the Palestinian Arab representative at the Alexandria Protocol meeting of the Arab League in 1944. He had secured a nominal commitment to assistance in aiding Arab Palestinians in the conflict with Zionism. When this support floundered, however, ‘Alami looked first to British and then American assistance. IVS was ready to assist him.

547 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, September 21, 1954, MCUA, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2.

548 Cited by Clark, Four Monographs, CDA, p. 5.
CHAPTER 5:
“RECONSTITUTING THE DISPERSED PALESTINIAN ARAB COMMUNITY”:
REFUGEES AND RESETTLEMENT ON THE WEST BANK, 1948-1956

Introduction

Amidst the blinding sun on a scorching August day in the Jordan Valley in 1949, Musa Alami and a handful of his household members walked south from the Jerusalem-Amman road near Jericho. After about twenty yards, “I simply couldn’t walk any further,” Alami recalled, as the salty soil gave way up to his knees. Making a small canopy out of wooden posts and a light covering, the men set to work digging a hole ten-feet in diameter. Digging by hand was of course slow, laborious work, and soon Alami had hired some refugees from nearby camps to help dig. With the advice of a young man who had previously worked for a boring company, the small band rigged up a machine made of welded pipes, a pulley, and a baler. Eventually they were able to produce a motor and the work quickened.

Alami suffered a bout of chronic colitis that winter and was staying in Jerusalem for treatment when his presence was urgently requested down at the digging site. After arriving by car, and aided by a man helping him to walk, Alami approached the group of laborers by the hole. “[T]here was a silence of death,” he recalled, and the young man from the boring company quietly lowered a pitcher by rope into the hole. “Have you

549 Symptoms included fatigue, joint swelling, chills, diarrhea and dehydration. He periodically took cures in Karlsbad. Information from Alami’s medical records found in “Musa Eff Alami,” 758/25, Israel State Archives (hereafter ISA).
found water?” Alami asked. Pulling it up, it was filled with muddy water. The young man handed it to Alami who took a sip. “[I]t was sweet; and I put down the pitcher, and I felt as if I were choking, and I looked round at the others and I saw tears running down all their faces, as well as mine. No one said anything: it was all too unexpected, too good to be true; but it had happened.” They had struck water in the desert.550

Popularized in American and British press, this vignette was retold within simpler, but well-worn narrative grooves: an inspiring story of a man defying the odds by discovering substantial subsoil water in the hot, dry southern portion of the Jordan Valley and establishing an experimental demonstration farm and an agricultural training center for Palestinian refugees. What’s often missing in these retellings is the backstory. Born in 1897, Musa Alami was a Palestinian Arab from a wealthy, land-owning family in Jerusalem. Alami’s father, Faidy, had been an Arab representative to the Ottoman Parliament and was a former Mayor of Jerusalem. Thus the Alami family was well-known among the incoming British Mandate authorities and Faidy was able to secure for his son schooling in law at Cambridge University in 1919. After passing the bar, Alami practiced as a Junior Crown council for the British government in Palestine. He would then briefly become High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope’s Private Secretary.

550 This story is drawn from Alami’s biographer, Sir Geoffrey Furlonge, who includes Alami’s retelling unedited. See: Palestine is My Country: The Story of Musa Alami (New York: Praeger, 1969), pp. 170-177. Furlonge was a lifelong British diplomat for the Levant region and he knew Alami personally after 1961 when he helped create the British Friends of ADS.
Wauchope had a penchant for obtaining local insights and experiences, as he did with Afif Tannous, and Alami frequently advised him on Arab matters.  

I argue in this chapter that Alami and the ADS continued the grass-roots model of self-help rural development pioneered by NEF. Alami was likely familiar with the Department of Education’s work with the NEF and their approach to village development. After all, the Alami family owned large estates and thus dealt on a daily basis with the business of agricultural production and the matters of the peasants, or fellaheen, who worked their lands. As his father’s only son, Musa grew up close to his father’s work and, by his own account, developed a fondness for the countryside and an empathy for Palestinian farmers “which he was to retain all his life.” ADS emerged in no small part from the MESC’s attempt to promote both Arab unity and regional agricultural improvement. In the waning years of World War II, and within the context of the emergent civil war between Arabs and Jews by war’s end, Alami turned to nation-building. He looked to bolster the Arab community through agricultural development and land security even as he sought wider Arab support for his efforts through the Arab League. His commitment to nation-building only deepened in 1948 with the founding of Israel and the Palestinian refugee crisis. His work would move from village technical assistance in the mid-1940s to refugee resettlement and orphan care in the Jordan Valley after 1948. Founding the non-profit ADS to assist him, Alami saw his efforts as a self-

551 Furlonge, My Country, pp. 72, 98-102. See also: CO 967/93, Letter from Arthur Wauchope to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, August 20, 1937, National Archives at Kew (hereafter NAK).

552 Furlonge, My Country, p. 10.
help pilot project “in the great task of reconstituting the dispersed Palestinian Arab community,” in the apt phrasing of Alami’s friend, Cecil Hourani.553

Common in such cultural adaptations, Alami utilized this strain of rural development for his own political and social purposes: across his efforts with village technical assistance, refugee resettlement, and orphan care, he argued that these development strategies would build a nation from the bottom-up by securing Arab Palestinians on the land and thereby preventing Israeli expansion. Although Alami spoke to a Western model of rural development, his work fit within other Arab entities following similar logics. This included the students at AUB’s Rural Life Institute and the Arab Student League. More germane was the Arabic Society for Economic Revival, or the Arab Development and Economic Society, run out of Haifa in the 1920s. The organization sought to better Arab Palestinian life, including the lives of the fellaheen. It condemned the “evils of idleness” and advocated expanded educational opportunities for schools and young men, cooperation, and “drilling in self-help.” The British political analysis of the group was that they were pushing a press campaign to convince Palestinian nationalist leaders to turn their efforts to economic matters to beat back Zionism.554

Alami was nothing if not pragmatic. Alami would also draw on Zionist examples, such as intensive dairy and poultry-raising and a kibbutz growing crops on purportedly


554 See the files in ISA 4/4.
uncultivatable portions of the southern Jordan Valley. And the evolution of his thinking about development and resettlement across the late 1940s and early 1950s demonstrated the fluidity of modernization and rural development approaches. I therefore suggest both the importance of a longer historical lens that contextualizes “self-help” not just within Alami’s patriarchal tendencies but his exposure to British, American, and Zionist ideas and practices; and a firmer grounding in Arab refugee and Jordanian politics, especially the question of resettlement or repatriation.555

The ADS sought but failed to secure consistent outside Arab backing so turned to the West for financial and material support. This chapter thus continues to follow the connections between American and British efforts in rural development. Even as separate technical assistance programs had emerged, the crystallization of community development in the British empire pushed the Americans to follow suit; this task was made easier since the foundations had already been laid in Point Four. Whereas Africa was the lodestar for British efforts in this regard, the Middle East played a similar role for the U.S. I support this argument through an exploration of the aid that one American voluntary agency, the Mennonite and Brethren-affiliated International Voluntary Service (IVS), provided to the ADS project. The subtle supplanting of British with American influence in the region was marked by British confinement to technical assistance and

American adoption of community development. By the early 1950s, Alami himself became disillusioned with the lack of British support and turned to the U.S.

“Raising the Standard of the Fellah”: Sanduq al-Umma al-Arabiyya

After multiple meetings with hesitant Egyptian officials and coy British diplomatic personnel, Alami was finally granted access to the Preparatory Committee at Alexandria in 1944. He did so, however, on the condition of representing Palestinian Arabs only and not “all of Palestine.” Looking out at the sea of Arab delegates from across the region, Alami set to sharply berating them for their lack of spine in the face of British interference in what should have been a purely Arab matter. The acidity of his comments were such that the Chairman had them stricken from the official record.

Alami left the conference feeling that he had made real progress. The members agreed to Alami’s two recommendations regarding positive Arab action for Palestine. To counter international Zionist propaganda, the first was to establish Arab Offices in critical capitals around the world. The second was the creation of a fund (Sanduq al-Umma al-Arabiyya) to bolster rural Palestine. Alami, an enigma within Palestinian Arab politics, had been chosen as the Palestinian representative to the Alexandria Conference as a compromise measure among the competing Palestinian political parties. His rather quick

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558 Beside the Arab states, the first Arab Offices would be set up in London, Washington D.C., and New York. The Arab Offices were to promote and popularize the Arab point of view vis a vis the Zionists.
decision, therefore, to shirk the newly-established Umma Fund in favor of a private company (the ADS) due to Arab infighting, was questioned by Palestinian presses who wondered why another such entity was needed. And the Jewish Agency reported that “Arab circles state that the new company is bound to be a failure.”

I categorize ADS’s first six years of existence (1945-1951) into three stages: first, still under the British mandate, Alami envisioned the ADS as a mechanism for agricultural extension, providing holistic social and technical assistance to the villages of Palestine; second, after the founding of Israel in 1948 and the beginning of the refugee crisis, Alami used the ADS to secure land near Jericho on the then-Jordanian occupied West Bank in order to establish an experimental farm and a model village as demonstrations for resettling Palestinian refugees in the Jordan Valley; finally, by 1951, Alami retooled these ADS projects to provide a home and adapted education for orphaned Palestinian boys.

The Alexandria Conference deferred the question of implementation of Alami’s idea to a sub-committee, and, as the Palestinian representative, it fell to Alami to provide concrete suggestions. Alami therefore returned from Egypt asking the British authorities for both cooperation in the scheme and information to help devise it. The scheme of rural improvement that he subsequently developed strikingly mirrored that of the NEF-British efforts of the 1930s, stating with the diagnoses of the problem: lack of land

559 “Arab Political News,” April 25, 1945, pp. 2-4, Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem (hereafter CZA), L35/1.

560 Specifically, he inquired about the latest “land position” in Palestine, irrigation problems, and “any possible reconstruction scheme” the Government might possess. Letter from Musa Alami to the Officer Administering the Government, October 29, 1944, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.
security driving peasants to towns and urban centers which could not provide adequate employment. Thus, Alami argued, social revolution could be on the horizon.\textsuperscript{561} As a remedy, Alami and his ADS envisioned a two-prong attack that reflected the solutions that the NEF and Humphrey Bowman promoted at Tulkarem. After all, Alami admonished, elements of his scheme had been incidentally “recommended by several [Royal] Commissions, as far back as 1930, to be undertaken by the Palestine Administration.”\textsuperscript{562}

The first approach of the ADS involved one of the MESC’s principal recommendations for agricultural development in the region: land reform.\textsuperscript{563} ADS sought to purchase land and redistribute it. If, say, Palestinian Arab landlords felt they could no longer hold on to their land, or were simply willing to sell it, the ADS would secure the land and parcel it out among Arab fellaheen with “full ownership.” In framing this approach, Alami appropriated the common label of “feudal” practices; whereas American and British observers in the MESC and Scientific Advisory Mission applied it to regional systems of land tenure, Alami applied it to the Jewish National Fund as well as Arab absentee landowners who had been a significant source of land sales to Zionists.\textsuperscript{564} This

\textsuperscript{561} “Arab Progress: (xii) The Arab Land-Development Scheme,” ca. 1946, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

\textsuperscript{562} Letter from Alami to the Officer Administering the Government, October 29, 1944, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

\textsuperscript{563} On this, see Doreen Warriner, \textit{Land and Poverty in the Middle East} (London: Oxford University Press, 1948).

facet of the scheme sought explicitly to “break up the little that remains of the large
landholdings and place the land in the direct hands of the peasants, its cultivator.”

Towards this end, by October 1947, ADS asked the British to register a piece of land they
had purchased in Zububa village near Jenin from a Lebanese family; they intended to
“construct thereon an agricultural school for the advancement and development of
agriculture and the raising of the standard of the fellah.”

ADS’s second prong complimented the first: to use what amounted to holistic
agricultural extension methods to raise “the standard of living of the villagers,
(fellaheen), economically, culturally and socially.” To each village visited, the ADS
would ideally offer to pay off the village debts and provide experts for economic
assistance and holistic village programming. On the economic front, the ADS would
promote greater economic productivity by introducing “scientific methods” of
agricultural cultivation, cooperation, and marketing while introducing agricultural
industries (such as poultry and dairying) and “reviving” other village industries (such as
small crafts, carpentry, shoemaking). On the village life front, the ADS would “care for
the Arab fellah and the raising of his standard in all aspects of life,” providing services

565 The JNF, he argued, consolidated land purchases into a single institution making “it impossible
for the peasant who live on it or tilled it ever to hold it again.” From: “Arab Progress: (xii) The Arab Land-
Development Scheme,” ca. 1946, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

566 Letter from Kamel Dajani to the High Commissioner, October 18, 1947, ISA 315/63.


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that encompassed housing improvement, transport and communications, health, and education.\textsuperscript{568}

The crux of these efforts was securing the future security and prosperity of Palestinian Arabs, a form of nation-building which, for Alami, was intertwined with countering Zionist expansion. This belief was reflected in the only expectation the ADS had for fellaheen receiving its free services: “that peasants should give legally recognised guarantees which will make the alienation of their lands impossible,” including turning them into family \textit{waqfs} if necessary.\textsuperscript{569} Alami’s adoption of British (and American) colonial rural development was simultaneously a bid for British recognition of readiness for self-government, a repudiation of Zionist claims to be the force of modernity in Palestine, and a solution to the issue of Arab land sales to Zionist buyers. This was how Alami believed Palestinians could compete with Zionism in a physical battle for land and an existential battle between seemingly irreconcilable nationalisms;\textsuperscript{570} to “provide a conclusive, living repudiation of the Zionist claim that Arab nationalism is reactionary, that the Arabs are incapable of progress, or that the progress of the Arabs is due to Zionist efforts.”\textsuperscript{571} Indeed, Alami envisioned the ADS setting up branches in as many towns and


\textsuperscript{569} “Arab Progress: (xii) The Arab Land-Development Scheme,” ca. 1946, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

\textsuperscript{570} It continued down the oppositional path set down decades before and illustrated in the Kadoorie agricultural schools. Two nation-building schemes in conflict: Kadoorie agricultural schools: the Jews used Mt. Tabor to build its future Israeli leadership and the British sought to use Tulkarem to build Arab agricultural leaders.

\textsuperscript{571} “Arab Progress: (xii) The Arab Land-Development Scheme,” ca. 1946, pp. 6, 5, 7, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.
villages in Palestine as possible, becoming a truly national organization building an Arab nation from the bottom up. He argued to the British that the scheme would be “consistent with good Government,”572 “constructive work for the nation,” and proof that Palestinians were able to take “over responsibility for the social reform of their country.”573

Given his goals, then, Alami made sure to point out that his society and his scheme were entirely Arab. “This is significant as it shows that the Arabs by themselves, by their own thought, initiative and work are deeply interested in the improvement of the lot of the masses of their own people.”574 This notable statement signifies a success for the NEF-British model, despite the larger failures of the British mandate. This is, in other words, was what the NEF desired and what the British, despite competing tensions with imperial control, sought to achieve. Here was an Arab leader hoping to use the very tools the NEF and British recommended to promote Arab betterment, nationhood, state-building, and self-sufficiency. Just as NEF hoped to provide practical examples of how to substantively go about such work, Alami argued that his scheme “imbues with social content the whole idea of Arab nationalism.”575

Roadblocks immediately plagued Alami, as they would throughout the rest of his life. The new Arab League failed to make good on the Alexandria Conference’s show of

572 Letter from Alami to the Officer Administering the Government, October 29, 1944, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

573 “Arab Progress: (xii) The Arab Land-Development Scheme,” ca. 1946, pp. 6, 5, 7, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

574 “Arab Progress: (xii) The Arab Land-Development Scheme,” ca. 1946, p. 6, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

575 “Arab Progress: (xii) The Arab Land-Development Scheme,” ca. 1946, pp. 6, 7, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.
support in 1945 and Alami’s requests for funding went wanting.\textsuperscript{576} Then, responding to British hesitations about the creation of the ADS, Alami withdrew the scheme from the Arab League and registered it as a non-profit society under the laws of Palestine.\textsuperscript{577} Moreover, the virtual state of civil war during the final years of the mandate in Palestine and limited financial resources handicapped the implementation of Alami’s scheme. In a way not unlike that of Tannous working for the NEF, Alami had set about traveling Palestine as a catalyst from village to village but these initial efforts were largely confined to making a survey of over 350 villages and establishing “scores” of ADS branches.\textsuperscript{578}

The Arab-Israeli war in 1948 then caused even these small early efforts to go to waste as Arab villagers fled or were forced to leave their homes. From 1948 to 1950, Alami and the ADS reoriented their focus to refugees. What did it mean to “be local” now in a context marked not by individual, established villages but among a sea of displaced refugees from across Palestine living in “temporary” camps?

“Uprooted”: Repatriation vs. Resettlement

After a failed meeting with Ernest Bevin in November 1947 in which Alami tried to dissuade the Foreign Secretary from having the British leave Palestine, Alami returned

\textsuperscript{576} This reluctance stemmed, Alami surmised, from growing intra-Arab rivalries which made a mockery of their gestures toward Arab unity and support for Arab Palestine.

\textsuperscript{577} On the British objections, which Alami apparently satisfied, see: Letter from Musa Alami to the High Commissioner, May 15, 1946, MECA 0058, Box 2, File 1.

\textsuperscript{578} Alami enlisted Tawfiq Abul Huda, former PM of Transjordan (and later to be PM of Jordan), as a partner. Furlonge, \textit{My Country}, pp. 137-138; \textit{Arab Development Society} (Jerusalem: Commercial Press, 1953), p. 6.
to Palestine to survey the scene. “What he found . . . increased his forebodings,” his biographer wrote. The Jews were arming themselves and fortifying their settlements while “the Palestinian Arabs were inert” and without effective leadership. This problem was compounded by his sense that the Arab states were equally ill-prepared to come to the Palestinians’ defense. Alami concluded that Palestine would be lost. Sharing time between Jericho and Amman, he looked on as the nakba unfolded.

As Hourani poignantly noted, raising standards in existing Palestinian villages had been surpassed by the need to save the “uprooted” refugees, most of whom were from rural areas and for whom dispossession of land was a complete loss of livelihood. Against wider refugee and Arab sentiment, Alami was not convinced repatriation was a politically viable option and so he looked to resettlement. Given his history of playing mediator between Arab and Jewish factions in Palestine across the 1930s, Alami had a finger on the pulse of Zionism and comprehended (if vehemently disagreed) with their resolve. And, after meetings with British officials, he simply did not believe repatriation would be a realistic possibility.

The new imperative for ADS was to save the Palestinian Arab community from “complete disintegration and dispersion” threatened as it was “if left to rot in camps, with their demoralizing life of inactivity.” Ever the Palestinian nationalist, Alami disagreed with the Arab states’ use of Palestinian refugees as political pawns and viewed resettlement as a practical and realistic solution. He therefore advocated strongly for resettlement in the Jordan Valley because it remained within “Arab Palestine” and thus

served as a natural base to construct a nation. He also believed that the refugees themselves were more likely approve of resettling there, closer to their roots, than in places such as Syria, Iraq, or Libya as international plans envisioned.

Without established villages to improve, Alami set to creating his own and experimenting with crop cultivation in the Jordan Valley; with so many refugees in this area, Alami hoped to provide a demonstration for other states and international bodies to follow.\textsuperscript{580} To secure land, Alami presented a request to the Jordanian Government in 1949 to use state land on the western side of the Jordan River.\textsuperscript{581} The Government agreed, handing over 20,000 dunams (5,000 acres) to ADS just south of Jericho near Allenby Bridge, cutting across the Jerusalem-Amman road.\textsuperscript{582} On land considered barren and that received perhaps three to six inches of rainfall annually, water was the keystone to any resettlement program.\textsuperscript{583}

Although he was never likely to admit it, given his anti-Zionist intentions, the most immediate example for Alami in the southern portion of the Jordan Valley was the

\textsuperscript{580} See: “The Society of the Arab Development Scheme,” NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/4, NAK. See also: Furlonge, \textit{My Country}, p. 138; Hourani, “ADS Project,” p. 718; Hourani, “Experimental Village,” p. 498. The ADS had purchased two large tracts of land for building model villages: 5,000 dunums in Zububa, 10 km north of Jenin, and 500 dunums in the Fara’a district of the upper Jordan Valley. See: ADS, p. 6. Zububa, although falling within the West Bank, lies right along the 1949 armistice line between Jordan and Israel. It is likely that the Fara’a land did fall directly into Israeli hands.

\textsuperscript{581} “The Society of the Arab Development Scheme,” May 1949, FO 371/82253, NAK.

\textsuperscript{582} They granted the land “free and without return” until a final settlement was made about boundaries between Transjordan and Israel. Letter from the Prime Minister of Transjordan to the Governor-General of Palestine, June 29, 1949, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/4.

\textsuperscript{583} The “barren wasteland” of the grant is noted in all of the news reports and in ADS’s own publications. It was supposedly labeled “dead and waste” by the British authorities during the mandate. Moreover, as there was an estimated 600,000 total dunums between the west and east banks of the Jordan River of which only a third was under cultivation, a successful ADS experiment could have immense implications for resettlement. This would also be eminently more practical than transferring refugees to Syria or Iraq. Hourani, “Experimental Village,” pp. 499, 501.
Zionist kibbutz Beit Ha’arava. Established in the late-1930s by young workers of the Palestine Potash company, the kibbutz explicitly sought to experiment with agriculture in the adverse soil and climate conditions there. With funding from the corporation, the members of the kibbutz pumped water from the Jordan river to flood and desalinate the soil and then to irrigate crops. The experiment proved to be successful, moving from one dunum under cultivation in 1938 to seventy by 1945, but the kibbutz had to be abandoned during the 1948 war. Alami likely knew of the kibbutz’s existence and success and this would explain his determination to settle the Jordan Valley despite the obstacles and in accordance with the ADS’s own propaganda about proving international experts wrong. Indeed, after 1948, one of Alami’s first initiatives was to convert currency to pounds sterling in order to buy the equipment necessary to pump water from the Jordan River.

Alami was not averse to industrializing. During ADS’s early work in Palestine before 1948, Alami and the ADS sought import licenses for over a dozen tractors and two combines, not unlike how the British authorities in Palestine during the war had emphasized tractors and deep plowing to increase productivity in the short-term. ADS’ stated purpose was “for its scheme for improving conditions of Arab peasants,”

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584 I have been unable to determine if the exact location of the ADS project coincides with that of the kibbutz, but they were nonetheless very close in proximity.

585 “Glimpses of Jewish Settlement History,” Youth Department of the Keren Hayesod (Jerusalem 1945), p. 34, CZA, BK964; and the findings of the Jewish Agency’s Agricultural Research Station at Rehovot in 1942, which examined the work of Beit Ha’arava, CZA, F38/1203. On the kibbutz’s evacuation, see: CZA, J112/1512 and “Jews Regain Full Control of Jordan Valley,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 26, 1948. The settlement was the subject of a documentary film by the Palestine Films Inc. entitled “House in the Desert.” It is available in its original Hebrew on YouTube.

586 Memorandum on Agricultural Production in Palestine, August 29, 1942, p. 4, NAK FO 922/97.
especially with drought-affected areas in the south of Palestine.\textsuperscript{587} J.C. Eyre, former British technician in Africa\textsuperscript{588} and then Director of Agriculture and Fisheries in Palestine, noted that tractors would be made available without the need for imports. He also noted, though, that “In the past we have tried to dissuade the Arab Land Development Society from embarking on tractor ploughing schemes and we have pointed out that there are other more desirable ways in which they could spend their money in assisting local cultivators.”\textsuperscript{589}

Moreover, at the same time that Alami looked to repeat Beit Ha’arava’s success, he also propagated a grand vision of large-scale development modeled on the TVA. Alami called his plan the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA), modeled on the plans of American soil conservation expert Walter Lowdermilk who formulated proposals for Jewish Zionists in the 1940s on using the Jordan River for development and settlement purposes.\textsuperscript{590} Thus, the TVA model was recycled first as the JVA for Jewish refugees during World War II and then by Alami as the JVA for Palestinian refugees after 1948 – in Alami’s thinking, what would have been good for the Zionists would certainly be good for the Palestinians. The British advised Alami against such a plan, however. He had trouble with the Jordanian officials but also lacked the financial resources to pull off such a plan. They suggested he start smaller, with a pilot project that could lead the way for

\textsuperscript{587} Note from Secretary of State for the Colonies to High Commissioner, July 7, 1947, ISA 96/9.

\textsuperscript{588} Stedman-Davies to Skilbeck, August 26, 1943, FO 922/97. During the war, Eyre had been a Senior Agricultural Officer in Palestine (Haifa) and was previously stationed in Tanganyika.

\textsuperscript{589} Eyre to Chief Secretary, August 8, 1947, ISA 96/9.

\textsuperscript{590} On Alami, see: ADS, p. 16 and “Irrigation Scheme for the Resettlement of Refugees,” August 30, 1949, NAK FO 371/82253. On Lowdermilk and the Zionists, see: CZA, Z4\textsuperscript{3}1014 and F45\textsuperscript{3}6.
future developments. His options narrowing, Alami moved steadily in more rural development directions.

Before the war, the Palestine Government had invested in a hydrological survey that involved boring wells for irrigation water, although the work was interrupted by the Arab rebellion and claimed only one success in the coastal plain. The MESC had called for continuing such efforts.\textsuperscript{591} Thus, unable to pump water from the Jordan River, Alami then sought to purchase boring equipment from the UK or the U.S. But he quickly becoming entangled in a triangular relationship between the Jordanian Government, the British, and himself, explained more below. Alami was thus forced to start digging a well by hand in the Jordan Valley. Alami, a Palestinian, had hardly ingratiated himself to the West Bank’s new authorities when he smuggled ADS’s financial assets (and some of his own) from banks in Amman to Beirut under the seat of his car. He feared the Jordanian Government would try to appropriate the money for relief aid and Alami desired, rather, to hew as closely to the original aims of the Society as possible. He thought his small amount of money would “hardly furnish one meal” for the refugees.\textsuperscript{592}

After modest beginnings digging by hand, ARAMCO donated boring machinery to ADS. A number of wells soon began providing irrigation water which Alami used to purge the salty soil on his new land holdings. Then the experiment began in earnest. Hiring laborers from the nearby refugee camps, Alami began to cultivate a variety of

\textsuperscript{591} “Irrigation Needs of Palestine,” October 18, 1943, pp. 5, 6, NAK FO 922/97.

\textsuperscript{592} Quoted in Furlonge, My Country, p. 159.

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crops and planted thousands of trees while overseeing the building of his model village.\textsuperscript{593} In this endeavor, he followed the original pattern of assistance to villages before the war. By 1951, the village consisted of a few dozen houses - each with individual and shared plots of cultivatable land - a handful of classrooms and offices, and a health clinic. The village also included dirt roads, public cisterns, irrigation canals and bridges.\textsuperscript{594} Furthermore, true to the aims of the Society, the model village was to be a cooperative village that would eventually become an independent, self-sufficient community; and, in so doing, prove Alami’s vision viable.\textsuperscript{595}

However, once again, Alami’s plans required reevaluation as the ADS failed to establish the village it envisioned. A British observer with UNRWA visited the ADS village in October 1951. Families had begun to move into the project’s housing units in March of that year and UNRWA sought to examine this resettlement program in action. Collecting information from the refugee families, Alami, and other ADS Board members, the UNRWA observer drafted a report, which made its way into the hands of the BMEO, on the difficulties that the ADS model village had encountered. This report indirectly

\textsuperscript{593} Crops included: banana trees, grapevines, barley, cotton; trees included: eucalyptus, casuarina, Cypress. Hourani, “Experimental Village,” p. 500. It is notable that planting trees was a common feature of plans to restore and conserve the vitality of the land. The destruction of forests led to soil erosion and so afforestation became integral to environmental conservation. It was popular during the New Deal and became important to the development efforts of both Point Four and the British Middle East Office. It had also been part of the development efforts of the British mandate in Palestine and Transjordan after World War I, where the Ottoman war-machine deforested large areas for fuel as did the deprived inhabitants of the region. For the New Deal efforts in this regard, see: Sarah Phillips, \textit{This Land, This Nation}.


\textsuperscript{595} “The Society of the Arab Development Scheme,” May 1949, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/4.
gives voice to the refugees themselves and demonstrates how the tensions within rural development over "the local" became exacerbated in a refugee context.

The observer reported that the newly settled refugees began a series of ever-increasing demands that worked against self-sufficiency. So, for instance, the refugees almost immediately noted that they would only remain in the homes with their allotted land if ADS continued to oversee the scheme, fearing what would happen if crops failed or water supplies broke down. Alami agreed but, on self-help terms, insisted the families thus contribute one-fifth of the costs. Then they wanted ADS to supply manure for fertilizer; then they insisted on being given paid, part-time labor. Finally, many of the families approached the ADS and noted their desire to work only as daily laborers rather than farm their land. As a breach of the original agreement and the aims of ADS, the families were asked to leave the scheme. Moreover, Alami pointed out that the refugees had refused to help in any way with the maintenance of the houses or the land without being paid and that not a single family had cultivated the individual two-dunum plots attached to the houses. It also came out later that most of Alami’s laborers had given him false names.596

Refugee positions give clues to why Alami’s resettlement efforts failed. In essence, Alami had accepted Israel’s existence; although he feared its expansion, he thought it was only practical – and necessary – to urge resettlement (especially in the

596 Alami argued that the attitude of the refugees had shifted in the three years since 1948 and the "normally somewhat suspicious attitude of the peasant has been increased to a pathological extent" along with a deep bitterness towards anyone who conceivably have played a part in their present fate. Memorandum from B. Todd to Deputy Director, October 19, 1951, MECA, Middle East Development Division Collection (0203), Box 3 (hereafter 0203), pp. 1-2; quotation from p. 2.
Jordan Valley) on the Palestinian refugees as the only viable avenue towards full independence and nationhood. To be deployed as pawns in wider intra-Arab politics was folly, as were the Western plans to scatter Palestinian refugees in resettlement projects across the Arab world. Alami was looking ahead – to land that needed to be settled to from a new Palestinian nation. The refugees, on the other hand, were looking behind, to their land to which they hoped to return. Many may also have accepted Israel’s existence, but they were unprepared to resettle if there was any possibility of return. The refugees – at least those chosen for this plan – were clearly unsure about the long-term consequences of resettlement, especially as envisioned by Alami. Part of the problem undoubtedly was what the observer referred to as the “mystique” of UNRWA rations: refugees seemed to have become convinced that rations were a ticket to future benefits such as repatriation or individual compensation and thus they lacked incentive to fully engage in resettlement which might have resulted in the loss of those rations.  

Two of the observer’s critiques of Alami’s model village scheme are of particular relevance, however, for the question of “being local.” He argued that the housing accommodations were of too-high a quality. In keeping with the imperative to introduce improved methods and ways of living but remaining culturally appropriate, the houses were built with local materials – mud bricks baked in the sun with mud and cane roofing

597 Memorandum from B. Todd to Deputy Director, October 19, 1951, MECA 0203, Box 3, pp. 6, 3. The BMEO also believed anti-ADS rumors were at work, which Furlonge also relates in his biography; in that Alami’s opponents in Jordan and around the Arab world purposely stoked the rumor that Alami’s scheme was an Israeli ploy to deny refugees repatriation. Ibid., pp. 6, 2-3; Furlonge, My Country, p. 179.

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– even as they included “running water, sanitation, and cross-ventilation.”598 But such modifications – likely to the whole village, and not just the housing – only served to increase the hesitancy of the refugees who feared that “there must be a catch somewhere” and that they would eventually be evicted for Western inhabitants.599 The observer also argued that the process of selecting families had been botched. The committee that chose families included not only ADS board members but also Jordanian Government officials who were “unduly influenced by considerations other than those of picking the best qualified people.” Most of the families were chosen from among those who had been working the project; they had little agricultural background while those families who had actually been agriculturalists were rejected. It did not make sense, the observer argued, to settle “dock labourers from Haifa” on farms.600 Indeed, the origins of most of the refugees in the two camps nearest Jericho – Ein El-Sultan and Aqbat Jaber – were from areas near urban centers and located in the hill country or even coastal plain of Palestine.601

The failure of the scheme can be attributed in part to some of these shortcomings in “being local.” Despite its local design and build, the housing and village were not “local” enough; they were too ordered, too planned, too modern. Alami’s elite status was a likely detriment to a more local approach in that he was striving for an acceptance among the peasants that was too fast too soon. Alami, despite being an Arab ardently


599 Memorandum from B. Todd to Deputy Director, October 19, 1951, MECA 0203, Box 3, p. 3.

600 Memorandum from B. Todd to Deputy Director, October 19, 1951, MECA 0203, Box 3, p. 6.

601 Many of the refugees hailed from Gaza, or the areas surrounding Hebron and Jaffa. See: UNRWA Website.
defending an Arab-led scheme for Arabs, was nonetheless himself an insider/outsider; he was not a peasant and he was not a refugee to the same degree as those whom he sought to help.\textsuperscript{602} In another sense, his status as a Western-educated member of a notable family from Jerusalem may have served as a barrier to greater trust with the refugees; the Arab Revolt between 1936 and 1939 had heavy rural dimensions in which villagers vented anger upon Arab elites as well as the British and Zionists. In this climate, the tensions within rural development regarding outside-expert partnerships were magnified, and his reliance on an approach to development heavily inflected with Western ideology and influences was a liability.

The latter point gestures toward the reality that aside from issues of Alami’s identity or tensions within rural development itself, Alami’s efforts for refugees ran aground of local and international factors. For example, the way families were chosen for the scheme went against the ADS’s own stated policies, illustrating that Alami and ADS were unable to dislodge themselves entirely from the national government, no matter the distrust between them.\textsuperscript{603} More significantly, however, Alami’s efforts to promote refugee self-help misread the recent historical experience of Palestinian villagers. Alami sought to create an ideal of Palestinian rural life that was quickly becoming anachronistic. Given his pragmatic tendencies, Alami was not likely swayed by a romantic agrarian nostalgia in his desire to create a national foundation by settling productive farmers on the land. Nonetheless, his desire to do so ran aground of changing socioeconomic conditions in

\textsuperscript{602} Although in some ways, he was a refugee of sorts, having lost much of his family lands to the Israelis in 1948/1949.

\textsuperscript{603} “Jordan Valley Development Board,” 1949 memo from NAK files.
Palestine. World War II and the policies of the MESC had driven dramatic increases in the trend of Palestinian villagers seeking wage labor jobs in urban areas. However, many continued to return to their villages during “off” seasons. This meant that the population largely retained its “village” identity even as they began to move away from primarily agricultural ways of life. In other words, after 1948, Alami’s efforts at using rural development to promote self-help and self-sufficiency simply did not resonate with those he sought to empower. Hesitant to stake too much in a permanent resettlement scheme, and likely somewhat removed from a purely agrarian existence, the refugees on the ADS model village project looked to Alami to provide for them and assist them by providing them wage labor; they did not want to become full-time farmers in the Jordan Valley. Given their desire to return to their homes and lands, and not wanting to risk forfeiting that chance by resettling, they seemed to want more paternalism under the circumstances, not less.

Within this context, Alami stood in good company. The Jordanian government struggled with what to do with the 450,000 Palestinian refugees now within their borders – already outnumbering the existing Jordanian population of about 400,000. One estimate suggested that about one-third lived in the organized camps, “almost all of them villagers”. Officially, the government extended citizenship but was wary of political instability. For their part, refugees were also ambivalent, desiring a political voice and improved circumstances but, determined to go home, looked askance at any scheme that

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might jeopardize their claims to return. Because of this situation, UNRWA and the Jordanian government also had a tense relationship. UNRWA sought to provide not only relief but also projects designed to afford refugees the ability to work and resettle. The Jordanian government feared Palestinian political activism in the camps and often publicly declared its opposition to UNRWA schemes even as it urged the refugees to consider resettlement for the sake of their own well-being. Refugees themselves often fiercely resisted outside attempts to upgrade their shelters – at first little more than tents – even as two brutal winters saw many begin to build “extensions” onto their tents or even construct their own stone structures. And they were suspicious of resettlement schemes that were conditioned on turning over their ration cards. UNRWA schemes thus proceeded very slowly and the Jordanian government “withdrew proposals in both 1949 and 1953 to replace the ration card with an outright payment from UNRPR and UNRWA.”

Especially as a larger political settlement between Israel and the Arab states went lacking, and large international resettlement plans stalled, Alami had made the future prosperity of the Palestinian refugees his personal mission. The very size of the catastrophe before them was further reason he took to the NEF-British model of agricultural extension, with its promise to promote large-scale change with small, economical projects. But, with the failure of the model village and his experience with

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adult refugees, Alami and the ADS turned to a more literal form of paternalism: working with orphaned refugee children.

“No Country, No Future, No Hope”: ADS and Palestinian Orphans

Alami was sitting by the cistern in front of his office listening to the boys play in the water. Unexpectedly, Jordanian soldiers arrived and brought before him “what appeared to be a bundle of rags”: a young, emaciated child. The boy, the soldiers explained, had been staying at a hospital since he was discovered starving just outside of a village in 1948. Because of the fighting, the boy had to flee with the remainder of the village but quickly succumbed to exhaustion. After a futile search for relatives, the Government had opted to unload him on Alami. Reluctantly, Alami at first protested that he was above capacity with the orphaned boys he had already accepted; but the soldiers dismissed him and walked away. So Alami sat down next to the boy and began to talk with him. The boy’s voice was broken and barely audible as he retold his tragedy. Unable to bring himself to cast the boy out, he took him in.606

Alami was aware that UNRWA, now charged with caring for the Palestinian refugees, worked only through heads of household, leaving the orphans without means of securing even relief aid. Moreover, there were fears that this “lost generation” of Palestinian youth, growing up with “no country, no future, no hope” would grow up to be “disruptive” and “destructive” forces.607 And, if the Jordan Valley was to truly become an

606 This story adapted from Furlonge’s telling, My Country, pp. 181-182.

area with flourishing communities, it would need trained agricultural leaders and craftsmen. He thus decided, with ADS backing, to use existing structures as a home for young boys – and later, hopefully young girls. The ADS would provide them with shelter in the now-largely empty housing as well as with food, an education, and eventually, livelihoods and responsible citizenship. This was now, Alami believed, the most valuable contribution he could make with the small amount of resources still at his disposal. And he once again borrowed from the NEF-British arsenal, this time emphasizing adapted education as a nation-building strategy.

As with the earlier iterations of his plans, Alami considered his work with the orphans to be a demonstration and given his experience with the refugee families, he hoped to select orphans to suit his purposes for the farm: boys from rural backgrounds who would likely return to farming as adults. Alami determined to privately select orphans rather than issuing a general call but word of Alami’s plans quickly circulated the refugee camps and within a short time “the boys just came,” he recalled. He decided not to accept (a) seriously ill or mentally challenged orphans, (b) girls, for whom entirely separate accommodations and staff would be needed, (c) boys young enough to need a woman’s (mother’s) attention, or (d) boys on the cusp of manhood, being set in their ways. Alami well-understood the callousness of these restrictions but argued that he only

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had the means to provide a certain level of care. Still, he quickly had a crop of about fifty orphaned boys, with plans to expand as he could.

Alami’s social and political goals were reflected in the adapted education curriculum he developed for the boys. ADS accepted orphan boys between the ages of 8 and 14, and until the age of 14, hired teachers provided a full-time elementary course of studies following the guidelines of the Jordanian Government. Alami partnered this formal schooling with a few hours of gardening every week, to “inculcate in them the love of the soil and of working with their hands.” At age fourteen, the boys were given training in practical agriculture along with a craft or trade – tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, plumbing, or baking. ADS hired skilled craftsmen from the refugee camps to provide these courses for the boys, who then would create much of what they required. They also took evening classes (another social welfare innovation NEF had adopted on its own projects). Although the emphasis was clearly on rural development, Alami had the boys receive training in machinery, motorized vehicles, and farm industrialization as well. At age nineteen, the boys were to leave the project to take up employment as

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609 Furlonge, *My Country*, p. 179. And for girls, in particular, I assume this would have been almost unthinkable, particularly for Arab Muslims, to not have women care for girls in such a place.

610 Furlonge, *My Country*, p. 180; Memorandum from B. Todd to Deputy Director, October 19, 1951, MECA 0203, Box 3.

611 Furlonge notes: “But they didn’t need just reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, they needed to be able to make a living some day: they needed vocational training, ’as the Americans call it’. *My Country*, p. 180.

612 “Agricultural Education in Jordan,” July 26, 1955, NAK, FO 371/115712, VJ 1821/6. This included reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English, and agricultural theory. See: “Bootstrap.”

613 ADS, p. 36.

614 “Bootstrap.”
tradesmen, start their own farm in the Jordan Valley, or take up farming on ADS land. Those who seemed suited for a university education were encourage to attend secondary school in Jericho.615

Furthermore, the ADS’s explication of adapted education mirrored NEF-British imperatives: local sensitivity and rootedness as a base for introducing modern methods. Indeed, “farm and rural problems serve as vehicles for teaching arithmetic, spelling, geography and natural sciences” while “emphasis is constantly on higher living standards in keeping with existing Arab rural patterns.” And, although “modern methods are encouraged, they are encouraged within the framework of existing services, facilities, and tools. Trades are taught which could be easily supported in small agricultural villages and for which little capital outlay is needed.”616

Alami and ADS envisioned building up Palestine from the farms-up, turning out young men trained to take up a rural life and educated for democratic, cooperative citizenship. But it hoped to reach Arab girls as well. In a statement that could have come straight from Theodore Roosevelt’s Country Life Commission, the ADS noted that it hoped to eventually include them since Arab girls needed “even greater care than the boys, because they have much less opportunity for training and education.” Because the ADS argued that its future batches of educated male farmers needed similarly educated wives, it envisioned courses in domestic skills, sowing, handicrafts as well as poultry and

616 “Bootstrap.”
dairy training to complement formal schooling. Indeed, higher standards of living could only be maintained if “better families and solid family life” were maintained as well.617

Consistent with the NEF-British model, the ADS project was ultimately about self-help – its work with children was to help eventually “form villages in the future which would be self-sufficient.”618 A 1953 ADS pamphlet was appropriately titled “Bootstrap.” The pamphlet argued that the ADS project was a bootstrap, or form of self-help, for the Arab peoples. The children with whom they were working would “act as a leaven to the hundreds of thousands of their generation.”619 Here was ADS’s implicit theory of change, and it differed little from the NEF-British approach adopted at Kadoorie in Tulkarem in the 1930s. The strengthening of human resources and capacities would renovate and rebuild the Arab world. These boys, “trained to live and think democratically and imbued with the spirit of service and co-operation,” were to be the vanguard of a new Arab resurgence, the “harbingers of great social and economic change.”620

The boys called Alami Ami, an affectionate designation of respect, but this was a political project beyond its undeniably humanitarian elements. Alami and ADS housed, fed, and educated children who desperately needed such basics of human life. Education is, though, inherently formative and so political: through curriculum, lectures, and activities, a certain vision of a properly-functioning adult is an ultimate end. The ADS

618 ADS, p. 32.
619 ADS, p. 30.
620 “Bootstrap.”
pamphlet explicitly stated that the benefit of working with children was that they did not have to be first divested of existing ideas and practices. Thus it is notable that Alami aligned his educational program with the goals of adapted education: not forming the Palestinian boys into a group of “white collar” town-dwellers but into educated, modern farmers and craftsmen with practical experience that would build a nation from the farms-up and stymie Zionist expansion.

Indeed, Alami’s choices reflect the tensions within of this style of development. To be liberating, strategies were to be formative and in promoting sustainable self-sufficiency, strategies had to be both Arab and Western. The pamphlet noted that the ADS project was an “all-Arab programme aimed at educating young farmers on a rural level.” The pamphlet takes a defiant tone, arguing that it was foreign control that was responsible for the regression of the Arab peoples and that independence through self-help was the answer. It practically warns the West about a coming Arab resurgence. Nonetheless, in providing information and soliciting aid, the writers intended it for Western audiences, complete with a biblical reference to the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. More importantly, the writers accepted the Western assumption that “The Arab is backward; his part of the world is undeveloped” and acknowledged that they were striving to create a new type of rural society in which “community-wide cooperative effort” would replace the domination of “individuality and family action.” In the end analysis, the ADS project would help pull Arabs from their foreign-imposed poverty and...
ignorance, but by both staying within what was “Arab” and by departing from the same:
“The major task of these boys is that of melding technological and social advances with
the almost singular simplicity of rural Arab life in such a way that the boys will lose little
of their identity as an Arab farmer.”623

“To Damn Them Utterly”: The Politics of Suspicion

“It is shameful that the Arab governments should prevent the Arab refugees from
working in their countries and shut the doors in their faces and imprison them in camps,”
wrote Alami in a 1949 article. Reflecting with bitterness on the trajectory of recent
events, Alami laid primary blame on the lack of Arab unity and British policies that
advanced Zionism. As a remedy, he proposed nation-building within and across Arab
states. “The people” would be the foundation: “Unity and modernization of government
are not enough unless they are based on care for the people, and their endowment with
the main elements of power, so that their power will be reflected in the state.”624

Along with his efforts at resettlement, it was this progressive desire for
democratic change that engendered support for Alami and ADS in the United States and
Great Britain. In making his own case for village improvement within rural Palestine,
Alami was combating the Zionist argument that Jewish settlers were correcting Arab
Palestinian backwardness; Arabs, he argued, were fully capable of making “progress.” Its

623 “Bootstrap.”

624 Musa Alami, “The Lesson of Palestine,” Middle East Journal 3, No. 4 (October 1949), p. 386, 395 (373-405). The article is an abridged and translated version of Alami’s book in Arabic by the same
name, published in Beirut in March 1949. See the journal’s “Note to the Reader” at the front of the volume.
anti-Zionism aside, this critique’s continued acceptance of Western assumptions about progress and Arab backwardness easily resonated with Anglo-American audiences.\textsuperscript{625} Moreover, in his adoption of land reform and redistribution, Alami placed himself on the side of progressive social reform and in a mode that American and British policymakers would recognize and admire. British officials, for instance, believed Alami had “a reputation for honesty and progressive social ideas.”\textsuperscript{626} The next two sections of this chapter detail the British and American involvement with the ADS project and its implications.

Already shaken by the effects of the First World War and rising nationalism around the world, World War II greatly weakened Britain’s hold on its global empire. In the Middle East, the expansion of its presence – from the crushing of the Iraqi revolt and the introduction of massive amounts of material and troops – strengthened the disapproval of British influence among Arabs.\textsuperscript{627} Recognizing the limits of its power, the British sought to reorient their relationships with the people under their rule. This process played out very differently in the Middle East than in Africa. Whereas the British Middle

\textsuperscript{625} News coverage: “Something for Ammi,” \textit{Times} 62, No. 3 (July 20, 1953) suggests that while other Arab elements were focused on their quarrels with Israel, Alami was focused on practical things such as land development and education; the article thereby obscures for American audiences Alami’s own anti-Zionism.

\textsuperscript{626} “Musa Alami’s Arab Development Society at Jericho,” June 30, 1954, NAK, FO 371/110950, VJ1821/2. For American proponents of development in particular, this was a friendly refrain of Jeffersonian agrarianism with self-sufficient, individual cultivators as the backbone of a nation. This melded well with American notions of reforming non-Western societies.

East Office (BMEO) demonstrated the tenuous British position there, the emergence of community development provided a glaring contrast.

Community development continued the “colonial turn to the local” although on a more intentional and expansive basis, centering as never before the agency of locals. Crystallizing in the late 1940s, community development would remain a force in British colonialism into the 1960s as decolonization accelerated. It emerged as one way to navigate various demands and interests. Anti-colonial sentiment was on the rise. So was African social disintegration. Yet, Senior British officials suggested in 1946 that Africa was “the core of our colonial position; the only continental space form which we can still hope to draw reserves of economic and military strength”.\(^{628}\) As the Cold War began to solidify, the British looked to neutralize American and Soviet criticisms of imperial rule; community development was one way to demonstrate progress on the issues of poverty and self-rule. The emergence of the Labor Party in Britain also gave added impetus. Providing wide-spread education for citizenship and engaging in partnerships with voluntary agencies resonated with Labor sentiments that looked to replace coercion and compulsion with local self-help and empowerment. With the African Research Survey setting the stage, the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945 marked a renewed enthusiasm for developmentalist thinking. They provided funding to promote local self-rule and laid out the expectation that the British state had responsibility for promoting well-being.

But community development was not modernization and it built largely from ideas emanating from the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies (ACEC). As one British official wrote: “Community development in its special sense is basically an educational concept,” the term describing “more accurately all the things which mass education stood for.” A 1935 ACEC memorandum on “The Education of African Communities” suggested that for rural communities in particular, education should help improve the life of the community as a whole, and should address communal issues holistically and simultaneously. The memo then stated that any program of improvement would ultimately hinge on local people: success depended on “the consent and wholehearted support” of Africans who were to be “the main agents in its execution.”

These principals – coordinated government action driven by popular initiative and participation – were reiterated by the Committee in a 1944 document on how to approach mass literacy and other forms of adult education and then again in 1948 as they took up the issue of building democratic, modern nation-states in Africa. Community development therefore combined the new developmentalist atmosphere and decolonizing mindset of building modern, democratic nation-states in Africa with the educational thought of the ACEC, particularly regarding local participation, and which had always been concerned with social and economic development.

The 1948 Cambridge Summer Conference on African Administration defined community development as mass education: “Mass education is a movement designed to

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630 Webber, “Some Reminders,” p. 43.
promote better living for the whole community, with active participation and, if possible, on the initiative of the community, but if this initiative is not forthcoming spontaneously, by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to secure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement. Mass education embraces all forms of betterment.” A colonial despatch after the conference explained further: “It is no new movement, but the intensification of past plans for development by means of new techniques; its main novel feature lies in the great emphasis which it places on the stimulation of popular initiative.” Thus, community development was about thinking in human rather than administrative terms; about bridging understanding between government and the citizens; about success as measured more in winning support and unleashing desire for improvement than in material results; and in starting at the village level to ensure suitability. And it was, ultimately, a nation-building strategy. Community development began in the villages and worked its way up, looking to “secure that the local movements come to be part of a national movement.”

In African countries like Kenya, community development manifested as local community centers promoting education, services, and self-sufficiency and as rural development schemes encompassing the construction of latrines, establishing village craft industries, and the formation of poultry cooperatives. Some district welfare officers incorporated local practices in designing new cattle pens and planting in ways that

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631 Notes for Office Meeting, 1951, NAK, CO 859/351 and Webber, “Some Reminders,” p. 44.

632 “Local Government and Community Development,” NAK CO 859/69/3.

prevented soil erosion. Staff were encouraged to live closely among the Africans, to learn
the local language, and to take on catalytic roles: “suggesting and encouraging, rather
than directing; somehow he has got to make the people help themselves and better
themselves by their own efforts – led by his example”.

The British had no such luxuries in the Middle East. A prime example of the
differences between community development in Africa and the British constraints in the
Middle East involves British debates over providing aid to the ADS project. The
Jordanian Government, recently formally independent, strove to exert its authority even
as it remained financially dependent on British loans. For their part, the British were
conscious of the strings they still held in Jordan but were trying very hard to maintain a
low profile in the country. A primary aim after 1945 was to make Jordan economically
viable, although economic development became a prime location of struggle. The British
desire, without being overtly imperialist, to maintain control over development
expenditures clashed with independent-minded Jordanian officials.

Into this vortex sank Alami’s request for pounds sterling releases; recalling
Alami’s struggles to establish a farm and model village in the Jordan Valley, he needed to
exchange his local currency, Palestinian Dinars, in order to buy boring and irrigation
equipment from the U.K. However, Alami’s adversarial relationship with the Jordanian
Government compromised the British ability to aid the ADS. As Jordan sought to cope

634 Quoted by Lewis, _Empire State-Building_, p. 333. Information drawn from pp. 332-350. See
also: Ocobock, _Uncertain Age_, pp. 210-223, especially regarding the Mau Mau rebellion.

635 Kingston, “Modernization.” The British pushed the creation of the Jordan Development Board
which included British and Jordanian members that made decisions about economic development
disbursements.
with the recent influx of Palestinian refugees, Alami chaffed under the regime’s economic development policies. In particular, he ran into an MESC holdover which Jordan had incorporated, import licensing; Alami had been caught smuggling in materials for his project. Finding his requests with the Jordanians stalled and feeling stonewalled by the British embassy in Amman, Alami took the advice of the British Consul-General in Jerusalem and went to London in search of leverage.

This move sparked a revealing series of exchanges between the British Foreign Office (FO) and British diplomats in Jordan. The FO, after meeting with Alami, noted that they were “anxious to assist” him but could not go over the head of the Jordanian Government to secure sterling releases. They did, however, favor Alami’s request because he was moving to provide a pilot project for refugee resettlement, which was critical for Jordan’s future economic position – and Alami had his own money. The FO was further concerned with the British image across the region and among the refugees, and, after securing from Alami confirmation that he would use a British company for his purchases, agreed to make his case with the embassy in Amman. A first letter was quickly followed by a second after Alami publicized his struggle in an article in The Times. The FO noted to the ambassador that since the British had no official “locus


637 “Summary of Discussion Held with Mousa Bey Alami,” December 28, 1949, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/1; Letter from E. J. Fudge to T.E. Evans, January 5, 1950, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/3. They did, however, offer him advice: to proceed in stages with his scheme so as to guard against charges of being uneconomical, they advised him to draw up a plan with detailed equipment needs to help provide a solid sterling figure required; and they secured a separate appraisal of his equipment needs from the British Board of Trade.
“standi” regarding Jordan’s resettlement of Palestinians, “it would not be right for you to apply for sterling releases on Mousa’s behalf,” but nonetheless urged him to look personally into Alami’s application. Sir Hugh Dowd, the Consul-General in Jerusalem, argued that the scheme “must be regarded as protective and preventative rather than remunerative” and thus could not be dismissed out of hand as being uneconomical. He also argued that, despite the need to allow the Jordanian’s freedom of action with the refugees, the British desire to settle refugees should not stop the British from lending support “as is possible.”

The embassy, backed by Sir Herbert Stewart of UNRWA, opposed this lending of support for the ADS scheme. Stewart warned against “rushing headlong into commitments, contracts, and construction,” reporting that not enough information was known about how much the scheme would cost to run, the availability of sub-soil water, its suitability for cultivation, the crops that could be produced, or market possibilities. Sir Alec Kirkbride, the ambassador, registered a similar opinion and reminded the FO that they were no longer the mandatory power. He noted both “the inadvisability of encouraging Arabs to try and bypass the proper local authorities” and “the unpopularity

638 Draft letter from Mr. Richard Wright to Sir Alec Kirkbride, January 5, 1950, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/1; Letter from Mr. Richard Wright to Sir Alec Kirkbride, January 6, 1950, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/1.

639 Letter from Sir Hugh Dowd to Foreign Office, December 29, 1949, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/2.

which we nearly always achieve when we interfere, with the best of intentions, with
matters which are, strictly speaking, no concern of ours.”\textsuperscript{641}

Kirkbride dutifully, however, went to Jordanian authorities on the FO’s request. The Jordanians, in turn, advised Alami to meet them in person. This meeting was a flop, Kirkbride reported; the Jordanians were unhappy about Alami’s going to the British as way to skirt their authority as well as his propensity to smuggle. In a not-so-thinly-veiled swipe at the FO and its meddling, Kirkbride noted: “I am afraid that in spite of our arguments, the Jordan Government still think that Mousa would get on better if he complied with the laws of the country.”\textsuperscript{642} Minutes in the FO file included a handwritten note, suggesting that Kirkbride’s request with the Jordanian officials would probably be satisfactory, but concluded: “I cannot help feeling that Sir A. Kirkbride is making rather heavy weather of it.”\textsuperscript{643}

The last reporting on the matter in May 1950 pointed out that Alami was approaching UNRWA about receiving dollars in exchange for Palestinian Dinars and thus hinted that he was looking to the U.S. for support and machinery.\textsuperscript{644} Given the Jordanian relationship with Alami and Kirkbride’s own opposition, likely based on his first-hand knowledge of Jordanian sentiment, the FO let the matter go although what they feared came to pass: Alami began to look elsewhere for assistance. Even in 1954, after a

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\textsuperscript{641} Letter from Kirkbride to Wright, April 3, 1950, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/11.

\textsuperscript{642} Letter from Kirkbride to Wright, April 3, 1950, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/11.

\textsuperscript{643} Handwritten minutes on file, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/8. Note written by Sir Geoffrey Furlonge.

\textsuperscript{644} Letter from Amman Chancery to FO, May 5, 1950, NAK, FO 371/82253, E 1826/13.
handful of British members of parliament met with Alami and subsequently urged
governmental and public backing, the FO and Foreign Secretary could only offer “verbal
support.” The Secretary responded that although he greatly sympathized, “it was very
important not to rouse suspicion by helping projects of this sort too obviously since this
very often was sufficient to damn them utterly.” By stalling on support for Alami, the
British were registering their own desire to remain on good “local” terms with Jordanian
authorities, despite their imperial control of Jordanian economic development. The
Americans would demonstrate no such caution.

“Service in the Land of ‘Milk and Honey’”: IVS and ADS

In a show of “generosity typically American,” International Voluntary Service
made a public call for 5,000 baby chicks and some turkey eggs on a Friday afternoon and
“within hours” the order had been oversubscribed by a community in Broadway,
Virginia. The same month – March 1954 – Alami secured from the IVS Executive
Committee two technical personnel for his ADS project. During his trip to the U.S., he
also visited Broadway. Consistent with his personality, Alami “sat in ‘cracker barrel’
discussions covering religion, world events and small talk,” after which he described the
townsfolk “as such wonderful people.” The event was later publicized as part of the
U.S.’s Point Four foreign aid program, the writers suggesting that Alami “discerned in

645 Letter from J.C.B. Richmond to Kenneth J. Simpson, July 20, 1954, NAK, FO 371/110950,
VJ1821/3.

646 On Meeting of Minister of State with British MPs, June 22, 1954, NAK, FO 371/110950,
VJ1821/1.
Broadway, Virginia no dark plots or imperialistic designs.” Indeed, they wrote, he had “glimpsed the real America in which he and so many foreign people want to believe, and he carries this conviction unshakeably [sic] in the Near East.”

If the British authorities felt unable to provide direct assistance, and were slower to enlist private entities, U.S. officials looked to the ADS project as a valuable opportunity to showcase what voluntary American organizations could contribute to overseas development: an altruistic, people-to-people approach that complemented government-led bilateral aid programs and that would convince the world of what America wanted to believe about itself. That is, a “real America” existed and that PVOs could demonstrate it through hard work, solidarity, empathy, and genuine good will, trumping narrow foreign policy and security considerations to help the U.S. win friends abroad. Alami had previously made an assistance-seeking visit to the United States in 1951 where he unsuccessfully lobbied UNRWA in New York to support his work with orphaned Palestinians; he was more successful in making American contacts, however. The Ford Foundation provided $149,000 to ADS for a Vocational Training Center and would contribute more throughout the next decade; and ARAMCO, through political advisor William Eddy, airlifted IVS’s shipment of eggs and chicks to ADS and


648 The Vocational Training Center mirrored the adapted education approach Alami utilized for the orphans.
contracted to purchase the project’s fresh produce for their oil operations in Saudi Arabia.649

The Dwight Eisenhower administration came into office intent on marginalizing foreign aid and prioritizing the promotion of international trade and private investment as means to global prosperity. Although foreign aid remained, the new Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) consolidated. Top TCA brass were “liquidated,” according to one news report. And, opposed to the “strong social character” of foreign aid under Truman, much of the work by social scientists was eliminated or cut back; indeed, the administration cut many of the sociologists and anthropologists on staff in Washington, replacing them with an emphasis on business acumen and a near-single-minded anticommunism.650 Such actions were part of a larger process of Republican economizing, retooling foreign aid to fit within the administration’s New Look containment strategy in which the U.S. could outlast the shaky Soviet economy by closely shepherding American economic strength.651

Eisenhower eventually changed his mind. Originally more focused on the Cold War in Europe, the defeat of French colonialism in Indochina in 1954 along with a Soviet economic offensive in the developing world placed the focus back on the emerging Third

649 Furlonge, My Country, p. 184-185; Lippman: Arabian Knight.


World and the U.S.’s ongoing struggles to grapple with nationalist movements. It was within these circumstances that rural development was catapulted to new relevance. Almost as quickly as its root assumptions were cast out, the FOA created a Community Development Division in 1954 and in 1955, under the newly retitled International Cooperation Administration (ICA), sent a consultative team abroad to study existing community development programs in the developing world. An agency-wide community development conference then followed, the ICA sponsoring it Bangkok, Thailand in March 1956. By 1956, a Community Development Division within the ICA had aid and staff for 47 community development programs in 27 countries.\textsuperscript{652} ICA reiterated commitments to human-centered development grounded in local participation: “The know-how of Community Development concentrates on the latent power of human motivation and the will to work for improvement. It teaches people in communities how to think and talk and work together for progressively greater cooperation, self-development and productivity.”\textsuperscript{653} One of the basic problems facing “people everywhere” was the question of how to maintain cultural and communal continuity amidst change. “Community development is designed to produce change without social disintegration by binding the people into the making of their own future.”\textsuperscript{654}


\textsuperscript{653} “Recommended Policy Statement on Community Development,” pp. 1-5, attached to “Community Development Conference,” NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1252, Box 1, Folder: Education – Community Development.

\textsuperscript{654} Airgram from ICA/W to ICATO Circular, October 7, 1958, pp. 7, 13, NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1253, Box 19, Folder: Community Development.
Paul S. Taylor, a community development consultant for the U.S. government, wrote of fears of rural villagers flocking to unprepared cities where nascent industrial employment simply could not absorb them. This situation would breed not only rural stagnation, but also overcrowding and underemployment in urban centers, both outlooks threatening internal order and security.\(^{655}\) Thus, many foreign aid administrators and technicians did not envision David Lilienthal’s brand of TVA-modernization; countries in the non-Western world simply did not have the industrial capacity to absorb “excess” farm population. From this logic, the TVA approach was sure to bring instability and thus attract opportunistic communists. Community development, rather, was a way to ensure the desirability of rural living and stability by keeping villagers on the land and encouraging a cooperative process of economic and social improvement. Like early Point Four, community development was more agrarian liberal than industrial liberal.\(^{656}\)

In a 1958 lecture, Taylor also noted community development’s colonial past. Suggesting that it had become “a self-conscious device for rural improvement in less developed countries more than a decade ago,” he noted British colonial efforts to “prepare colonial people for impending self-government.” Among others, he listed the

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\(^{655}\) Airgram from ICA/W to ICATO Circular, October 7, 1958, p. 4, NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1253, Box 19, Folder: Community Development.

\(^{656}\) This of course did not mean that industrial growth was not desirable. Industrial growth in the cities is perhaps implied, particularly when talking about a country’s economic development as a whole, but the articulators of CD, like Carl Taylor, Paul Taylor, and Ernest Neal, left this side of the economic equation unmentioned. Paul Taylor does admit that, realistically, CD “cannot be expected to set up great industrial enterprises, nor to substitute for great national public works like railroads, main highways or large reservoirs,” all of which are presumably desirable. Airgram from ICA/W to ICATO Circular, October 7, 1958, p. 12, NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1253, Box 19, Folder: Community Development.
definition from the 1948 Cambridge Conference. The first official U.S. community development program came into being in India, the recently independent, former “jewel” of the British empire. The American version built from the British model, although the process was eased by a long-running, shared commitment to rural development as Progressive education and agricultural extension.

Community development’s institutional expression within ICA stemmed from Point Four. The India program began under Truman’s watch in 1952, fully emerging by 1953. And, the TCA’s Division of Human and Educational Services deployed the term “community services” to mark the primary social component of economic development. A 1953 newsletter noted that it was “concerned with the development of community organization, social services and related community programs designed to obtain participation in self-help activities and to provide specific services needed to increase productivity and enable people to improve their standard of living.” Functionally, the Division encompassed labor, housing, and social welfare as well as “village projects which involve a multisided approach”. It thus held the most relevance for ACVAFS PVOs and in the early 1950s the head of the Division suggested that PVOs provide input on project requests up front – when they were first presented – which would allow TCA

657 Lecture attached to an airgram from ICA/W to ICATO Circular, October 7, 1958, p. 5, NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1253, Box 19, Folder: Community Development.

658 On this, see: Cullather, Hungry World, Chapter 3; Immerwahr, Thinking Small, Chapter 3.

“to take advantage of their experience” and be informed on local PVO activity, problems and suggestions, and personnel.\textsuperscript{660}

As the FOA and then ICA began to push community development, missions began scrambling to retrieve these Point Four files and to (re)take seriously partnerships with voluntary agencies. A September 1954 memo from headquarters in Washington admitted to a focus on “broad economic plans,” trade, investment, and strengthening government services, largely “in capital cities and at higher levels of government.” But “comprehensive community programs aimed at stimulating and mobilizing local groups to reach agreement on their common problems and to initiate and carry out community self-help projects” had also emerged, typically through projects in agricultural extension, community schools, or health education. Thus, community development could multiply the effect of “local level” technical assistance programs.\textsuperscript{661} Albert Mayer – of the community development work in Etawah, India of the U.S. government\textsuperscript{662} – acted as a consultant during an ACVAFS meeting concerning putting together a technical assistance study. He suggested to ACVAFS members that “development” was a better term than “technical assistance” for the Point Four concept: “development connoting a team approach, a sociological approach, rather than merely technological.” ACVAFS noted

\textsuperscript{660} See the files in Rutgers Archive, ACVAFS, Box 115, Point 4 ACVAFS’ Committee – Minutes 1950.

\textsuperscript{661} Airgram from FOA/W to USFOTO Circular, September 4, 1954, NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1252, Box 1, Folder: Education – Community Development.

\textsuperscript{662} See Immerwahr, \textit{Thinking Small}; Cullather, \textit{Hungry World}. 283
that “He stressed the importance of the independent role of the voluntary agencies in this connection.”

Daniel Immerwahr rightly notes the importance of anthropologists and rural sociologists to the emergence of community development in U.S. aid agencies by the 1950s, taking with them sympathy for communities “imperiled by modernization.” This process, though, began in support for rural development years before and had Point Four as its immediate predecessor. Indeed, Tannous received his PhD in Rural Sociology from Cornell in 1940 and pushed land reform during the MESC years. And as eminent a figure as Margaret Mead, who studied under Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict at Columbia University, supported technical assistance, using her influence within the Society for Applied Anthropology and American Anthropological Association to support Point Four. She hoped to promote equality among the globe’s peoples while building cultural relativism into American foreign aid. She succeeded in helping an applied anthropologist become a trainer in intercultural communication at the Foreign Service Institute for Point Four technicians going abroad. In addition to field staff across Point

663 Cited by Clark, Four Monographs, CDA, p. 25.

664 Immerwahr, Thinking Small, p. 53; he tracks rural sociologists, specifically, into aid programs on pp. 50-56. He also cites the work of anthropologist Robert Redfield, who, with his interest in using local cultural patterns and institutions to cushion native societies from the forces of modernity, Immerwahr calls the “eminence grise” of 1950s community developers. Ibid., p. 56. See also Nicole Sackley, “Cosmopolitanism and the Uses of Tradition: Robert Redfield and Alternative Visions of Modernization During the Cold War,” Modern Intellectual History 9, No. 3 (November 2012), pp. 565-595.

665 Mead’s approach was encapsulated in the concept of “education for choice”; that is, development was a means to allow cultures to “cope with modernity as much on their own terms as possible” and should be delivered “in forms that suited, respected and ideally strengthened indigenous cultural patterns.” Mandler, Return from the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won the Second World War But Lost the Cold War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 272, 259.

Four country programs, the TCA hired two anthropologists as staff members in Washington. And two prominent figures in American community development, Carl C. Taylor and Arthur Raper, had rural development backgrounds that ran through Point Four. The TCA employed Taylor (a rural sociologist) to advise the Point Four administrator “on rural development programs” as well as Raper, sociologist of the American South known for his work on the exploitation of tenants and sharecroppers as well as for taking his students to visit Tuskegee Institute. Together, applied anthropologists and rural sociologists displayed a commitment to human-based, locally-sensitive, and holistic approaches to socioeconomic change and were to help technicians gain basic knowledge of local contexts, languages, and cultures.

Moreover, because Point Four had deep commitments to the region, the Middle East was critical for the emergence of American community development. In 1945, a scholar in the journal *Applied Anthropology* used Allen’s *Come Over Into Macedonia* to distill the “first principles” of rural rehabilitation. By 1953, the first anthropologists and rural sociologists to serve as field staff for Point Four did so in Iran, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon, serving “in positions of assistant planning officers, where they could be in

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667 MacGregor, “Anthropology in Government,” p. 423. MacGregor was himself an applied anthropologist assigned as a deputy administrator to the official overseeing TCA’s Middle East projects.


direct contact with central program development and decision making.” More concretely, country director in Israel, Dr. Lincoln B. Hale, expressed his eagerness to move the foreign aid program in community development directions following a community development assessment mission by ICA in 1955. That October, he sent a letter to the new ICA Regional Community Development Adviser, Raper. He noted that he felt “there is opportunity in this whole Middle East area for a most distinctive contribution in the field of community development.” Hale’s biographical trajectory made him a prime candidate to support community development. Born in 1899, Hale was an educator, serving as President of Evansville College (Indiana) before becoming director for ICA in Israel. He was also an ordained Congregationalist minister, serving as a field representative for the Yale Divinity School, and served as assistant director of the Thessaloniki Agricultural and Industrial Institute in Greece (formerly known as the American Farm School) from 1927 to 1930, notably during the time when Near East Relief was transitioning to NEF.

Furthermore, groups like the NEF had pioneered in the region a common component of community development: the village-level worker. A person of indigenous birth, he (typically men) was “the extension agent at the village level for all the

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671 Letter from Hale to Raper, October 31, 1955, NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1251, Box 1, Folder: Education – Community Development.

672 On biographical information, see the Jewish Telegraphic Agency’s piece on Hale after his appointment as Director in Israel: “Dr. Hale Named Director of U.S. Operations Mission in Israel,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, April 30, 1954.
government services and the energizer of village self-help.” The village worker was, in short, an educator: one who offered not solutions but assistance in helping villagers arrive at solutions to community problems on their own. The village-level worker concept shared a legacy stretching back to Progressive Era neighborhood block or extension agents. And, given that ICA guidelines looked to “group action at the local level” centered on “a focal point of activity” such as a village council, a school, a health center, village workers were a carbon copy of the village teachers Allen argued should “make of their little schools radiating centres of progressive community life.” Such a proposal, of course, sat within a lineage that included ACEC recommendations and the joint NEF-British work at Khadoorie in Tulkarem.

A message from ICA headquarters to missions overseas in 1958 recalled earlier policy “to make the greatest possible use of private agencies in the field of technical assistance and suggested that they “explore ways in which the pool of younger American personnel available from this source may be used to greater advantage as demonstration workers in close cooperation with local personnel in rural and village development programs.” The message further noted that IVS was one such organization. Grouped into country “teams,” these were “designed to lead in rural and/or village improvement practices and support and train native leaders. A shirt-sleeve grass-roots operation is


674 Airgram from FOA/W to USFOTO Circular, September 4, 1954, NARA II, RG 469, Mission to Israel, Series 1252, Box 1, Folder: Education – Community Development.

envisaged with the team members living in the village. . . .”

Moreover, a former government community development advisory and former Acting Director of the U.S. mission to Haiti was soon to become IVS’s Program Officer.

Alami had also incurred the sympathy of Point Four’s advisory body, the International Development Advisory Board (IDAB). Headed by John D. Rockefeller, whose father supported Protestant missionary work, the IDAB proved to be an ally to voluntary organizations seeking to impact the outlook of the program and who hoped to expand their own efforts abroad. Eisenhower entered office determined to curtail governmental socioeconomic aid and asked private entities to bear more of the burden. It was in this atmosphere that the IDAB partnered with William T. Snyder of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and W. Harold Row of the Brethren Service Commission (BSC) to establish IVS.

IVS emerged within a post-1945 surge of voluntary agencies into the development field. More proximate, however, IVS was an extension of cooperation between the U.S. government and the Historic Peace Churches during World War II with the Civilian Public Service program. Continuing to provide alternative service outside of the military draft, members of the historic peace churches were instrumental in the foundation of IVS as a way to channel the enthusiasm of American Christian youth into overseas service. An ACVAFS history noted that Mr. Benjamin Bushong of BSC helped lead the effort to “create a mechanism (to become International Voluntary Service)

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676 Airgram from ICA/W to ICATO Circular, April 30, 1958, NARA II, RG 469, 1253, Box 26, Voluntary Agencies 1958.

677 Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*. 

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whereby conscientious objectors could discharge their military obligation through service in Point 4 programs.  

The MCC was formed in 1920 to assist Russian Mennonites amidst famine, dislocation, and persecution (and emigration). The middle of the twentieth-century witnessed calls for Mennonite ecumenicalism against the vast socioeconomic changes of the era – and which had helped produce seventeen different denominations. While some communities reinvigorated their traditional commitments and pulled up stakes to find spatial seclusion elsewhere; others remained on the land and began to adjust, happily or not, to the socioeconomic forces around them; others “fashioned a diversity of urban lives well removed from the old soil of a communitarian past.” Propelled further by World War II, the turn to humanitarian service as ways to conform to pacifist commitments, express nationalist loyalties, and actively witness to their beliefs, took expression as a multitude of voluntary experiments: rather than be drafted or even serve in non-combat roles in the military, conscientious objectors performed various types of service work. IVS, formed in 1953, was one of the experiments in alternative service, continuing to provide an outlet for CO’s in the midst of the draft during the Cold War. Thus,

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679 Royden Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside: Two Mennonite Communities and Mid-Twentieth Century Rural Disjuncture* (University of Toronto Press, 2006), p. 3. He explores rural change through the diverse reactions of two Mennonite communities: Meade County, Kansas, and Hanover, Manitoba.

Mennonites were dealing with issues of land and community – their own “rural diaspora” – at the same time Alami was.\(^{681}\)

IVS had community development built-in to its mentality before community development became official government policy. In its own words, IVS hoped to be “an ingredient within and beside Point 4,” and “would reinforce in the minds of the people overseas that Americans were concerned for their well being [sic].” The IDAB therefore linked IVS into Eisenhower’s “people-to-people” approach of building friendships abroad through social and educational exchanges and “employment of the volunteer spirit and altruistic aims of private organizations in a way to supplement the programs of government.”\(^{682}\) These linkages however did not obscure the continuance of NEF-style rural development. Indeed, the rural reform pedigree of IVS was unmistakable. Its Board of Directors boasted over 150 years of combined experience “in dealing with rural problems”\(^{683}\) and the work they envisioned was small-scale technical assistance to rural villages: its primary goal was “to develop human resources,”\(^{684}\) the focus less on things, projects, or plants and more on developing people through ideas, skills, and attitudes. It

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\(^{681}\) Loewen suggests: “Their composite story reveals a scattered rural people, participants in a rural diaspora. It was a diaspora in the countryside, a literal and virtual uprooting and dispersion of farm families.” *Diaspora in the Countryside*, p. 3.


\(^{683}\) Document #4291, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 1. Others included: Roy Burkhart, president of World Neighbors; Dr. John H. Reisner, Executive Secretary of Agricultural Missions, Inc.; and two presidents of land-grant colleges.

was no surprise, then, that IVS Executive Secretary, Dr. J. S. Noffsinger, recommend that all IVS country teams visit NEF village projects. The MCC itself began a relief program in the West Bank in 1950, headquartered near Jericho because of the large number of nearby refugees. One volunteer bemoaned that “Just feeding and clothing these people is like giving aspirin to someone who has appendicitis.” Vocational training therefore operated in the background; needlework, shoemaking, and woodworking programs were started (often combined with formal educational instruction) as was a community center that offered typing courses.

With comparable goals and approaches, the humanitarian facet of U.S. technical cooperation partnered easily with Alami’s vision of a Palestinian Arab nation. In a remarkable statement, Noffsinger, a Brethren, noted that Point Four had been conceived “in the spirit of true helpfulness and human brotherhood”; it had shortcomings, to be sure, but “by and large it comes nearer to the Christian concept of how we as a nation should deal with underprivileged countries than anything we have ever known heretofore in U.S. Foreign Policy.” Furthermore, a Newsweek publication from January 1955 covering the ADS project called it an Arab version of “Boys Town,” the author noting that Alami did

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685 IVS Meeting Minutes, Executive Committee, June 21, 1954, MCUA, IVS Collection, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2. And in 1956, President Dr. John Reisner would suggest Clayton Whipple, now with the USDA but who had won his rural development spurs with the NEF in the Balkans, to be an IVS board member. See: Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, April 9, 1956, MCUA, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2.

686 Weaver and Weaver, Salt & Sign, pp. 22-23.

687 J. S. Noffsinger, “Youth’s Opportunity in Point Four,” ca. 1954, MCUA, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2. Noffsinger was a member of the Church of the Brethren, had a background in social science, and was an advocate of education. See, for instance: Popular Science (August 1935), pp. 88-90.
not want to create “a white collar group, but better peasants and farmers.”  

The article not only connected Alami’s work with the settlement house movement of the American Progressive Era, it also, perhaps unknowingly, unveiled its connection to domestic and colonial versions of adapted education. Thus when the IDAB contacted Alami about the nascent IVS organization, he replied that he was “impressed by the aims and objectives of this organization” and was “very happy to cooperate with you or any organization which you recommend.” Discussion about the project continued and IVS formally approved it in July 1953. In the interim, Harold Row had visited the farm and he “was profoundly impressed.”

Alami was looking to expand his agricultural experimentation in the Jordan Valley to include poultry and dairy-raising as a way to diversify and inch the project closer to self-sufficiency. The orphanage was separate but linked to the farm inasmuch as they needed direct experience with agricultural cultivation. The farm, however, was necessarily a commercial venture as well as an experimental demonstration: ADS needed the funds from the sale of produce and goods to help keep the project afloat. In its earliest beginnings, IVS’s heavy Mennonite influence lent itself to expertise in poultry raising and dairying. Limited financial resources, however, confined IVS’s involvement to poultry-raising and the IVS team noted that one of its primary purposes was to determine

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688 Sam Souki, “Palestine Experiment: Hope for the Refugees,” *Newsweek*, January 3, 1955, p. 33; the IDAB would also refer to the project as a Boys Town; see IDAB, “Testing the People-to-People Approach,” FOA, ca. 1954, p. 2, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 2.

689 Musa Alami to Dale Clark, 30 April 1953, MCUA, IVS Collection, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1.

if “chickens can be raised on a commercial basis in this valley.” IVS recruited two young technicians: twenty-four-year old Jim Baile – “a product of American community 4-H clubs, boy scout troops and an agricultural college” who also “successfully operated a four-hundred-acre Missouri farm for years” – and Harold Neuman, who was tabbed for the project from his alternative service with the MCC in Amsterdam. Jim Baile arrived at the ADS farm with the donated chicks on March 27, 1954 and Harold Neuman soon followed.

In addressing technical assistance problems throughout their stay on the project, which lasted about eighteen months, the IVS team faithfully strove to combine modern practices with local resources. They acknowledged that the “set-up is far from ideal according to American standards” and that the “job here is to organize and manage the project introducing as many modern and efficient methods as possible or practical” but they felt compelled – both by necessity and by their development ethos – to build upon what existed. Keeping a project small-scale with low costs and a minimum of outside resources and expenditures were critical to building local capacity and sustainability.

Thus, the IVS team worked with the project’s carpentry shop to begin to churn out higher-capacity poultry housing units while they rigged up light bulbs to the brooders

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691 #6, September 5, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 2.
693 “Statement of Present Status,” ca. July 1953, p. 2, MCUA, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1; Minutes, Operations Advisory Committee, August 3, 1953, MCUA, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2.
and incubators to better control temperature.\textsuperscript{695} Dealing with the heat was another issue. Throughout their stay on the project, they visited many nearby commercial poultry-raising ventures as well as similar projects of the U.S. foreign aid agencies.\textsuperscript{696} Within six months, the team heard reports that chickens were dying from heat on these similar projects and they marveled at how well their own flock was doing. Baile noted that they had been offered advice on combatting heat – “from air conditioning to taking the chickens to a higher altitude during the hot months” – but that they had not provided any external cooling system.\textsuperscript{697} Rather, the IVS team determined that, as constructed, the locally-built housing units were well-suited to withstand heat: aluminum roofs reflected instead of absorbed the sun’s rays. This was ideal. “I believe that the less complicated we can prove this poultry raising to be,” Baile wrote, “the more we shall have done for its ultimate success.”\textsuperscript{698} A third major problem was a holdover from the war and the MESC: securing a sufficient protein source for the chicken feed. The rest of the feed mixture was obtained from the farm’s crops – wheat, barley, brown and yellow maize – but protein sources remained scarce.\textsuperscript{699} For protein, the team secured vitamin/protein packets from the United States while they searched for a reliable local source.\textsuperscript{700} Here, they tried dried

\textsuperscript{695} #5, August 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

\textsuperscript{696} #7, October 15, 1954; Alami’s success with digging wells and making the soil cultivatable prompted other men of means to stake out commercial ventures in the Jordan Valley.

\textsuperscript{697} #6, September 5, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

\textsuperscript{698} #6, September 5, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

\textsuperscript{699} #1, April 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

\textsuperscript{700} #2, May 1, 1954; the shipment from the U.S. was NOPCOSOL, a vitamin and mineral concentrate.
milk but ADS notified them that it was too expensive to purchase. After experimenting with alfalfa, cod liver oil, sesame seeds, and a local bean, the IVS team settled on animal blood from Jericho slaughterhouses. “I go on my motorcycle daily with a small barrel,” Baile reported, “and bring the fresh blood mixed with wheat bran.”

However, during a visit to the ADS project in May 1954, Noffsinger reminded the young men that technical assistance was only part of their service. He emphasized specifically the importance of “making good friends with the people with whom we work, the boys and visitors, and gaining their admiration.” In this spirit, the American men commented that as they moved through their time on the project, they were “looking for detours of service on all sides,” ways of filling needs outside of their poultry duties. Alami “is very eager,” they noted, “to give the orphan boys in his school a balance of experience and knowledge in all phases of life.” Consequently, Alami asked Neuman and Baile to “assist in every possible way.” As ADS was already providing health services and agricultural expertise, the IVS team taught English (six periods weekly) and assisted with recreation. They built basketball hoops at Alami’s request, measured off volleyball, basketball, and soccer fields, and taught the boys the rules.

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701 #6, September 5, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1; the IVS team noted that they were generally feeding the chicken flock a feed composed of 12-15% protein rather than an optimal 20%.

702 Quotation from: #11, May 1, 1955; see also: #2, May 1, 1954; #4, July 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1. This new source helped provide a 30% protein feed.

703 “Service in the Land of Milk and Honey,” 8 June 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

704 #5, August 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

705 #5, August 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

706 #5, August 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1. Constructed at YMCA workshops located in a nearby refugee camp.
The IVS team also took relationship-building to heart. They spent leisure time with the orphans, ate in their dining hall, and worked with the older boys on the poultry project.\textsuperscript{707} “We work very closely with the boys,” noted Baile. “The boys will hardly let us do anything or carry anything ourselves.” The IVS team was also treated to the “gracious hospitality of these Arab people in the form of tea and coffee times, as well as full course meals.”\textsuperscript{708} In a short time they happily reported: “We have also ‘found’ ourselves with the ‘family’ here at ADS during the month and are enjoying the fellowship and the responsibilities that go with any family.”\textsuperscript{709}

Living among the boys and refugee laborers was a way to remain locally embedded and locally attuned. “We can tell by their reactions that giving them our attention and asking them for help in learning Arabic words has raised their confidence and self-dignity a great deal.”\textsuperscript{710} It also helped engender a measure of humility – an empathy for others as human beings and a respect for local practices and beliefs – that was critical to promoting change. This could take literal form, as the IVS team strove not to be too proud or off put by different cultural conventions, coming to accept that laborers or the boys would “come up to us in the morning and walk hand in hand or arm and arm as is the custom of the Arab men,” realizing that “it is their genuine interest and admiration that is prompting their actions.”\textsuperscript{711} It also meant viewing the work in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{707} “Service in the Land of Milk and Honey,” June 8, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
\item \textsuperscript{708} “Jericho Chick Project,” 1 April 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
\item \textsuperscript{709} “Jericho Chick Project Monthly Report (#2), 1 May 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
\item \textsuperscript{710} #3, June 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
\item \textsuperscript{711} #3, June 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
\end{itemize}
cooperative terms. The IVS team suggested that they were partners in improvement:

“Problems and obstacles arise here that are not common or encountered at home or in our country. We are doing our best to adapt ourselves to their methods, but while so doing, throwing in or suggesting a few of our own ways and ideas.”

In these ways, the IVS team was pushing against a simple cultural or Orientalist imperialism. Beyond a provision of services and technical assistance, the young American men strove to meet the “other” on their own terms, build constructive relationships of equality and mutual respect, and so prove a benefit to both sides. The fruits of these actions are difficult to measure – a reality the NEF knew well. Still, signs pointed to its effectiveness as a form of self-help. After the IVS team returned from a short vacation in the fall of 1954, they were greeted enthusiastically upon their arrival by the boys who “were really overwhelmed with joy and pride to know that ‘their’ chickens were really laying eggs,” and they carefully described each egg to the team, “its shape and size and yolk.”

That November, when Neuman finished his term of service, Alami and the boys held a dinner in his honor, which included, of course, “lots of chicken.” Afterwards, the boys delivered farewell speeches, amidst which “tears fell and many eyes were cloudy so that no doubt was left as to the sincerity and depth of their friendship,” noted Baile. “It proved to me that we had been successful in our contact with the people.”

Alami agreed. He had initially encountered significant opposition from within

712 “Jericho Chick Project,” 1 April 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1. Alami also wanted up to 40 Jersey heifers.

713 #7, October 15, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.

714 #8, December 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1. Emphasis in original.
the ADS Board of Directors concerning the use of American personnel on the project. Alami had nonetheless secured the IVS team on a six-month trial basis but within a few months Alami reported that the young American men had won over the Board and were a clear example of how Arab-American relations could be improved.

Even as they worked to live out the ideology of self-help, their own reporting records their internal struggles with putting this into effective practice. After a few months on the project, Neuman set to putting the team’s observations and struggles into words. His recollections simultaneously disavow inherent, biological traits as the root of human differences, thus allowing for the possibility of change, even as he remains within the trope of Arab backwardness extending to time immemorial. “Through the centuries the inhabitants of this land have done very little to develop their resources due to their background, climate, terrain and general outlook on life. Thus they exist as a relatively backward and illiterate people.” A similar mixture of empathy and stereotypes marks his grappling with the implications of Islam for the state of Arab society and economics. He admired the “devoutness” of Muslims to their faith and the “remarkable” feat of fasting during Ramadhan in the region’s climate but falls back on the trope that Islam lent itself to a belief in predestination – that occurrences in the human realm were chalked up to

715 Cecil Hourani relayed this hesitation to the IDAB in late 1953, noting that the “anti-American feeling was so strong that some did not want to assume responsibility for the personal safety of Americans in the area.” IDAB, “Testing the People-to-People Approach,” FOA, ca. 1954, p. 4, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 2.

716 Letter from Alami to IDAB, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 2.
“the will of Allah,” outside of human control. “Perhaps,” Neuman mused, “that is one of the major factors in their failure to maintain progress.”

“Progress” here meant social and economic improvement, seen from the lenses of a technologically-capable American. For the IVS team, then, ADS was a shining light in the darkness, “one of the real pioneers in making an effort to alleviate” Arab backwardness. Compelled to try to be more effective practitioners – “to look into these problems, inquire into their background” and establish themselves “in the picture of assistance” – the IVS team struggled against their own upbringing and sense of expertise. In his own reporting, Baile emphasized that “we are filled with one big word – WHY? Why is the situation as it is?” In trying to make sense of things, he fell back on the frames of reference he was the most familiar with – American standards. He relates an example. At one point, the IVS team was using the farm’s alfalfa as a protein source for upwards of 9,000 chickens but had to cut it with “two serrated jack-knives” – a task made harder when one was lost. After securing a scythe, Baile demonstrated one of his own father’s techniques to the laborers and then let them try it out: “It worked beautifully and drew nearly as much of a crowd and attention as a new car would have at home,” he noted, with one of the laborers asking him if Americans cut their wheat this way. On one hand, Baile attempted to explain this incident by acknowledging that these laborers

717 All quotations in this paragraph are from: “Service in the ‘Land of Milk and Honey,’” June 8, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
718 “Service in the ‘Land of Milk and Honey,’” June 8, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
719 #4, July 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
720 #4, July 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
simply had less exposure to tools and machines than someone from the West. On the other hand, he posited that in contrast to the American predilection to use their minds, skills and resources to search for improved methods, the people in Jordan “give little effort or time” to this pursuit and they “accept existing conditions with the idea that nothing can be done about them.”

The questioning of the IVS team reflects the tensions at the heart of this strain of rural development: trying to understand local attitudes and working within them while being limited by one’s own cultural grounding and frames of reference. Or alternatively put, how to balance the humanitarian impulse to intervene with the cultural relativist impulse to retain local integrity. The IVS team was being self-reflexive in their desire to truly understand local circumstances and attitudes so as to improve their own methods of aid; and this very attempt, the struggle itself, is an indication of the humility and local sensitivity the IVS team strove for. But the frame of the questioning on the other hand reflects a grounding in American assumptions and standards: Americans strive to make continual improvement so why could not the Arabs do the same?

The American position on the issue of resettlement vs. repatriation further fueled sentiment against the United States and Alami. With most of the rest of the world, the official U.S. position on the issue was to induce Israel to repatriate as many refugees as possible. As time wore on, however, U.S. policymakers had failed to ease tensions and were unsuccessful in getting Israeli cooperation. The American position therefore moved

721 #4, July 1, 1954, MCUA, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1. All quotations in this paragraph are from this source.
in favor of resettlement – it would end human misery in the camps and, they hoped, provide an avenue for pursuing a more general peace in the region. In this, their designs aligned with those of Alami, but against refugee sentiment. Thus, by the time IVS arrived on the scene to aid Alami, ADS’s chances of success had already significantly dwindled.

Conclusion

Two days after water had been struck with their first well in the Jordan Valley, an older Sheikh, a friend of Alami’s father, came to the site from Jericho. Upon tasting the water – “I thought he was never going to finish,” Alami recalled – the Sheikh uttered “Thank God,” set the pitcher on the ground, turned to Alami, and said “Musa, now you may die.” Alami noted: “To me that phrase of his was the greatest compliment that could ever have been paid to me: for of course he meant that this deed of mine was sufficient for me to close my life with it.” Undoubtedly reliving the history of the farm after what he often referred to as his foolish decision to go digging for water, he added: “Perhaps I should have taken his advice.”

The history of Alami’s involvement with ADS had indeed been rocky. From village improvement to the crisis of 1948, from full-scale resettlement to adapted education for orphaned children, circumstances kept outpacing Alami’s vision of achieving an independent Palestinian Arab nation. Throughout, however, Alami’s specific solutions to Palestinian Arab problems demonstrated the osmosis of the NEF-British model of locally-adapted rural development ideology and practices into an “all-

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Arab” project, although the tensions remained. With each new manifestation, the ADS crept incrementally further down the paternalistic path, despite its best intentions. And despite its own rhetoric, this Arab program remained dependent on the West – explicitly through financial and technical aid and implicitly in the model of development Alami adopted.

Although they continued to search for ways to help the project, IVS’s standing as a mechanism for U.S. government cooperation made raising its own funds difficult. By mid-1955, the American team at ADS was transferred to the IVS’s community development project in Iraq, which was much larger and funded by a U.S. aid contract. IVS’s Board of Directors included Dr. Carl C. Taylor of the USDA who was known for his wide experience in community development. By 1954, community development had become ensconced within U.S. foreign aid agencies.

From a foreign aid perspective, the early 1950s was a transitional period between British and American influence in the region. This transition was marked by the British confining their presence to a small, itinerant corps of technical experts while the more expansive and holistic approaches of community development were being taken up by the Americans there. And IVS thus served to help expand American power at the expense of the British. With a change of diplomatic personnel at their embassy in Jordan, British officials began to explore positive action toward the ADS project in 1955. Much initiative

723 The IVS project with ADS was one of its earliest, likely growing out of an MCC presence in Jericho, and it did not follow what became a typical pattern as exemplified by its project in Iraq and later Southeast Asia: small teams of young men and women headed by someone older with more advanced technical or overseas experience engaging explicitly in community development projects; IVS’s typical projects were in community development specifically, made up of larger groups of technicians and community organizers broken up into small teams across multiple villages.
came from British technicians, which used Jordanian economic development funding to provide ADS with a loan to build a cold storage plant for their produce; the embassy in Amman also asked the FO to help enlist British oil companies to match the support of ARAMCO.\textsuperscript{724}

The later history of the ADS project matched its early past: turmoil and change. Alami’s desire to forestall Zionism by building a nation from the farms-up, creating modern, progressive farmers fell victim to changing ideas of Palestinian nationalism. In the later months of 1955, a wave of protests and rioting led largely by Palestinians and ignited by the Baghdad Pact negotiations swept the country, impacting both British and American development projects as well as ADS. Rioters destroyed the crops and set fire to the buildings.\textsuperscript{725} The refugees were giving voice to what they saw as the lamentable taint of Western imperialism (and possible Israeli collusion) on the ADS project. Rather than acquiesce to Israel’s existence and resettle as a nation of farmers, Palestinians looked to a new ideal of nationalism: the daring freedom fighter, \textit{fida’i}, who raided Israel-controlled territory.\textsuperscript{726}

Alami would rebuild in 1956, and the farm would again flourish only to be occupied and effectively destroyed in 1967. The farm continued to exist, but never fully recovered – used as an Israeli outpost on the frontlines and frequently bombed by

\textsuperscript{724} See, for instance: Minutes on file, NAK, FO 371/115712, VJ1821/5; Letter from Eyre to Aspden, August 31, 1955, NAK, FO 371/115712, VJ1821/5; Letter from Chancery to FO, June 24, 1955, NAK, FO 371/115712, VJ1821/1.

\textsuperscript{725} Alami was in Europe by chance for medical treatment.

\textsuperscript{726} Citino makes this point effectively. \textit{Envisioning the Arab Future}, p. 111.
Jordanian artillery.\textsuperscript{727} Alami died in 1984, striving until the day he died to maintain the Palestinian Arab character of the farm and prevent it from falling completely into Israeli hands. “What friendship he gave,” recalled Dunstan Skilbeck, former British official in the MESC, upon Alami’s death. He added, perhaps all too accurately, “and what a strange and rather unhappy life he must have had.”\textsuperscript{728}

Alami and the ADS failed in no small part because they were continually out-of-step with refugee sentiment. Rural development advocated a self-help model that tried to negate the effects of paternalism; however, the refugees themselves wanted to return home and looked upon self-help schemes as the relinquishing of their ability to do so. They wanted more paternalism, not less. Thus, the true paternalism that helped doom Alami was, paradoxically, his desire to build a Palestinian nation-state with a resistant population. Alami had accepted Israel’s existence; although he feared its expansion, he thought it was only practical – and necessary – to urge resettlement (especially in the Jordan Valley) on the Palestinian refugees as the only viable avenue towards full independence and nationhood. Alami’s adoption of rural development failed in two other regards as well. His desire to promote self-help within those circumstances misread the recent historical experience of Palestinian villagers; it also was quickly outpaced by the evolving Arab-Israeli conflict. By his own accounts, Alami’s training project produced effective farmers and employees in Jordanian agricultural branches, but they were not likely to be the leaders to which the Palestinian people turned. This ideal of the fighter

\textsuperscript{727} See, for instance, the report in MECA ADS files (Swedish report) as well as “Al-Alami Farm Manager Says no Guns in Vicinity,” \textit{Jerusalem Post Weekly}, May 26, 1969.

\textsuperscript{728} Dunstan Skilbeck to Theodore G. Hodgkin, 11 June 1984, MECA, 034, Series 4.2.
converged with an anti-Western imperialism which associated Zionism with Western support against Palestinian Arab interests. Alami frequently discussed with Western observers – from whom he depended on for financial support – that his Palestinian and Jordanian political opponents often stirred up angry sentiments against him in the refugee camps, painting him as a tool of Western and Zionist imperialism. Given Alami’s history, this is not out of the realm of possibility, and, given his desire for resettlement, would have been an effective propaganda ploy.

At the same time that Alami was hoping to build a Palestinian nation-state in the West Bank from refugees scattered across the camps, the AFSC was looking to assist Palestinians that remained within the new state of Israel. They sought nation-building as well, although it involved integration into the Israeli economy and society.

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CHAPTER 6:

“TO TAKE THEIR PROPER PLACE”: DEVELOPMENT AS INTEGRATION IN ISRAEL, 1950-1961

Introduction

“Reading it as a whole, I find that it is better tied together than I had imagined or could have hoped for,” wrote William (Bill) Miner in 1956. Referring to his report on the end of the American Friends Service Committee’s (AFSC) rural development project in the Arab village of Tur’an, Miner added: “When I think that this history was done mostly with divided attention during the final, rushed, and jam-packed days in Israel, I am amazed that it is as comprehensible as it is.”

Born in Ohio in 1924, Miner received a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Michigan in 1950, concentrating in community organization and administration. After work with the YMCA in cities like Detroit and Indianapolis, Miner, an African American, did his first overseas work with the AFSC in Israel. The Tur’an project became the platform for a career in community development that would stretch across UN and U.S programs over nearly four decades and include stints in decolonizing Africa.

730 Letter from Miner to Jane Bennett, February 18, 1956, FS 1956, Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Reports/Tur’an AP#3, American Friends Service Committee Archives in Philadelphia (hereafter, AFSCA).

The AFSC, formed in 1917 during World War I by a number of American Quaker sects, was originally an avenue for servicing conscientious objectors, providing pacifist witness, and helping to heal intra-Quaker schisms.\textsuperscript{732} Consistent with Quaker thought, building human relationships was both ends and means in AFSC programming; it was the end goal on which peace and reconciliation rested and it was the means by which AFSC personnel engaged with those they were assisting. Harking back to Seaman Knapp’s ever-widening circles approach to agricultural extension and self-help, this approach – using skills Miner gained community organizing – would form the foundation of the AFSC’s development work among Arab Palestinians in Israel. Beginning with relief in Gaza and Galilee in 1948, the AFSC would undertake numerous peacebuilding projects in Israel until they departed in 1961.\textsuperscript{733}

The Tur’an project (1950-1955) marked AFSC’s transition from relief to rural development. This chapter thus shifts the discussion of rural development among Palestinian Arabs to those who remained within what became the boundaries of Israel after 1948 (known in the wider Arab world as the “1948 Arabs”). Given their


\textsuperscript{733} Other peace projects not touched upon in this chapter include: a series of young adult “work camps” which comprised Jewish and Arab Israelis as well as international volunteers from the United States and Europe for summer and spring work projects between 1952 and 1958; the AFSC ran a community center in the mixed town of Acre for development and the bringing together of the town’s Jewish and Arab populations between 1950 and ended in 1960; and in 1957 they initiated discussion groups in Jerusalem in the hopes of bringing Jew and Arabs together in a relaxed, informal atmosphere to discuss questions relating to the future of the Middle East.
marginalization, AFSC feared that Palestinian socioeconomic survival was at stake. The Quakers hoped to catalyze a process of Arab integration, which, if done genuinely and with sensitivity, could be the basis for building new, positive relationships between Arabs and Jews. That is, by proving Arabs could be a productive, contributing part of the citizenry, and by incorporating the state into this process, suspicion and fear on both sides would be replaced by trust and security. In turn, fair treatment of Arabs in Israel would improve Israel’s relations with the wider Arab world.

The model for integration of Arab farming villages into the new modern Israeli state was the Jewish kibbutzim: to survive, Arabs had to modernize and raise their standards of living to achieve equality. Given the primacy of the kibbutz as an example, the rural development project in Tur’an contained a strong dose of modernization. By the time the Tur’an project ended in 1955, however, the AFSC had heavily critiqued their own efforts and looked to move in more explicitly community development directions. I thus argue that AFSC work in Tur’an straddles the rural development line between Point Four and community development. Still, even as this chapter continues to make distinctions among development approaches, it remains attuned to the overlaps in thinking and to the ways such distinctions could be easily blurred in certain contexts.

The AFSC’s relief efforts among Palestinian Arabs has been covered in recent scholarship, emphasizing the dilemmas of humanitarianism, but its work within Israel

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734 The AFSC would help the village “convert from primitive ways to modern mechanized methods of agriculture so that they could successfully compete with the surrounding kibbutzim.” “The AFSC in Israel,” October 20, 1956, p. 2. FS 1956/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/VD, AFSCA.
remains neglected.735 More broadly, literature on U.S. intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been largely top-down and policy/peace process focused.736 Palestinian and Israeli historiographies have become consumed by oppositional internal historical narratives dominated by the origins of the refugee crisis, thereby neglecting the influence of outside actors.737 I build on literature about Arabs in Israel in the 1950s – a still relatively neglected topic in the historiography – but bring a bottom-up, development lens to how U.S. actors sought to resolve the conflict.

As the Tur’an project was to align with and supplement government policies in helping the Arab minority to “take their proper place with and enjoy the same opportunities as other citizens in Israel,”738 the chapter reinforces a view of the Israeli government as dedicated to building a Jewish democracy and ambivalent about policy toward the Arabs.739 In a post-Orientalist contribution, I argue further that Arab villagers


were also ambivalent about reconciliation efforts. They were not averse to rural development nor “improvement” but generally their attitudes had little to do with being integrated into Israel. The backdrop to the Tur’an project was an oppressive Military Government, implemented in 1948 and continued until the mid-1960s. By June 1951, it ruled over 88% of the remaining Arab population in Israel. Palestinians despised the Military Government because of its “despotism, its contempt for due process, and its Big Brother-like insinuation into their lives and communities.”

Like other Arab villages, resistance and collaboration were operative in Tur’an, complicating the AFSC’s efforts. Caught within their nation-building development logic, which dovetailed so closely with their religious convictions, the AFSC struggled to see Arab resistance for what it was – hesitance to be tied to a nation and state which they viewed as illegitimate.

The AFSC was cognizant of possible charges of impartiality if they remained only within Israel; they therefore secured Ford Foundation funding to begin a community development project east of the Jordan River in 1953. It was in this capacity in Jordan that the AFSC joined forces with the British Middle East Office (BMEO), who eagerly sought to incorporate the AFSC into Jordanian development plans. After their departure from Palestine in 1948, the British sought to shore-up their image and presence in the wider Arab world and so did not maintain development projects in Israel. It was impossible, however, for the AFSC to separate their work in Jordan from that in Israel, or


from its association with the aid agencies of the British and U.S. governments. In the end, state-level politics out of the Quakers’ control were determinative. The challenges of rising nationalism in the mid-1950s were all too clear as the AFSC saw their work in Jordan destroyed by rioters. In Israel as well, their ongoing work after Tur’an was fatally handicapped by increasing Arab and Jewish intransigence.

“The Harmony of Human Relationships”: AFSC and Rural Development

Miner’s employment in Israel in the 1950s demonstrated both the Quaker commitment to racial justice and, as with Afif Tannous, the growing opportunities that U.S. interests in the Middle East were opening up for minority groups.741 AFSC’s commitment to Miner illustrated a dovetailing of Quaker thought and rural development, most significantly around the faith that human relationships across social divides were the starting point for social harmony. AFSC origins, history, and basis in Anabaptist thought predisposed it to rural development.

Like other American Protestant sects, Quakerism had splintered during the 1800s.742 The founding of the AFSC in 1917 owed much to the leadership of Gurneyite Quakers like Rufus M. Jones who “embraced a modernist agenda of adapting Quakerism

741 For a relevant discussion of the Cold War’s opening (but still constraining) influence on the domestic fight for Civil Rights, see Mary Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy (Princeton University Press, 2000).

to progressivism, higher criticism of the Bible, and the theory of evolution.”

The most likely to embrace the Social Gospel and to actively engage in ecumenicalism, the Gurneyite sect in particular had greatly influenced the amplification of Quaker international efforts. Moreover, the modernists hoped to reunify Quakerism through the AFSC, using the traditional commitment to pacifism as the glue amidst World War I. AFSC became a permanent organization in 1924, many seeing the organization as “the best vehicle American Friends possessed to unify Quakers, end racism, provide relief, offer an opportunity for Christian service, and witness for peace.”

Quakers had a long, notable history in using mediation and arbitration to resolve international disputes, and the AFSC tapped into this peacemaking legacy. The organization worked in Bolshevist Russia to help relieve famine and partnered relief with rehabilitation to rebuild relationships between the French and German peoples during and after World War I. The AFSC hoped to provide similar services in the 1920s at home, working in the depressed coal mining regions of West Virginia. Their self-help work at Scott’s Run in West Virginia gained the favor of Eleanor Roosevelt, who, with AFSC

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745 Frost, “Deeds Carry our Message,” p. 43. The AFSC broached the topic of continuation as early as 1918, electing a special committee to discuss future options in 1919. See Frost, “Deeds Carry Our Message,” 42.

746 On this early work, see Frost, “Deeds Carry Our Message,” 12-29, Forbes, Quaker Star Under Seven Flags, 48-68, and Jones, Swords into Ploughshares, 12-22.
Executive Secretary Clarence Pickett’s support, used it as the foundation for the experimental subsistence homesteading village of Arthurdale, replete with a Progressive educational focus on adapted education as the means toward individual and communal improvement and led by Elsey Clapp, a student of John Dewey.747 The AFSC was then prominent in PVO activism during World War II, being a founding member and prominent leader in ACVAFS. And, as with many ACVAFS PVOs, the AFSC came out in support of Point Four, testifying on its behalf before Congress.748 The AFSC founded a social and technical assistance subcommittee within its Foreign Service section and reframed its self-help, pilot project work “similar to that proposed by Truman’s Point IV.”749

In the main, AFSC work in Israel officially fell under the guise of social and technical assistance, and like its other foreign programs, dovetailed with certain Quaker beliefs. Namely, within each person existed an “Inner Light,” an image of God: “There is something of infinite worth in every individual, and . . . there is an active or latent striving and capacity for creative and harmonious living in every personality.”750 From this grounding, Quakers believed that any human divisions were artificial, surpassed by the shared likeness of God – all humanity was thus united, belonging to one human


748 Clarence Pickett served as ACVAFS head between 1951 and 1953, after his term as AFSC’s executive secretary came to a close (1929-1950). See: Reiss, Four Monographs.

749 Memo, April 1950, AFSC – Folder Foreign Service, Palestine, AFSCA.

family. Following this logic, Christian truth was not to be found in Church institutions or ordained clergy but contained within each person: a person’s conscience – his or her growing awareness of the experience of spiritual connection between God and themselves through the Inner Light – was a person’s ultimate authority. Personal communication was the best way to stimulate the Inner Light – to tap into everyone’s inherent capacity for goodness – and as individuals became more aware of its existence, God would increasingly point them toward living in peace with all others. Human unity therefore provided true security – not just material or physical, but that found in “the harmony of human relationships.”

In their overseas programs, Quakers sought to live out their sense of responsibility to address, if only in small ways, the state of world affairs and to provide a testimony to others. Entering into personal relations and witnessing to God through their actions, they could stimulate the Inner Light within others. But, resisting coercion, self-help was always central: as with standards of living, a spiritual connection could not be granted but had to be desired and nurtured by the individual herself.

In places like Tur’an, then, the AFSC worked to devolve responsibility for foreign programs on those they were meant to assist; like the missionaries before them, the Quakers were to be catalytic agents only, providing the initial impetus from which local change could evolve of its own accord and conscience, enabling people to determine their own fates. And it was on the basis of human relationships that the AFSC built its programming, to build cooperation, friendship, tolerance, and goodwill through people-

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751 Byrd, Quaker Ways in Foreign Policy, p. 81.
to people initiatives. One member of the AFSC Israel team commented: “The security of Jews at the very least is not harmed by treating Arabs as fellow human beings.”

Quakers were ambivalent toward Jews before World War II like many other American Christians. Nonetheless, the AFSC saw in Jewish persecution a violation of their faith in the unity of humankind and began to act much earlier than most of American Christianity. After a visit to Nazi officials failed to alter German policies, the AFSC actively worked to shelter and assist Jews fleeing Hitler’s regime. Their work of providing relief to Jewish refugees intersected with the Arab refugee crisis in 1948. The AFSC opened its relief efforts in the new state of Israel in the fall of 1948 in the coastal town of Acre, just north of the port city of Haifa. It provided aid to Arab refugees in the area as well newly arriving Jewish immigrants. That December, AFSC entered into an agreement with the UN to undertake relief efforts in the Egyptian-controlled Gaza strip.

The AFSC only expected to be in Gaza for six months. They never intended to be engaged in long-term relief and had included self-help programing like weaving and carpentry classes as they awaited Arab repatriation. International efforts continually proved ineffective, however, amidst both Israeli and Arab obfuscation. When the

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752 “A View of the AFSC Israel Program,” December 1960, ISD 1960/STA/Ind to Ita, ISD-STA/MEP/I:G/Project Proposals, AFSCA.

753 For more on Quaker views of Jews, see: Romirowsky and Joffe, Religion and Politics.


755 The ICRC worked with refugees inside Israel, the LRCS worked with refugees in the Arabs states.

756 In March 1950, Donald Stevenson lamented that Middle East politics had “sunk to a new low” as the Arab League met in complete disunion. One AFSC official argued that “Egypt thought of the Gaza refugees and also the Gaza residents [sic] somewhat as hostages against Israel. The very plight of these
chances began to recede, they, like other international observers, saw resolution of the refugee crisis as critical to a permanent peace. Consistent with wider PVO ideology, the AFSC believed they were best placed not to continue to work in the morass that was now relief work but to provide a pilot project which would point to a long-term solution to the refugee crisis and promote reconciliation between Israel and Arabs more generally. While retaining their program in Galilee, on May 1, 1950, the AFSC transferred its relief activity in Gaza to UNRWA, thereby ending its immediate work with Arab refugees outside the state of Israel.\footnote{The May 1 date was in fact an extension of the AFSC’s work beyond the UN-AFSC contract. The UN was unprepared to take over the AFSC’s work in Gaza and requested a month-long extension, prompting debate that drew out differences within AFSC ranks. See Gallagher, \textit{Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict}, 111-112. The AFSC therefore extended its stay until the new United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which replaced UNRPR in December 1949, was ready to take control of relief activities.} Even as they sought out opportunities in the Arab countries as an amplifying counterweight, the AFSC sought to leverage its presence inside Israel to provide a development project that would embody its desire for long-term reconciliation and peace by proving Arabs could integrate.\footnote{In a way, the AFSC’s turn to development was supremely pragmatic and not unlike Musa Alami’s own calculations – it could be a way to create facts on the ground that loosened the political paralysis.}

The Quakers’ previous work placed them in a unique position to serve within the new Israeli state and in making the turn to rural development and Arab integration, the AFSC had a well of sympathy for both sides. The Quakers also had firsthand experience with conditions in the new state, particularly scarcity and a drive for security. As Israeli authorities struggled to build a new nation-state amidst war and the horrific aftershocks...
of the Holocaust, they were beset with material and financial scarcity and the burden of integrating waves of culturally diverse Jewish immigrants – upwards of 90,000 between May 1948 and March 1950\(^\text{759}\) – not only from Europe but also North Africa and the Middle East. Surrounded by hostile Arab neighbors against whom they had just fought a war for survival, Israel was in a “siege mentality” in the first years of statehood which prompted an overriding concern with security. The existence of about 100,000 Arabs – a “small but substantial” minority, comprising around 12% of the entire population – posed not only a potential security problem but an existential one which undermined the Zionist goal of creating a specifically Jewish state.\(^\text{760}\)

Becoming a minority practically overnight, Arabs faced a host of devastating circumstances: the fear of violence, food shortages, a local economy destroyed by war, and families that had been divided by the fighting and forced exile. They also faced overt and covert discrimination and were not prioritized for available social welfare services.\(^\text{761}\) Although technically guaranteed political and social equality under the Israeli constitution, the state, despite some Jewish opposition, put Arab inhabitants under the authority of an opaque Military Government that operated with impunity and enforced oppressive regulations. Originally a security measure based on British Defense Emergency Regulations from 1945, it quickly became a useful and effective political tool

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\(^{759}\) “Report to the American Friends Service Committee on the Position of the Arab Community in Israel,” March 22, 1950, FS/Co-Pal/MEC 1950, #242, AFSCA.


for Israel’s ruling MAPAI party: it allowed for “draconian restrictions” on the movement of Palestinian Arabs and, perhaps most importantly, played a vital role “as the handmaiden of the colonization” of Arab land.\footnote{Jiryis, \textit{Arabs in Israel}, pp. 10-27, 49, 137-140 (on MAPAI, see pp. 31, 163); Robinson, \textit{Citizen Strangers}, p. 2.} Reaching into the daily lives of individual Arab communities, the Military Government restricted travel and commerce with curfews and permits (to open a shop, to visit family, to seek medical assistance) and tried civilians under military tribunals. Moreover, the Military Government abetted the expropriation of Arab land. Israeli land laws in 1950 and 1953 considered vacated Arab land to be “abandoned,” disallowing uprooted Arabs to return to their former property holdings or legally repossess them while allowing for the legal seizure of “uncultivated” or untitled land. The first law codified the expropriation of nearly 60 percent of the country’s fertile land and the second of another 40\% of Palestinian land.\footnote{Robinson, \textit{Citizen Strangers}, p. 47.} To further ensure that Israel would be a Jewish state, the government began settling Jewish immigrants upon the vacated lands.\footnote{Pappe, \textit{Modern Palestine}, p. 171.}

Furthermore, in the absence of strong, unifying Palestinian leadership, Israeli officials “viewed control of local figures as the basis for controlling the entire population.” Israeli security agencies created a network of Arab informants and collaborators which penetrated nearly every Arab village, setting Arabs on edge and
sowing new “loyalist” and “nationalist” divisions in communities.\textsuperscript{765} Part of this process included Israeli officials continuing the British policy of coopting the position and authority of village \textit{mukhtars}, which was the case in Tur’an (described below).\textsuperscript{766} Arabs, already traumatized, quickly became second class citizens and grew disillusioned and alienated in the face of marginalization and discrimination.

The AFSC confirmed these circumstances, even noting that all “abandoned Arab villages, so far as we know, have been dynamited either during or since the fighting.”\textsuperscript{767} For the Quakers, a more insidious situation, however, was that Arab citizens were not being given equal opportunity to maintain a productive livelihood – as such, they certainly could not be expected to help in the development of the state. They estimated that up to half of the remaining Arabs had left their lands and were now dispossessed and unemployed.\textsuperscript{768} Meanwhile, government-sanctioned (and subsidized) Jewish agricultural monopolies were squeezing increasingly smaller Arab entities, crippling Arab agriculture

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{766} Cohen, \textit{Good Arabs}, pp. 98-99.
\item \textsuperscript{767} “Report to the American Friends Service Committee on the Position of the Arab Community in Israel,” March 22, 1950, FS/co-Pal/MEC 1950, #242, AFSCA. See also: Sabri Jiryis, \textit{The Arabs in Israel}, trans. by Inea Bushnaq (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 83-96. Pappe confirms such reports, arguing that the Israeli government campaign of “land and village confiscation” continued intermittently from 1949 to 1954 as the government saw Jewish immigrants as a means to consolidate the Jewish state through settlement and cheap labor. Forty Palestinian villages, he posits, were depopulated between 1949 and 1952, their inhabitants being either moved “\textit{en bloc}” to other villages or driven to other parts of Israel or even across the borders. He also claims that the government erected new Jewish settlements on top of the 370 Palestinian villages destroyed during the war or taken after the war. Moreover, this policy toward new Jewish immigrants was partially based on race since many were from Arab countries while those in power were of European origin. \textit{Modern Palestine}, 147, 160, 176-178.
\item \textsuperscript{768} “Report to the American Friends Service Committee on the Position of the Arab Community in Israel,” March 22, 1950, FS/co-Pal/MEC 1950, #242, AFSCA.
\end{itemize}
and forcing many Arabs to seek wage labor jobs. But the travel restrictions and need for permits made finding such work very difficult or impossible. Needless to say, the AFSC were not optimistic about the future of Arab citizens in Israel and feared for the Arabs’ social and economic survival – and, in turn, the fate of peace in the region.

It was with this knowledge of Arab marginalization, not despite it, that the AFSC sought to use rural development to integrate Arabs into the Israeli socioeconomic fabric. The AFSC was aware of the challenges Israel faced in its nation-building efforts and, in order to gain access, it sought to recoup its potentially sinking image in the country. As the AFSC tried to organize relief efforts among Arabs in Israel in 1948, the first hints of the Israeli government’s ambivalence towards the AFSC’s presence – and by extension, their goals among Arabs and Jews – were made apparent. Quaker missionaries had founded the Friends School in Ramallah in the late 1800s and a former school director, Dr. Khalil Totah, strongly and vocally opposed Zionism. The Israeli consulate general in New York noted that Totah was “the Director of Arab propaganda in this country [Israel/Palestine]” and that the AFSC “apparently was anxious to do something towards remedying the situation and to improve relations between the Friends and ourselves [the Israelis].” In a memo outlining their proposal to provide relief in Israel, the AFSC was frank about the fact that the Arabs were the most in need of relief aid and that “this might be misinterpreted in many directions as indicating a pro-Arab bias.” It added: “ Whereas

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769 Jiryis, Arabs in Israel, pp. 204-230.


771 Letter from Lourie to Silver, October 20, 1948, AFSC 1948, ISA.
certain persons and organizations might not be acceptable to Israel, it was hoped that Quakers might be able to command the trust and confidence of both Israelis and Arabs. For his part, the Israeli consulate general wrote to the nascent Ministry for Foreign Affairs that “this might give us an opportunity to improve our relations with the Quakers,” although a recent cable to him suggested that while they did not object, they were “most unenthusiastic.” They nonetheless acquiesced, perhaps buttressed by AFSC’s work among Jews in the 1940s. Nonetheless, Israeli ambivalence about the AFSC presence would not dissipate through the 1950s.

After securing the ability to stay in the country, AFSC oriented its work in Israel toward two primary objectives: to integrate Arabs into Israeli society and economy and to promote positive relationships between Arabs and Jews. Clarence Pickett had noted in early 1949, when repatriation had not yet faded from view, that the AFSC could help by supporting resettlement efforts through direct social and economic work with the refugees:

> We must help the refugees themselves face their situation realistically... They must realize that if they return home they will live in a new state, a modern state, a state that is becoming more and more industrialized and which will insist, for its own material survival, that every plot be used to produce the maximum amount possible. The refugees are facing an industrial revolution and must make the necessary adjustments.

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772 “Outline of a Proposed Plan for a Quaker Team in Palestine,” September 20, 1948, attached to letter from Bell to Lurie [sic], September 22, 1948, AFSC 1948, ISA.

773 Letter from Lourie to Eytan, September 23, 1948, AFSC 1948, ISA.

774 “Palestine Refugee Relief of the AFSC,” Bulletin No. 2, April 1949, p. 4. The AFSC never entirely gave up on repatriation although they, like UNRWA and the U.S., moved to resettlement given the seemingly intractable political impasse. Indeed, by 1952 mention of repatriation could no longer be found in the AFSC’s organizational objectives in the region, which included improving economic conditions,
And, that December, two AFSC members recommended that the organization “gain the confidence of Israel that we had a substantial contribution to make to the resettlement and integration of Arabs into Israeli life.”

The clearest statement of AFSC’s collective reasoning was provided in a 1952 address by the Secretary of the AFSC Foreign Service Section. She noted that despite the Arabs within Israel being citizens of a “Zionist State” which “they cannot accept,” they were likely to remain within Israel which was here to stay. This reality posed a problem for the Arab citizens both economically and socially because the present state of change within Israel would leave the Arab minority behind. Working with Arabs to manage this reality was, pragmatically, their best option for survival. Alleviating the situation, however, would bring a wider peace: “It is to be hoped that, if Israel handles this minority wisely and if it is helped to a satisfactory life in the country, that will have some effect on the relationship of Israel to the Arab States.”

Working to connect Arabs to the Israeli authorities was about Quaker religious obligations to promote reconciliation as well as a rural development logic based in nation-building and promoting social equality and harmony. Building human relationships as a form of peacebuilding works best when initiated from a position of equality; therefore, the task of integration – raising standards of living – would provide creating better understanding between Jews and Arabs, and “resettlement of refugees.” Subcommittee on STA, Minutes, October 27, 1952. Yet, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the AFSC by the mid-1950s would face similar tensions in their desire to repatriate, but having to settle for resettlement, displaced Arabs in Israel.


the foundation for the latter goal. Balancing the socioeconomic scales would create “a more equal footing” and thus increase the potential for “better relations” between Jews and Arabs.\footnote{777 “Contributions” section of draft, ca. 1955, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSC. Similarly, this strategy would provide the Arab villagers with a “common link” to their Jewish neighbors, strengthening the “confidence” between them. FS Executive Committee, Minutes, June 1, 1953; “Middle East Program,” Summer 1950, FS, Folder: AFSC – Foreign Service, Israel, AFSC.}

Even in the Quakers’ relief work in Western Galilee, the goal had been reconciliation through nation-building. One AFSC worker reported that “The problem of Arab-Jewish relationships is always in the forefront of our minds” and that they hoped to “help find the way to a coordinated social order.” Given the difficulty of absorbing tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants who, in the area of Acre alone spoke “about twenty languages” one AFSC worker mused that perhaps such great cultural variety would “not make it quite as difficult to bring the local Arab culture into the general cultural stream.”\footnote{778 Palestine Refugee Relief, Newsletter Number 5, May 16, 1949, p. 3, AFSCA.} Boosting its rural development bona fides, the Israel relief team contained two Danish members with experience working on Quaker programs in Europe and who had been schooled at Danish folk schools.\footnote{779 Palestine Refugee Relief, Newsletter Number 5, May 16, 1949, p. 1, AFSCA.} To be sure, the AFSC sought to prove that Arabs could be productive, contributing citizens, secure Israeli acceptance, and thereby convince the Israeli government to respond to Arab needs and extend their services accordingly.\footnote{780 The AFSC thus followed what PVOs saw as a critical role for themselves in the nation-building work of rural development which had its own distinct resonance in among Jews and Arabs in Israel in the 1950s: “In areas where villagers are suspicious of the government or where they have had little experience in availing themselves of government resources, a voluntary agency may perform useful service as a bridge between the villagers and their government. On the one hand, the villagers need to learn of existing}
Arabs share in State services and benefits and that they see and feel State accomplishments.”

The primary rural development mechanism would be cooperation. Social cooperation would bring the villagers together and enable them to work together for their economic survival, a condition manifested in a cooperative. In turn, intra-village cooperation would help enable village-government cooperation, which had the potential to translate into a wider cooperation and positive relationship between Israel and the wider Arab world. The project’s elements – using the machinery and a training program in particular – were opportunities “to educate them on the value of cooperation.”

“A Wisp of Cloud in the Hot Israel Sun”: Beginnings and Reactions

In retrospective reporting, Miner summarized the Tur’an project’s local staff members. The first employee that AFSC hired “had some speaking and writing knowledge of English because of his employment with the British,” and he served mainly with the agricultural machinery unit the AFSC had imported. Another, who spoke English so well the AFSC hired him as a translator, was very eager to be trained to use the machinery. However, his uncle, “head of one of the largest clans in the village, government resources; the government, on the other hand, often needs help in becoming familiar with the villagers’ problems.”

781 ISD 1960/STA/Ind to Ita, ISD-STA/MEP/I:G/Project Proposals, “A View of the AFSC Israel Program,” December 1960, AFSCA.


783 “Contributions,” ca. 1955, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.
refused him permission.” Participation and resistance in the village marked the entire Tur’an project. Miner’s detailing of what he called, tongue-in-cheek, “public relating,” is revealing. Just as AFSC personnel drove pregnant mothers to the hospital in Nazareth and attended local Arab weddings, they dined with American and British foreign service personnel and “were guests of the Military Governor of the Eastern Galilee.”

Underlying AFSC confidence about linking Arabs and the government were hints of Arab resistance only later fully realized. This section argues that, at the beginning, the AFSC’s rural development approach in Tur’an contained a heavy dose of modernization, driven by the desire to emulate Jewish kibbutzim. This emulation, and AFSC’s intentional involvement of government agents, made the project difficult for Arabs in Tur’an to accept even as they adjusted to the changes the AFSC sought to engender. The Israeli government’s support for the project reflected its own ambivalent policies toward the Arab minority.

As the AFSC explored longer-term programs beyond relief services, it began to engage in negotiations with Israeli officials in Tel Aviv in early 1949. The negotiations revealed an Israeli government ambivalent about the Arab minority, waffling between isolation and integration as policy prescriptions. During the relief period, one AFSC member noted that he had “spent considerable time in discussing matters with both local and district governors,” including the military governor overseeing Acre. They “are trying to do what they can within the framework of the present program” and, despite

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784 “Personnel,” FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.

travel restrictions, looked to implement a works program for the Arabs. By 1949, an
Israeli social service agency had set up shop in Acre and contained two committees, one
for Jews and one for Arabs. Nonetheless, “None of us sees the way ahead too clearly and
in no case can there be rapid progress.”

The government did finally approve the Tur’an project in March 1950, calling for
the village’s integration. The tension between the desire on the part of many Israeli
officials to isolate Arabs in the country and the liberal democratic ideals Israel aspired to
were on full display. After vetting by various departmental layers, including the
Ministry of Agriculture, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Foreign Relief, and, in
particular, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion’s advisor on Arab Affairs: Yehoshua
Palmon. The same drive for security within the ruling MAPAI party that prompted the
Military Government led Palmon to be “sensitive to Arab perceptions of state-sanctioned
discrimination” and to discourage government efforts he thought were providing
“separate treatment” for Arabs because they were a “political liability which tarnished
Israel’s public image abroad.” Good relations with an internationally recognized NGO
would certainly aid Israel’s public image and thus served to promote at least the
appearance of integration while working within the bounds of Israeli national security.

This dynamic played out in Palmon’s guidelines for AFSC work, which was a
combination of integration and governmental control. According to AFSC documents
summarizing the negotiations, he stipulated that any non-relief projects had to further self-help (not simply be hand-outs) and include, rather than remove, Arabs from the economic, social, and cultural life of Israel into which they were to be integrated. The projects also had to demonstrate the values of democratic social action and teaching modern farming methods to Arabs. At the same time, Palmon proposed an initial term of only two years for the Tur’an project, and stipulated that “Any Quaker work must fit in with the type and tempo of government planning.” Another Israeli official stated that “The scheme of the Quakers will be supplementary to Government schemes, and under the general supervision of the Ministries concerned, and of the local civil authorities.” Israeli policy encouraged the formation of cooperatives and the Arab Village section of its Ministry of Agriculture was already operating a machinery unit in Western Galilee; the AFSC’s work in Tur’an, located in Eastern Galilee, could round out this work and they urged AFSC to gear their project into Israeli goals, encouraging the formation of a village cooperative.

The AFSC was of course aware of the Military Government apparatus which had divided the Galilee area alone into fifty-eight separate units. And foreign groups and journalists looking to enter areas under its jurisdiction were accompanied by “official

789 FS, Folder: AFSC – Foreign Service Israel, “American Friends Service Committee Program in Israel,” 1949, pp. 1-6, especially p. 6, AFSCA.

790 FS, Folder: AFSC – Foreign Service Israel, Letter from H. Gellner, Director of the GOI Liaison Office for Foreign Relief to Mr. Hartsough and Dr. Morgan, AFSC members, September 19, 1949, AFSCA.

minders.” The first head of the AFSC’s personnel in Israel remarked that two governments appeared to exist in Israel, “one very idealistic, duly elected, and easy to work with and the other a self-appointed military clique that acted as a law unto itself.”

But the AFSC remained dedicated to their view of Israel as being a permanent reality and looked to rural development and their own religious commitments to reconciliation to promote nation-building and the changing of attitude among Jews and Arabs alike.

After both the Quakers and the government reached an agreement on the Tur’an proposal, the government arranged a meeting in the village. In what was likely an inauspicious start for the Arab villagers, the AFSC and government representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Military Government met with the village heads, or mukhtars (one Muslim, one Christian (and newly chosen, the AFSC noted)), as well as village notables, to explain the project. Tentative, the mukhtars agreed.

The selection of Tur’an as the project site was strategic and aimed at maximizing the chances for success. About 1,600 people inhabited the village, including a Muslim majority and Christian minority divided between Catholics and Greek Orthodox. Two churches, respectively, could be found along with the village Mosque. The village also contained one coffee house, a “sizable school,” about six one-room shops, and collectively the village contained about 1,000 livestock, mostly goats. Most of the men

792 Robinson, Citizen Strangers, p. 39, quotation from 49.

793 Delbert Replogle, a Quaker from a missionary family. Gallagher, Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, pp. 67, 130.

were literate, as were some women. Tur’an was located near kibbutzim so exposure to modern machinery was expected, making the village more amenable to accepting it; the village had been within reach of the AFSC’s relief efforts out of Acre and so the villagers were at least nominally familiar with the AFSC and would more readily accept them. It was located along a main road that would facilitate its potential influence and access to markets; it had relatively level, fertile land more amenable to machinery-based cultivation; and was relatively well-to-do among Arab villages. In ever-widening circles fashion, Tur’an would become a model for other nearby Arab villages.

As noted, the Jewish kibbutzim’s communal ethos and use of modern agricultural machinery was held up as an ideal: an example of what could be achieved, indeed may need to be achieved, if Arabs were to thrive and survive. In Tur’an, the AFSC moved to incorporate machinery from the beginning, unlike other rural development projects where their usage was generally discouraged as an inappropriate place to begin village development. Located seven miles from Nazareth, it lay at the foot of the Galileean hills. The mountainside rising behind the village was comprised, the AFSC observed, of “almost sheer rock.” While benefiting from more level land, the village appears to have operated on the typical dry-farming system of the Palestine hill country, relying on seasonal rainfall both for cultivation and for softening the soil for planting rather than

irrigation. This was especially the case for their wheat, which along with olives and vegetables, were the village’s primary crops. The village contained about 11,000 dunums (less than 3,000 acres) of which the village cultivated about two-thirds. The size of land plots varied, and there were some larger plots of fairly good soil but the village holdings also consisted of many small plots whose ownership or renting patterns were scattered rather than consolidated. AFSC reports further suggest the villagers used conventional Arab Palestinian farming implements, from wood plows for shallow furrowing in the rocky soil, hand sickles for harvesting, and threshing shears. “When they thrash wheat, a heavy board with stones embedded in it is dragged over the wheat by animals, which moved around in a circle, causing the straw to become fine enough for food.”

The AFSC appointed Norman Moody as the agricultural specialist and he, after the initial meeting with government officials and the mukhtars in March, began the program in April 1950. Blending Quaker faith and rural development, Moody worked to stimulate interest in improvement, adapt modern methods to local conditions, and build human relationships to overcome distrust, provide avenues for guided change, and bring Jews and Arabs together. The ultimate goal was self-help, on both economic and social fronts. From the beginning, Moody tried to instill from the beginning the idea that the


799 “When they thrash wheat, a heavy board with stones embedded in it is dragged over the wheat by animals, which moved around in a circle, causing the straw to become fine enough for food.” “Report on Israel: Periodic Summary No. 1,” October 15, 1950, 70/13, American Friends Service Committee, 1948, Israeli State Archives, Jerusalem (hereafter ISA). On these issues, see also: “Beginning of Program,” section of draft, p. 5 and “Contributions,” in FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.

help provided to the villagers was not simply “being given to them”. For example, each land owner paid a small fee for the use of the farming equipment (at rates that would cover maintenance costs). Other self-help initiatives included the formation of a Village Committee to act as liaison between AFSC and the village while providing a potential source of local leadership, the use of local staff for various mechanical and administrative duties (machine operator, workshop attendant, and administrative assistant), and occasional informal agricultural training in the field, workshop, or on home visits.

Similarly, the AFSC worked with the Israeli government on the project as a way to nation-build: to bridge village needs and government responsiveness. The Arab Village Section of the Ministry of Agriculture provided wheat seed for fall planting and arranged tours for the AFSC staff to Israeli agricultural experimentation centers and kibbutzim.

“Some visiting back and forth had been carried on with the workers in the kibbutz and the villagers.”

Moody also sought to “be local,” testing outside techniques and avoiding impositions. Moody undertook a series of test plots, carried on by his successors between 1950 and 1953, comparing conventional village practices with imported techniques like the use of fertilization and improved seeding (and their relative costs), as well as testing

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803 FS, Folder: AFSC – Foreign Service Israel, “Report on Israel,” Periodic Summary No. 4, Nov. 1951, pp. 4-6, AFSCA.

804 Development of the Program section of draft, p. 1. FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.
new types of crops such as sugar beets, sorghum, flax and vetch in the local environment. Moreover, part of his initial work was to discuss the needs of the village and help advise what types of mechanical equipment could be of use. At one of the first meetings, Moody reported that “I made it clear that the type of machinery which they got was up to them . . .” A mower was agreed upon to be used for harvesting in May, and one was purchased in Haifa, although one farmer expressed his belief that the village could not use such a machine as “it would lose some wheat and we did not have a rake . . .” Moody reported that the man subsequently “had been shouted down by the rest of the group,” to which he himself responded to those gathered that “I wished to encourage any questions, and needed their criticism.” Moody continued to apply his local approach when the use of a combine for wheat harvesting was discussed; describing the local method of threshing wheat, “there is some question here,” he reported, “as the straw a combine puts out is more coarse than their animals can eat.”

Because the goal of the project was the formation of a machinery cooperative, the village obtained other agreed-upon equipment over the course of the project. These included a tractor, a disc for plowing, a mechanical seed driller, and a combine. But village acceptance of the machinery was not an end in itself, but rather the means toward


social as well as economic change. The machinery would be an instrument for inculcating cooperation: “We hope,” Moody noted, “gradually to introduce methods of cooperation through use of our machines.”

Although not as extensive as in other parts of the hill country, the rocky soil in Tur’an as well as the small, scattered plots of many of the landholders, put the use of machines at a disadvantage – as the NEF had noted two decades earlier. Mechanical plowing and harvesting were best suited and most efficient on large plots of land that were “clean,” or cleared of stones which threatened to break them. This was especially the case with the plow that drove much deeper into the soil than the conventional and well-adapted wooden plow designed to operate in the climate and rocky soil. Maximizing the machines’ effectiveness required neighbors to cooperate in the clearing of their fields and then in requesting the use of the machines on their land from the AFSC at the same time.

Finally, human relationships were paramount. The AFSC noted that “Among the greatest need we have sensed among Arab villages is that they feel regard and affection,” having been denied such by outsiders and their own leaders. One way to demonstrate such attitudes was through individualized acts or personal contact. Moody and his successors lived in the village to engender as close a working relationship with the villagers as possible. They also undertook home visits, numbering approximately 250

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between 1953 and 1954 alone, which helped the appointees to get to know the villagers personally. The villagers discussed their own situations, problems, and concerns, and in turn, the visitors were better able to learn about opportunities for “progress” within the village.

During the five-year project the AFSC encountered both acceptance and resistance on the part of the villagers. Village reactions were a combination of desire for the machinery, given its exposure to nearby Jewish kibbutz, as well as suspicion born of decades of experience, convention in their own farming practices, and the pressure likely felt by the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Military Government.

On the one hand, consistent with IVS’s deployment of rural development in the West Bank, Moody displayed a combination of respect and Orientalism, cultural accuracy and ignorance, in his analyses of village reactions. At first, Moody observed that the Arab villagers were cautious of the foreigners. After village meetings in which Moody discussed with the villagers the types of machinery and nature of work needing to be done, initial interest translated into little actual action. Moody reported in early 1950 that “until last year, [the land was] farmed with the same primitive hand tools and ancient

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812 As AFSC looked to leave Tur’an, they were considering ending local staff employment. They had been staying in the house of a local family, employing the mother as a sort of housekeeper and her adult daughter. The daughter was insisting on terminal pay equivalent to that of the Histadrut. Letter from Evans to Bennett, IU-19, March 29, 1955, p. 2, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/STA/Acre Letters, T&F, AFSCA.
methods that have been used for the past hundreds of years.”813 Arab villagers had to learn to cooperate, “contrary to the practice of generations.”814 Happy with how the villagers were coming to accept him, he nonetheless added, “and yet there is still so much backwardness and lack of initiative . . .”815 And he vented in rural reform terms. “Our most difficult program is organization. . . . The villagers don’t trust each other, nor do they work together beyond two’s and three’s.”816

Of course, many of the village’s agricultural implements had long been used, as noted by Volcani and European travel writers in the early 1900s. But this only made them “primitive” by Western socioeconomic standards, rooted in evolutionary thinking and conceptions of linear human progress. Without approving of intra-Arab village power hierarchies, the practices of the peasants were eminently suited to the climate, geography, culture, and socioeconomic circumstances of Arab Palestine.817 And their agricultural patterns had not remained static: Arabs increasingly sought wage labor outside the village, varied some of the crops they grew, and altered certain cultivation methods as responses to Ottoman, British, and global market intrusions.818 Indeed, the relative lack of


814 “Contributions,” ca. 1955, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR.


818 Alon Tal, Pollution in a Promised Land: An Environmental History of Israel (Berkley: University of California Press, 2002); Moshe Bower, “Transformation in Arab Rural Settlement in 335
change likely had more to do with financial constraints – an inability to more readily respond to increasing market demands – than cultural or ideological concerns. In other words, fellaheen practices were well-suited because they knew the land; but this did not mean they would not have changed given a favorable set of circumstances. As it stood, the risk entailed was enormous and the burdens of subsistence farming and debt had not been eased under Ottoman or British rule.

Moody, and later Miner who did his own reporting, grasped some of the logic behind the village’s early inaction. One report commented that “They knew the fields had to be cleaned [in order to use the tractor] . . . Yet experience had been a good teacher and they were suspicious.” They did not want to exert the effort if no actual help was forthcoming: “They didn’t think the Quakers were really going to do anything. They thought that when they removed the stones from the fields, this clean land would be taken away from them.” Subsequently, the “enthusiasm expressed so strongly” at village meetings “seemed to vanish like a wisp of cloud in the hot Israel sun” when it came to action. “They were hard workers,” Moody noted, “but seemed to be unwilling to work unless it was absolutely necessary and could not be put off.”

Moody was likely correct when he noted that, in his attempts to make efficient use of the tractor for disking the fields for planting among scattered, often small plots

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820 “Beginning of Program,” section of draft, p. 6. FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR.
across a number of different owners or renters, they were “exceedingly eager”\textsuperscript{821} to make use of them but that “they are cautious and afraid” due to “the uncertainty of the weather and the newness of the machines.”\textsuperscript{822} In light of the general plight of Arabs in Israel at the time and the fact that the AFSC was working in conjunction with the government, the villagers were understandably suspicious and hesitant. And, like many Palestinian Arab villagers, their economic circumstances made them logically risk averse. The villagers, especially the small-holders, had little incentive to clear the rocks – which in the dry-farming climate helped keep vital moisture in the soil and for which their wooden plows were well-adapted – without guarantees if using the machines ended in crop failure or if doing so might lead to land alienation, especially when they were living a mostly subsistence economy after 1948 when available wage labor jobs were more difficult to come by under the Military Government restrictions.

Other responses by individual villagers held plenty of cultural baggage that could have been unpacked. Moody lacked the analytical tools and background knowledge to more fully understand the local. Moody reported that the people did not understand the machines, or misunderstood their benefits and limitations; some villagers had even apparently begun to sell their horses because of the presence of the machinery. Other villagers, he reported, came at him with nothing but complaints “which are quite aggravating,” although they were in the minority and were often shouted down by the
majority of other villagers. He listed the many requests and threats villagers had aimed at him:

One person asked me why I wasn’t working at night also, why we took ten days holiday and worked one day. Some asked why we started so late in the year and didn’t have the tractor and plow here sooner. Another said that if we didn’t plow his field (still full of stones) he would report us to the head of the Quakers, and still another that he was sorry he had cleaned his field and that if we didn’t plow it he would report us to [the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture].

These responses to the use of the machinery could have been reflections of cultural predilections to bargain, to assert dominance, to appeal to the highest possible authority, or to maintain honor and/or prestige vis a vis one’s neighbors or rivals. To his credit, Moody fell back on rural development’s (and Quakers’) emphasis on working within, not against or over the villagers. His reaction, after admitting his desire to “get a little ‘heated’” was to be patient and understanding with peoples unfamiliar with the technology and logistical difficulties. “I don’t feel that we should have the attitude that we are doing a great thing for these people and they simply don’t appreciate us. We didn’t come here to be appreciated first. If something is done well and with high resolve, appreciation may come with time. We must be humble.”

The evidence suggests that many of the villagers were in fact responding positively and incorporating elements of AFSC advice. The most apparent were in the form of experiencing “warm friendship” from the villagers because of the AFSC’s


concern for their well-being. Indeed, after the end of the first year of operation, Moody optimistically reported that the village’s suspicion of the Quakers and their work had begun to subside and the process of acceptance had begun. “I feel this year has been a period in which the villagers have tested our machines and have tried to feel out our purposes,” Moody commented. “Next year things should move much more smoothly with their greater understanding.” His replacements humorously noted later in 1951 that loading and spreading manure in the various fields “isn't as bad as you might think” because “it seems that you just can't spread manure without stopping in for coffee with the owner quite often.” By 1952, increasing amounts of land were being plowed, meaning the villagers were cooperating and asking the AFSC to use the machinery on their land; the Village Committee began to show an increased interest in the exact details of the costs of operating the machinery; the village purchased two power-driven olive presses; and twenty new houses were built, which were “superior,” the AFSC argued, in condition to most of the other village housing.

The goal of self-help, measured in terms of village participation in the use of the machinery and in the formation of a cooperative to take over the machinery, remained a

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“slow and difficult process.” Potential clues about the villagers’ hesitance had cropped up early in the project. The observations that villagers did not “trust” each other; that they were “cautious” and “afraid” of making changes; and that if they cleared their lands of stone, they would be taken from them all point to the post-1948 context in which most Arab Palestinian villagers found themselves. Indeed, the machinations of the Israeli security agencies under the umbrella of the Military Government had reached Tur’an, with evidence of collaborators. And, though it is unclear whether or not Tur’an suffered land expropriation during the time the AFSC maintained their project there, the fact that a cluster of Arab villages just to the north of the village lost half or more of their land holdings could scarcely have escaped Tur’an’s inhabitants. As the two-year agreement period for the project came to a close, the AFSC asked for and received permission from Palmon to continue and expand the project in late 1952. They took the opportunity to evaluate the project.

“Learning is a Two-Way Street”: Reevaluation and Critique

Miner titled his summary report of the entire Tur’an project, completed in 1956, “Learning is a Two Way Street,” an appropriate encapsulation of both the rural

830 See: Cohen, Good Arabs, pp. 80, 92-93, 131, 152-154.
831 See the compiled numbers in Lustick, Arabs in Israel, p. 179. The villages included: Yirka, Sakhnin, Arrabe, Deir Hana, and Majd el-Krum. Lustick estimates that of 95,000 dunums in 1947, the village of Arrabe maintained only 11,350 by the mid-1970s.
development emphasis in Tu’ran from the beginning and the community development critiques that drove mid-course changes and provided the rubric for post-facto analyses.

The AFSC hired Miner after the evaluation and from July 1953 to June 1955 he co-directed the project, working as community organizer to build village cooperation and nurture any nascent attempts to form a cooperative. Miner noted: “The lengthy analysis of the Tur’an Project produced also the conclusion that a technical assistance program should not be a one-village, one-approach project; rather, general development in several villages with projects based on recognized needs of the villagers.”

In other words, despite the problems encountered and the wider context of Palestinian marginalization, the AFSC doubled-down on rural development.

In their evaluation, the AFSC drew heavily on the expanding community development movement. With advice from experts and drawing on their experience of being deeply embedded in Point Four’s community development efforts in India, they began a major initiative in the closing months of 1952. They decided that their work had been too focused on technical aspects, too heavily weighted toward agricultural modernization and need more holistic village programming. They also feared that their initial approach was creating a sense of dependency on the AFSC and the machinery rather than cultivating robust self-help attitudes. This latter determination in particular, I suggest, is the foundation upon which AFSC decision-making in the closing years of the project rested.

The AFSC accordingly turned away from the more modernizing aspects of its agricultural program. AFSC questioned the wisdom of bringing in machinery and agreed that no new equipment would be brought in unless paid for by the village. The AFSC Israel Field Administrator, Isabel Pifer, explained that “We have felt that it is wrong to bring Western technical personnel to Tur'an to drive tractors. This has been wrong and we have realized this mistake.”

The Foreign Service Executive Committee reiterated that “educational and training emphasis is paramount.” They also noted that “it is quite likely that the time has come to emphasize smaller hand equipment, particularly for use on land which is unsuited to the use of the heavy machines.

More important however was decreasing the relative importance of the agricultural work in favor of a more inclusive village development approach. They hired two community organizers – Miner worked in Tur’an and William Channel began to explore other opportunities for the AFSC in Israel in the community development field – and initiated a public health program. They appointed a female Quaker nurse to head the health program and hired two local Arab women to assist her and better understand and serve the women in the village. By November 1952, the program included maternal and child care as well as general health education for the entire village.


835 FS Executive Committee, Minutes, November 30, 1953, AFSCA.


Between January 1953 and January 1954 the AFSC provided a one year unpaid, voluntary training program for boys and young men in the village in order to relate the village more closely to the project, encourage intra-village cooperation, and begin the process of devolving responsibility by creating new, progressive leadership. Indeed, the trainees were to be formed into village workers: “What we are doing is training a multi-purpose worker” with knowledge of machinery operation and upkeep, agricultural cultivation, and an ability to help the village improve its agricultural situation. Moreover, the trainees were to be educated to act in concert to use the machinery across family lines and, AFSC hoped, would form a basis for villagers interested in creating a cooperative. “It is through this training program and the future of these boys that rest the success or failure of this project in the long run,” an AFSC report noted.838 The trainees also took machinery courses and visited the Jewish Khadoorie Agricultural School at Mt. Tabor as ways to promote nation-building. At the same time that the trainees were to grow their own feelings of being part of the progress of the country, the AFSC hoped that the increasing contact of Jews with the Arabs meant they were “discovering the deep knowledge the Arabs have developed over the years about farming problems in that area.”839

However, drastic budget cuts in 1953 across the AFSC Foreign Service Section forced the closing of the health education program while the agricultural training program


839 “Contributions,” ca. 1955, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR.
was not renewed for a second year.\textsuperscript{840} Feeling financial pressure and having to end some of its community development work almost as soon as they had gotten started, the AFSC staff decided by the summer of 1954 to decrease their role and devolve responsibility for the overall use of the unit, the making of decisions, and the collection of fees on the village through the Village Committee – not, as they had hoped, on new leadership through the training program. Without this bulwark of strong village leadership, the AFSC feared furthering village dependency by continuing to operate the project through the family heads on the Village Committee. Heeding advice from community development experts, they thus felt pressure to move on from the project and to make “a fresh start in another village or group of villages.”\textsuperscript{841}

Fears of dependency weighed heavily. By the end of 1954, the village showed no signs of interest in taking full responsibility for the unit and the collection of debts. One of AFSC’s village staff members argued they had erred in not emphasizing more upfront to the boys in the training program and the village that “their future depends entirely on themselves and the development of the village”; that is, that the AFSC would not continually be their patron, overseeing their work and paying them. The AFSC admitted that in such projects, “there will always be more that could be done” but that their objective was to stimulate village interest in sustaining such work themselves. The AFSC presence, per rural development, was to be catalytic and temporary. Nor did they wish to sell the machinery to the village just for the sake of it – “It would be a great mistake to

\textsuperscript{840} For the budget troubles, see the various committee meeting minutes from 1953.

\textsuperscript{841} “The AFSC in Israel,” October 20, 1956, p. 2. FS 1956/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/VD, AFSCA.
expect or encourage the village to purchase machinery which is not suited to their needs and the use of which is not economically sound.” 842

After consideration and evaluation, the AFSC decided against continuing the operation of the machinery unit altogether. Across the early months of 1955, AFSC personnel made home visits to the village explaining their intent to no longer work the unit and to offer it for sale to a group of villagers to operate themselves as a cooperative. The AFSC also hedged, looking to salvage the project, and had begun negotiations with Ministry of Agricultural representatives. When little village initiative developed, the AFSC made the decision to sell the machinery unit to the government on the conditions that it continue to operate in Tur’an as well as nearby Arab villages. As the sale of the unit to the Ministry of Agriculture was being finalized in May, the village began to stir and took belated steps to form a cooperative. The AFSC happily noted that the Ministry accordingly agreed to sell the unit to a village cooperative if it indeed formed and was willing to buy the machinery within a reasonable amount of time. The final bill of sale in May included these agreements, and the Ministry employed AFSC’s former local staff members. American personnel, including Miner, departed Tur’an in June. 843

The AFSC judged the Tur’an project to be an economic success. The village had generally accepted the idea of machinery cultivation, as yields and incomes doubled against the use of animals and wooden plows; most level land in the village was cleared

842 STA Subcommittee, Minutes, November 17, 1954, AFSCA.

of stones; overall, use of fertilizer, manure and chemical had increased; and some villagers were spraying vegetables for insects and disease. AFSC also pointed to signs of alterations to cultivation patterns. AFSC even estimated that with the machinery now available and generally accepted, villagers had begun to rent land outside of the village to cultivate with their animals in addition to what they owned in the village and which was cultivated with the machinery. These developments, along with the intentions of the Ministry of Agriculture, caused members to remark after the project's conclusion that the Service Committee was “pleased with this outcome” because bridges were being built between the Arab village and the Jewish government. The AFSC was withdrawing at a time when “this new relationship of village and government has proved desirable and practicable.”

But, according to rural development nation-building rubrics, this was only a partial success. “We felt we failed to help the village make any social progress,” Channel lamented. The AFSC interpreted its failures for more definitive social progress in Tur’an by identifying the lack of a deeper community development approach. The AFSC suggested that their importing of mechanized agriculture as the means to advance Arab

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844 All from “Summary Report of the Tu’ran Agricultural Project,” ca. Spring 1956, p. 22, AFSC – For Ser – Isr, AFSCA. More specifically: deeper summer plowing had helped eliminate weeds and some pests that had reduced yields; acceptance of mechanical drill for sowing seeds vs. broadcasting by hand; planting of wheat before the rains (made possible by machinery, whereas before wooden plows had to wait until rains came to soften the soil). In addition, “some villagers” had come to accept a three-crop rotation system (grains, vegetables, and grasses) rather than just grains and veggies), cultivating summer crops.


village life and integrate it into the Israeli socioeconomic relationships had involved them providing a predetermined service based on AFSC’s assessment of Arab agricultural needs rather than allowing the village to define and articulate its own felt needs, agricultural or otherwise. It also had entailed “too much giving” with not enough articulation of what the AFSC expected of the village – the Quakers had not been clear up front about what the village’s responsibilities were. This approach had proven fatal in the sense that the village had thus always expected more giving and oversight with little incentive to invest or take over: the village was always waiting on the Quakers “to do the job for them.” This had created dependency, not self-help, as they found themselves “constantly” in “a ‘pushing’ role” which they deemed an “unhealthy relationship.”

Personnel believed (1) that the village was aware of the project’s benefits and (2) that they were capable of more responsibility for its implementation and oversight than they had yet taken. There was, a report suggested, “the danger that the Project would assume more the characteristics of a business,” rather than a community development program. Miner argued: “the villagers’ dependence on AFSC will not diminish and that their interest in the Project will not grow unless they begin to acquire an equity in the machinery.” Personnel had in fact rejected a belated bid by the Village Committee to purchase the machinery unit because it involved a two-year payment plan (likely much


longer) which would keep the AFSC in its current unrelished and paternalistic role of debt collector; the problem of debt had been a widely-recognized source of tension hampering village relationships.851

The AFSC also left hints as to why the project failed in this particular Arab context. “Allah had sent the Quakers to Tur’an. Allah would keep the Quakers in Tur’an,” Channel wrote.852 Such sentiments indicated the common trope of peasant fatalism – that without more fully centering village responsibility from the outset, the deterministic attitudes of the villagers had held sway. Moreover, Channel suggested that the village “never believed until the deal was closed that the Quakers really meant what they said about leaving Tur’an” – a position, he mused, consistent with Arab bargaining practices. The villagers thought the Quakers were bluffing as a way to bring pressure on the village to act, a form of leverage “for some surprise that we were to spring on them at a later date.”853 Moreover, many of the village’s “influential people” and larger landowners had large, long-standing debts with AFSC, which “not only stood in the way of their participating in any negotiations, but also were a barrier to other villagers’ paying their debts.”854 Miner suggested that the village’s Muslim mukhtar held sway in the


854 “It appears that the experience of the last eighteen months when an effort has been made to be more business-like and to get the villagers to feel more responsible for paying for field work has created a public opinion in Tur’an that field work should be done only for those who owe no debts and who are willing to pay cash. This has been voiced by many villagers, and it is the basis for the work of the combine
village and was looked to for leadership, “especially in times of stress”. His reluctance, therefore, to embrace the cooperative idea meant the “villagers did not (perhaps could not) begin to move until he began to show interest.” In advancing this line of reasoning, Miner looked to “local” cultural clues based on his reservoir of knowledge about Arab village life in Tur’an. Ongoing hesitance, however, was more likely due to the fact that this mukhtar was recognized by the Israeli government and like so many others had been coopted.

Against the scholarly claim that community developers ignored power relations, the AFSC’s embeddedness in village life ensured that they were not blind to the workings of power in the village, however circumscribed their knowledge was. They knew of the role played by the village mukhtars and were aware of divisions between (and within) family groupings, between religious sects, and the class partitions separating landowners from landless poor. The question was less about recognizing these differences and more about how to move forward with a project aimed at building a larger sense of community and cooperation despite them. How were the Quakers to navigate the tensions between guided change and respect for local circumstances? Could they have a project if they did


856 Immerwahr makes this claim in his assessment of US government community development programs; Thinking Small, conclusion.

857 The AFSC quickly came to enumerate the family divisions, suggesting there were four major and four minor family or clan groupings. “Staff” section of draft, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.
not work through family heads? Was it wiser to begin where the village was and hope to build more equality along with greater cooperation?

The AFSC walked a fine line between working within and working against. In encouraging a village cooperative, the AFSC looked to “work with interested village landowners towards effecting a lease-purchase plan, which will help those villagers to operate and to begin to purchase the mechanical unit.” How the landless would be benefited, or impacted at all, is unclear.858 Similarly, the AFSC accepted the family structure of the village as a given and worked within even while hoping to build cooperation and democratic decision-making that would come to supersede it, befitting their Quaker values and the tenets of rural development. The AFSC noted that a primary “problem is to get village-wide participation at meetings where family heads dominate.”859 The AFSC would also observe in their descriptions of the village that “None of the heads of family clans represents or is on speaking terms with all segments of his clan. Some are more representative than others, and these variations in, or degrees of, representation are hard to measure accurately or objectively. It is fact; yet, it is feeling.”860

The operating principle for the AFSC among these divisions was to seek “representativeness.” In making decisions “as a village,” the AFSC hoped to achieve

858 “Report for March, April, and May, 1955,” p. 1, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSC. The original agreement between the AFSC and the Israeli government called for a project of two years, although AFSC had always expected it to take longer.


860 “Staff” section of draft, p. 4. FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.
accord by securing consent across a broad swathe of the village measured by representativeness of the families of the village. After they started the training program in 1953, they used it as a way bring the village’s families together and promote cooperation; in literature designed to solicit donations for the project, the AFSC highlighted three of the trainees, each from a different family and each from a different religious sect (one Muslim, one Latin Catholic, one Greek Orthodox), and each having expressed support for the ideals of cooperation.861 And, the AFSC sought a cooperative ideally representative of the entire village. They denied the four-man communist party in the village on this basis, despite their being business-like and Western in their thinking, noting the desire to only entertain serious purchase offers “from a really representative group . . .”862

Yet, moving in democratic and representative directions often worked against the established power structure. The Village Committee continued in 1952 to be attended simply by the two village mukhtars (one Christian, one Muslim) and the heads of family. Wider participation was hard to stimulate and the meetings tended “to be used by each for his own personal advancement” 863 They noted that the Muslim mukhtar was wont to “speak without village support,” was typically not cooperative, and had “caused a vacuum in communication to exist between the [AFSC] team and the people of the village which leads to difficulty in arousing village participation.”864 One AFSC response

864 “Staff” section of draft, p. 6. FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.
was to hold village meetings in the village school rather than “in ‘high class’ homes”; attendance at the abodes of notables was always low and they surmised that, in addition to limited space, “Some stay away because they are poor others because of a grudge . . .”

Similarly, the Greek Orthodox priest in the village, one of the wealthier villagers with large landholdings, “considers himself one of the more important people in the village.” When AFSC arrived, he had felt they should work his lands with the machinery first, given his status. The AFSC demurred. This did not sit well with the priest and he then “had a strongly negative attitude toward AFSC work” in the village.

Moreover, because of the machinery landowners who did not own draft animals were now no longer required to beg neighbors to rent their fields; they could now grow their own crops rather than face very small yields. Villagers who worked outside of Tur’an, a common phenomenon in Arab villages as the population increased across the mandate period, could now remain in the village to farm.

One of the clearest examples of the tension between pushing for guided change while retaining local sociocultural integrity was the attempt to craft strong village leadership. Like other rural development projects based in agricultural extension and the ever-widening circles model of change, the AFSC looked to lean on the most progressive farmers (those most amenable to AFSC methods) in the village for new forms of


leadership that could quietly subvert the conservatism or intransigence of established authorities; it was in the hopes that their success would light the way for others in the village to follow. In Tur’an, this need was evident but not easy to accomplish. AFSC personnel noted with dissatisfaction that the family heads were the most outspoken at village meetings, but were the least likely to cooperate while the most progressive farmers were the quietest and least likely to have influence. These farmers, often young men between twenty and thirty-five years old were the most “susceptible to new ideas and to change” but were likely “the most futile group with whom to work” since their influence in village affairs was “very little,” compared with the heads of families who held “the power and authority, and command the respect.”

Wrapped up in their commitment to nation-building and changing attitudes, Quaker personnel focused intensely on the project itself. Even as the AFSC blamed their own approaches and sought cultural clues as to why the village acted as it had, the documents reveal a lack of reflexivity about the power of Arab attitudes toward the Israeli government. Aside from the AFSC’s cultural miscues, evidence points to the village being unreceptive to AFSC’s nation-building, involving as it did being tied to Israeli authorities. The villagers indeed seemed to have accepted and respected the Quakers and to have taken to the advice they offered; but it was a different scenario altogether to afford Israeli personnel the same. At a meeting just before the sale of the machinery, the villagers “made clear how unhappy they were.” This was true, Miner

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“Staff” section of draft, p. 5; see examples on pp. 6, 8. FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.
reported, “even though the Ministry agreed to sell the machinery to a village cooperative” when it materialized. Arab distrust of the government was represented in the “hard feelings” felt by the village when the Quakers informed them of the sale. It was only late, as Quaker intentions to leave and sell the machinery to the Ministry of Agriculture became apparent, that “a flurry of activity” toward securing the machinery occurred, including a meeting requested by the Muslim mukhtar himself. The existence of government collaborators and the divide between those who supported Palestinian nationalism and those who supported the government goes unmentioned in the AFSC’s records, even as the Military Government received a report from one Tur’an collaborator that “people were gathering every day at the entrance to the olive press at the edge of the village ‘and look[ing] with derision and scorn at the villagers who are close to the authorities.’”

Looking to transition from the Tur’an project to a more impactful community development effort, Channel noted that AFSC hoped to “start with some small area of need which the villagers feel themselves and are willing to work on with us from the beginning, assuming their share of responsibility right from the start. For “true village development,” he added, “is not bringing a service to a village, but in working to get

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869 “Report for March, April, and May, 1955,” p. 2, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA. In which the mukhtar and eight other villagers proposed that he Quakers stay to work the unit at least through the harvest season; AFSC rejected this offer, but said they’d consider a definite purchasing suggestion from a “really representative group”.

870 Social and Technical Assistance Committee, Minutes, May 26, 1955, p. 2, AFSCA.

villagers to participate in recognizing and meeting their own needs.” Part of Channel’s efforts to help determine the right project was a wide-scale set of village-level surveys. Accordingly, Miner noted, “a greater knowledge of Arab life and culture and villages, generally and specifically, is being sought through the collection and reading of written materials, conferences with authorities on and practitioners . . . in Arab villages in Israel (and Palestine), and visits to projects and villages.” Also consistent with community development, they reported their belief that “at the beginning of a community development project a well-qualified rural sociologist or anthropologist should be attached to the staff,” one with fluency in the local language to communicate directly without an interpreter and, preferably, someone local who would be “likely to be more readily accepted by the villagers than a foreigner.” Accordingly, Quaker initiatives at promoting resettlement among displaced Arabs in Israel as well as establishing community centers in Arab villages became the focus of AFSC development efforts. But the move to community development also overlapped with its work in Jordan, coterminous with the project in Tur’an, and in which the AFSC partnered happily with the British Middle East Office (BMEO).

872 “The AFSC in Israel,” October 20, 1956, p. 3. FS 1956/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/VD, AFSCA.

873 “Report for March, April, and May, 1955,” pp. 5-6, FS 1955/Co-Ind to Co-Isr, Co-Isr/Rpts/Tur’an MR, AFSCA.

“Impossible to Separate”: AFSC in Jordan

As Miner sat typing the last of the report on his return visit to Tur’an, he did so from a desk at Oxford University in England. He had spent the years after 1955 working as a community development expert for the UN in Liberia and now was receiving additional training for the International Cooperation Administration (later, USAID). He would soon be on assignment for four years in Kenya – just before and just after its independence from British rule.

As community development accelerated across British colonies in Africa, Britain’s less conspicuous BMEO continued to promote rural development in the Middle East as the best means to help Arab states achieve economic self-sufficiency. In the case of Jordan and Palestinian refugees, I focus on two BMEO programs: a small loans project to what were called the “frontier villages” (led by Jack C. Eyre, a former agricultural officer with the British Palestine authorities) and a push to establish credit cooperatives in the West Bank (led by Matthew C. Wordsworth). Consistent with their hesitations about aiding Alami, the British demonstrated a concern for their image in the region and rural development’s tension between outside guidance and local control: they ensured heavy oversight of loan disbursements and cooperative creation but did not impose them and were attuned to building local administrative capacity. Nonetheless, financially and politically constrained, they eagerly looked to partner with AFSC, as well as other U.S. non-state actors, who were promoting community development.

For their part, the AFSC began a project in Jordan in 1953 as a way to balance out their work in Israel and demonstrate impartiality. The AFSC’s work in Jordan plugged into a wider nexus that included other American PVOs such as the Near East Foundation
and the Ford Foundation as well as the BMEO. These entities found common ground with the British development presence in the region based on a shared community development approach, and, by the mid-1950s, by a shared critique of the US foreign aid agencies who only took to community development in Israel and Jordan in earnest after 1955. Yet, it was the association that many Arab villagers and refugees made between the AFSC and both American and British programs that tainted their efforts during the upheavals in late 1955 and 1956. One AFSC member rued that it was “impossible to separate” their project in the minds of the Arabs.875

One of the more successful BMEO projects in the region was a small loans scheme for village development in the frontier villages on the West Bank.876 The armistice line between Israel and Jordan divided the land of many villages along this “frontier,” leading to “a state of near starvation, simply through lack of any means of earning the [sic] subsistence.” The people, one British diplomat observed, sit “about in abject misery, mourning over their former lands being intensively cultivated by the Israelis under their gaze.” The British hoped, within this context, to “restore confidence sufficiently to induce the people on the West Bank to get to work and to the Jordan Government to support them.”877 The villagers were “economic refugees,” not counted among the official refugees under UNRWA support. One solution, at least in the short-term, would be to fund schemes that provided work and increased production to meet

875 STA Committee, Minutes, March 3, 1956, AFSCA.
876 For more on this scheme, and BMEO’s approach to technical assistance, see: Kingston, Politics of Modernization.
877 Quotations from Furlonge to Bowker, March 10, 1952, NAK FO 957/160.
rising food needs. The joint British-Jordan scheme, a precursor to what we call today micro-lending, provided individual cultivators with small, low-interest loans for improvement projects on their farms. The policy was consistent with mandate proscriptions in which Arab cultivators were most in need of debt relief. Easily available credit on manageable terms would allow them to invest and overcome their risk aversion to making changes in their cultivation practices.

The issuing of such loans was a form of self-help in which limited resources could be used across a wide area to encourage farmers to better leverage their own resources and initiatives given a small outside stimulus. T.C. Rapp, a political officer with the BMEO, returned from a visit during the scheme’s early stages and was impressed “with what the villagers have done from their own resources and how greatly they needed help.”

The goal was to boost agricultural production in Jordan from the farms up, and so they rejected many applications – such as investing in citrus plantations or in purchasing cattle – that were long-term, investment-heavy ventures which would do little to provide immediate work or have the potential to greatly boost overall production. They favored, rather, small improvements for small landholders: projects like well-digging and terracing which increased land available for cultivation.

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878 Rapp to Crawford, September 30, 1952, NAK FO 957/164.
879 Eyre to Crawford, c/o British Legation in Amman, September 4, 1952, NAK FO 957/164. Terracing, digging wells, small irrigation works, beekeeping and nursery creation (minor projects) and providing mules and tractors as appropriate (shortage of ploughing animals, with a few areas in need of tractors); terracing and wells would be the predominant concerns. “The ‘Frontier’ Villages of Arab Palestine,” May 5, 1952, NAK FO 957/160.
Tensions were apparent, however, and even as they promoted self-help and economic self-sufficiency, the British were not willing to forgo the reigns in the meantime. The British government provided this money and ensured a firm hand on the purse strings through a jointly-staffed Jordan Development Board. The scheme had gone ahead despite the adamant opposition of one Jordanian official on the Development Board. And Rapp was convinced, as were others, that Eyre needed to remain on the scheme to oversee it; the loans had to be fully justifiable and he worried that if a Jordanian official was placed in charge he would be unlikely “to resist the pressure that would otherwise be brought to bear on Jordan officials to make grants for political and other purposes.”

These officials of course had British interests in mind but they also revealed their feelings that the British had a tenuous hold on the region. Rapp had observed on his visit “a somewhat more optimistic spirit is prevalent in the depressed areas” and that, with loans now actually being dispersed, had “caught the public imagination.” Eyre, Rapp reported, suggested that if the scheme had been delayed it would have sapped any local trust in the program going forward, likely producing such a “disillusionment” that “he would not have cared to have returned to their neighborhood.” Eyre subsequently suggested application forms be given out personally by government officers, rather than indiscriminately, which “would raise false hopes” Further, he surmised that the project

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880 Rapp to Crawford, September 30, 1952, NAK FO 957/164.
881 Rapp to Crawford, September 30, 1952, NAK FO 957/164.
882 Eyre to Crawford, c/o British Legation in Amman, September 4, 1952, NAK FO 957/164. Officials could assist the applicants in filling them out – especially in cases involving terracing which
was helping to revive “some confidence . . . in H.M.G. [His Majesty’s Government]” but felt that “everything possible should be done to try and make the scheme a Development Board and Jordan Government scheme.” Alongside a nation-building drive to make such projects feel as local as possible, and to make such connections between the people and the Jordanian government stronger, was an underlying desire to avoid a backlash when numbers of applications were necessarily rejected. “The responsibility for rejecting applications,” Eyre warned, “initially must be placed firmly on the District Committees and the Sub-Committee of the Development Board.”

Similar dynamics were at play in the BMEO’s promotion of cooperatives in Jordan and the West Bank. Cooperatives had long been central to rural reform because they promoted collective self-help by pooling the resources of many small producers (or consumers) as leverage against more powerful, vested interests. Their formation as official corporate bodies was to give them, theoretically, the same privileges and rights as “those enjoyed by joint stock companies.” In late 1952, the Jordanian government passed a law encouraging the formation of cooperative societies and creating a governmental department to oversee it. Originally financed through the Development Board, across 1953 and 1954, fifty were established with the vast majority being Thrift

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884 See minutes of the meeting and Wordsworth’s talk attached to Jones to Wordsworth, September 20, 1955, NAK FO 957/211.
and Credit Societies; twenty-four had existed since the mandate and over 2,000 society members were receiving loan amounts.885

Outside support and supervision would be critical, but the overriding goals were those of rural development. In a talk to an umbrella organization of Christian PVOs doing work in the region, BMEO’s cooperative expert, Wordsworth, argued that cooperatives need not be confined to credit nor to agriculture, but that as agriculture was the primary economic problem in Jordan, improvement hinged on “better farming, better business and better living for the peasant farmer who is the mainstay of Jordan agriculture. Cooperatives are his chief hope . . .”886 He noted that it was “essential” that members contribute their own financial stakes in the venture, feel a sense of responsibility for paying off outside loans, and arrange for training and education that would alleviate the need for outside guidance.

With nods to the ideal of being locally adaptive, Wordswoth demonstrated the flexibility needed to make loans to such new entities in an Arab village population, one beset for decades by onerous debt burdens. He noted that the loans were typically seasonal, “many and small; the rate of interest has to be kept low, and there is no ordinary security for them. Village credit societies of unlimited liability can handle such loans cheaply and successfully.” Otherwise, the peasants would resort to moneylenders or pledge their crops as security, thus either worsening their debt or precluding their ability

885 “The Cooperative Movement in Jordan,” attached to letter from Wordsworth to Fouracres, January 11, 1955, NAK FO 957/209. By 1954, the Jordanian Department of Cooperative Societies was funded within the government budget. The Development Board continued to supply the loans, however.

to market crops efficiently or secure medium-term loans for agricultural improvement. “[S]hort term loans,” he argued, “are the basis upon which improved agriculture must be built.” And, he added, cooperatives forming in Jordan could draw on the experience of similar movements in Egypt, whose by-laws, for instance, could be “adapted to fit the needs of the society.”

Furthermore, mirroring AFSC’s experience in Tur’an, education was central and was the basis for stimulating ever-widening circles of change. Beside capital, the “main problem would be to find a skilled manager who was also a good teacher” otherwise “the cooperative would never be self-supporting”; indeed, such managers could train others to advise other cooperatives and then move on, thereby gradually expanding the number of self-supporting cooperatives. Promising young officers could be trained further so as to enable them to be better supervisors and to train more field organizers, both necessary for “when the movement grows.” Indeed, Wordsworth suggested that in light of how cooperative movements in other countries were struggling, “it may well be that it [the coop movement in Jordan] can be made into a working example for teaching the other countries how to succeed, so that money spent on training of Jordan staff may be of assistance to the whole region.”

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888 See minutes of the meeting and Wordsworth’s talk attached to Jones to Wordsworth, September 20, 1955, NAK FO 957/211.


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In turn, such an approach would enable local administrative capacity to keep pace with demand, securing stable, successful growth, both in economy and in nation-building. By the BMEO’s own accounts, the money distributed to cooperatives had an excellent repayment rate and demand for creation quickly outstripped administrative capacity. Because they used specially-trained field-level workers to do most of the work of “explaining the principles of cooperation, of educating members of societies in its practice and of supervising the business and accounts of societies,” expansion had to be restricted so as to maintain adequate administrative capacity and efficacy. In proposing this approach, Wordsworth noted that “Experience elsewhere has shown that over-rapid growth and failure to provide proper education and supervision has often been the reason for lack of success.”

The British hoped to concentrate as much of their development loan monies as possible on the West Bank, given the conditions of refugees, the frontier villages, and the overall sense that its current cultivation capacity was exceeded by population numbers. The conditions of the “economic refugees” was the “most immediate economic problem in Jordan today.” In this, however, they faced political resistance from the Jordanian government which they could not fathom – it struck them that political turmoil could only be eased by providing economic assistance. But they surmised that, on one hand, Jordanian officials feared investing in the West Bank because of U.S. support for Israel, and, on the other hand, that “greater possibilities of economic expansion [lay] in Trans-


Uneasy about their position in Jordan, the British did not want to push too far, “getting embroiled in a controversy” before the “still tender plant,” the Jordan Development Board, had “grown some roots.”

Just as they hoped to move Point Four and UNRWA towards a concentration in the West Bank, British diplomats and the BMEO hoped to guide the AFSC there as well. Led by Paul B. Johnson, former AFSC director of relief in Gaza, the AFSC undertook community development work in Jordan between 1953 and 1956, in frequent contact with Eyre and Wordsworth. Evidence suggests a close working relationship between the BMEO and AFSC by early 1952. The BMEO was aware of the AFSC’s project in Tur’án and kept tabs as the AFSC was exploring options outside of Israel in conjunction with the British Friends Service Council.

In August 1952, Eyre reported to the legation in Amman that “I had a long and useful talk with Paul Johnson who I think is going to be of very considerable assistance,” and that at least $50,000, with, quietly, a likely $250,000, would be coming their way. These amounts were not insignificant given that Britain’s development loan totaled a mere one and a half million pounds and that they faced, in their own words, Jordanian “political” opposition to spending in the West Bank. The British were dismayed when

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894 Minutes by Crawford, October 18, 1952, NAK FO 957/164.

895 Eyre to Wakefield, August 21, 1952, NAK FO 957/160.

Johnson’s visit to the region was delayed due to illness and the legation in Amman reported to the Foreign Office (FO) that, in talking with the British Friends representative, they “rehearsed our story of the need for work to be done particularly in the West Bank”. After returning in good health, Johnson kept in contact with Eyre as he explored options in the West Bank, even asking for a template of their loan application form and Eyre suggesting he meet with a local Arab man the BMEO was employing out of Jerusalem. “I shall be glad to come see you,” Johnson wrote, and Eyre replied that “I hope we can meet to discuss plans.”

Yet, despite the desires of both the BMEO and the AFSC to work with refugees in the West Bank, the AFSC was caught in the same political webs. In need of funding, and in talks about a potential grant, it seems the Ford Foundation considered work among the Palestinian refugees a political football. In addition, aware of refugee sentiments, discussions within AFSC focused on small resettlement schemes due to the likely “agitation against” any large-scale resettlement initiatives. The AFSC therefore had to settle on a project with non-refugees east of the Jordan River in an area located northwest of Amman near Jerash and Irbid; they subsequently received the Ford Foundation grant and hoped that the project would either act as a springboard for working with refugees or

897 Amman Chancery to Middle East Secretariat, FO, March 21, 1952, NAK FO 957/160.
898 Johnson to Eyre, September 4, 1952 and Eyre to Johnson, September 10, 1952, NAK FO 957/164.
899 STA Committee, Minutes, February 1, 1952, AFSCA.
900 AFSC headquartered their work in the village of Dibbin, and covered the surrounding villages of Jazaaza, Kitta, Nahle, and Reimoun as well.
at least provide an example of techniques that might prove useful in any refugee
resettlement activities, helping refugees integrate into their host countries.901

The community development work was holistic, although it was intentionally tied
into British and Jordanian development plans. By September 1955, months before the
project’s destruction, the AFSC posited guidelines for the next year’s work, including:
“more effective use of Government and other services” in which stimulating village
projects would be deemphasized in favor of a “deliberate gearing into broader programs,”
and the “Fullest development of the village Cooperative Credit Societies as instruments
of education and foci of responsible leadership . . .”902 A warm relationship had formed
between Johnson and Wordsworth.903

In concrete terms, the AFSC geared its project willingly into the remnants of
British colonial structures and the British and Jordanians reciprocated. The government
of Jordan funneled potential cooperative field organizers to schools like Loughborough
College in England which offered a nine-month course in cooperatives. AFSC tapped
into this system, using English-trained Jordanian officials for their project even as
Wordsworth and his Jordanian counterpart, Amin Husseini of the Department of

901 On these discussions, see: STA Committee, Minutes, February 1, 1952; October 27, 1952;
February 26, 1953; and March 6, 1953, AFSCA.


903 Johnson to Wordsworth, January 18, 1955 and Wordsworth to Johnson, January 12, 1955,
NAK FO 957/209.
Cooperative Societies, sought to train officers by having them work on the Quaker project.  

Cooperatives thus became a node in a network of public and philanthropic development actors. Bringing Husseini along with him, Wordsworth gave a lecture on the organization of cooperatives to interested members of the Near East Christian Council Committee for Refugee Work. The organizer informed him that his address was “warmly welcomed” and wished him “continuing success in the important work you are doing.”  

The Ford Foundation became a development force in the post-1945 era and displayed a commitment to rural development, as evidenced by its ongoing support of Alami’s efforts on the West Bank. In Jordan, it looked to expand the cooperative movement and did so in partnership with the BMEO, the Near East Foundation (NEF), and the AFSC, as well as the Jordanian government. It proposed to build on AFSC efforts and fund a national training program for cooperative field organizers based on the idea that socioeconomic progress in Jordan was hampered by lack of sufficient credit for small farmers. The NEF sent the memorandum to Wordsworth, who noted to the British embassy in Amman that a NEF official had drawn up the agreement and that “he and Paul Johnson of the American Friends Service Committee discussed it fully with me.” As the cooperative


905 Jones to Wordsworth, September 20, 1955, NAK FO 957/211.

movement was looking to expand, Wordsworth looked favorably upon the Ford
Foundation plan which would ensure enough and sufficiently trained supervisory staff.  

However, tension erupted over the memorandum, another iteration of the struggle
between British and nationalist Jordanian officials over the management of development
aid. Wordsworth reported to the Ford Foundation about Husseini’s meeting with the
Minister of Development about the memorandum. The Minister had, reported
Wordsworth, “received it very unfavourably.” Aside from a few smaller points, the
Minister was hesitant to approve of another central committee to oversee the work –
especially given his critique that its powers as written in the memo “were far too wide,”
including abilities to form policy, use outside technical consultants, and “approve” rather
than “recommend” loans. Wordsworth suggested there was lack of understanding about
“community development” within government circles and that “the Government would
certainly not be willing to give this Committee any policy making powers. . . I do not
know if the Minister or Mr. Husseini saw in this draft Memorandum an attempt to
interfere with internal affairs of the country, but something has definitely put them off
it.”  

Already having to deal with the strings attached to their development loans
(however much the British wished to downplay them), elements within the Jordanian
government were worried about undue external influence and powers of action. And the
British were certainly sensitive to it.

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908 Memorandum attached to letter from Wordsworth to Rey Hill (Ford Foundation), September
13, 1955, NAK FO 957/211.
Meanwhile, tensions simmered across the Middle East. Between 1953 and 1955, Arab-Israeli borders became areas of low-intensity warfare. In 1956, British, French, and Israeli forces invaded the Egyptian-controlled Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal, sharpening Arab-Israeli tension and threatening to bring the U.S. and the Soviet Union to blows. More immediately, by the end of 1955 nationalist upheaval swept the region because of the Baghdad Pact. A British-led Cold War initiative to shore up the region defensively, the Pact threatened pan-Arab sentiment as touted by Egypt’s Colonial Gamal Abdel Nasser. Nasser and his supporters fomented popular resistance to the pact, which sought to include Jordan.909 Like Alami’s Arab Development Society, the AFSC project was nearly completely destroyed.

As in Israel, Quaker work in Jordan was ultimately handicapped by state-level politics. The AFSC had noted at the start of the Jordan project that their staff were hindered by the fact that villagers “were inclined to think of the AFSC staff as representing the government,” either the Jordanian or the American, both of which they distrusted (the Jordanians having recently expropriated some of their grazing land), and as each frequently had reps visiting the project area. Even later in the project, one villager leader with frequent contact with AFSC staff inquired: “Now tell me, which government department are you really working for?”910 For Paul Johnson, the Baghdad Pact provided

909 Peter L. Hahn, Caught in the Middle East, 158-169: 182-209. As it excluded Israel, the pact prompted a more militant policy by that country toward the Arab states, including a sabotage campaign in Egypt and the invasion of Gaza. Such acts in turn convinced many Arab leaders that Israel, not the Soviet Union, was the true enemy.

910 AFSC Jordan Report, p. 35, AFSCA.
an “overt excuse” to act out anti-Western sentiment.\textsuperscript{911} Western development projects were specifically targeted by rioting refugees and villagers alike. Rioters targeted any Western project, including those of the BMEO and U.S. government aid programs, MCC’s relief project near Jericho, and the Southern Baptist Mission Hospital in Ajlun. In addition to ongoing U.S. support for Israel, Johnson argued that “It has been impossible to separate our project from Point IV in the minds of the people.”\textsuperscript{912} The AFSC’s desire to use the Jordan project to launch them into resettlement work had dropped their prospects to “practically nil.”\textsuperscript{913} Although Johnson singled out the anti-American sentiment he detected in the riots, AFSC’s collaboration with the British was just as much to blame. The AFSC was tainted by association not only with the U.S. government, but the former British colonial power as well.

Conclusion

“It was easy to recognize the adults, and it was surprising how the names returned suddenly once I was back in the setting,” Miner wrote to the AFSC after an unofficial return visit to Tur’an in 1960. “However, it was quite another story with the children. The pre-teen-agers of five years ago are young men and women now, and many of them tower above me. It was not always easy to recognize them.” Miner’s role as community organizer – as one with a deep familiarity with village life and its inhabitants – is evident

\textsuperscript{911} Social and Technical Assistance Committee, Minutes, January 30, 1956, AFSCA.

\textsuperscript{912} AFSC Jordan Report, p. 73, AFSCA. At that point in time, foreign aid fell under the Foreign Operations Administration.

\textsuperscript{913} Social and Technical Assistance Committee, Minutes, March 3, 1956, AFSCA.
in his report. He noted happily that the way he was “received and remembered so warmly” was overwhelming. “I felt like the Pied Piper as I walked,” he wrote, making numerous social calls among the villagers — sitting for coffee, catching up on the growing families of his acquaintances, and receiving compliments on his spoken Arabic. After being treated to a feast among his former Arab colleagues, he wrote: “The outpouring of hospitality by the Arabs truly must be experienced to be believed!”

The latter half of Miner’s report was much more sobering. The Ministry of Agriculture ran the former AFSC machinery unit until 1958 when a village cooperative – made up of the former AFSC staff – bought it largely on credit. But it seemed that after the AFSC departed, the village and the government had not grown closer together and that the cooperative was being left adrift. From what he could gather from snippets of conversation, the terms of the sale were not agreeable: the machinery had been sold to them at a higher price than the AFSC had sold it to the Ministry of Agriculture, despite three years depreciation, and with a greater amount of debt attached. The cooperative was in arrears on its payments and the Ministry of Agriculture’s payback options seemed to be “excessive.” Further, they were receiving little or no assistance from the government: their relationship “is not very close, nor is it providing the services which are needed so badly,” Miner reported. The feelings, however, seemed to be mutual. The cooperative members wished to “be free of debt from the M.O.A. as quickly as possible” and were “‘going it alone’ much too much and much too soon.” “It may be that they want it this

914 “Tur’an Revisited,” 1960, pp. 3, 8, AFSCA.
way,” Miner reasoned, “I do not know.”"915 Clearly disappointed, he noted that the AFSC had left thinking it had begun the process of bridging relations between Tur’an and the government, but that this had not only not evolved, but had been left to wither.

Miner’s report stood in marked contrast to the prevailing views within AFSC by 1960. AFSC worked with many in the Israeli government whom they considered sympathetic and helpful, particularly the lower-level officers within branches such as the Village Development section of the Ministry of Agriculture. However, higher-level governmental opposition to its reconciliation and integration work had been frequent and consistent across its programming: from insisting on emphasizing the “international” aspect of international work camps in Israel rather than the Quaker goal of rebuilding Arab-Jewish relations and opposing Quaker integration of their community center in Acre in light of government desires to “de-Arab” recently immigrated Jews from parts of the Middle East.916 The AFSC also quietly critiqued Israeli authorities during their 1953 evaluation when they expressed that, “From our experience we are convinced that the important thing, easily overlooked by Government, is that the Arab can be trusted, that patterns of behavior can change but understanding and concerned people are essential interpreters of new ways.”917 The Israeli state was not going to gain Arab trust or integrate them through either isolation or bullying. Amidst rising tensions, the Israel team met with

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915 “Tur’an Revisited,” 1960, pp. 13, 15, AFSCA.


917 “Arab Village Project in Tur’an, Israel,” p. 6, Julia Branson, December 1952, AFSC – For Ser – Isr, AFSCA. On the officials’ dispositions, see p. 4.
AFSC’s Foreign Service Secretary in 1956 to discuss the future of the program and the possibility of leaving because of governmental opposition to Quaker goals was broached. They reiterated, however, that “the minority problem” was their “reason for being in Israel”. The team acknowledged the government’s own ambivalence about Arabs, noting that since the government “had no explicit policy towards the Arab minority,” they could work against government policies and work towards integration without “broadcasting it from the rooftops”. And, by 1958, the (temporary) union of Syria and Egypt in the United Arab Republic spurred pan-Arab sentiment while internal Arab opposition to the Israeli military government had spawned protests, police clashes, and the formation of the Popular Front party. But, as with Alami’s efforts among refugees in the West Bank, the AFSC was finding their own work being quickly outpaced by the evolution of Arab Palestinian nationalism toward a “political-military activism” – even inside Israel itself. AFSC began realizing that “such intense nationalism” was hindering the effectiveness of its broader programming.

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918 AFSC Team Meeting, “Sunday Evening, 9 December 1956 – Discussion with Lou Schneider,” FS 1956/Co-Isr to Co-Jor, Co-Isr/STA/Rpts-Acre, AFSCA.

919 Jiryis, Arabs in Israel, 40-41. Domestic opposition to the military government reached its peak between 1961 and 1963 while David Ben-Gurion’s retirement from office in 1963 ushered in officials such as Levi Eshkol that were more favorable toward Arab citizens. Security concerns continued to be a factor, Jiryis argued, and new policies and attitudes aimed at erasing injustices were influenced by the desire to eliminate pretexts for Arab Israelis to organize nationalist movements. The military government was therefore abolished in 1966. Ibid., pp. 43, 56-64, 185-187, 195.


921 OWC Committee, Minutes, November 5, 1957; see also: “Some Personal Views on the Work Camp Situation in Israel,” Bruce Steiner, November 20, 1958, pp. 1-2, FS 1958/OWC, Co-Isr/OWC, AFSCA.
Nonetheless, despite what appears a considerable amount of negative momentum, the Israeli government demonstrated what many within AFSC perceived to be a change of heart. Channel’s community development efforts after 1955 had focused on internal Arab resettlement in Israel and the formation of community centers in Arab villages. However, concrete Quaker action was preempted by a sudden expansion of government services to Arab areas after 1957, what scholars consider a reaction to internal Arab discontent to Israeli policies. AFSC members, facing another financial crisis and feeling drawn to work in other parts of the world such as decolonizing Africa, began to question a continued Quaker presence in Israel both from a “pilot project” standpoint and from a fear of promoting dependency – that continuing work in Arab areas actually prevented their integration by standing in the way of expanding government services. In March 1960, AFSC’s assistant Foreign Service Secretary noted after a brief visit that the situation in Israel had “so changed and improved that it is now very hard to find a suitable role for the AFSC there.” He argued that the Israeli government, conscious of the world observing their treatment of the Arab minority, could carry out all the necessary work regarding Arab integration, resettlement, and social work-related activity. Simply supporting government actions was not an appropriate role for the AFSC. The visit

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923 ISD 1960/STA/Ind to Ita, ISD-STA/MEP/I:G/Project Proposals, Letter from Charles Read to Charles Alsapch, March 3, 1960, AFSCA. (emphasis in original)
seemed to merely confirm a decision already in the offing, and with final approval from Philadelphia, the AFSC terminated its entire Israel program by June 1961.\footnote{924 \textit{ISD 1961/STA, ISD-STA/MEP/I-G/Program Devolution, Letter from Philip Buskirk to “Friends” within Israel, ca. 1961, AFSCA.}}

The decision had not gone unopposed. The Israel team’s director sharply noted to headquarters that he was “dismayed and disappointed” and felt the decision was “abrupt” given the many avenues for reconciliation he saw in Israel and the region.\footnote{925 Quotations from: ISD 1961/STA, ISD-STA/MEP/I-Corr/#Ltrs to, Letter UI-16 from Lorraine Cleveland to Philip Buskirk, April 25, 1961, and ISD 1960/STA/Ind to Ita, ISD-STA/MEP/I-G-Program Devolution, Letter IU-11 from Philip Buskirk to Charles Read, March 11, 1961. See also: Cleveland to Buskirk, March 24, 1961, ISD 1961/STA, ISD-STA/MEP/I-Corr/#Ltrs to, AFSCA.} Miner’s own reporting, seeming to confirm such sentiment, did not change AFSC’s course of action. It is conceivable that, in light of the expansion of government services, Israeli officials determined that Tur’an had received enough assistance and was better off than other villages. But Miner also provided evidence that security concerns were central in its neglect of the village cooperative. Miner learned that the cooperative had had a falling out with the Muslim \textit{mukhtar} who, by 1960, had been elected as head of the new village council. Generally seeking to block their proliferation, the fact that one was created in Tur’an is a sign of the strength of resistance to the Military Government in the village. Nonetheless, in their desire to control the Arab population, Israeli security agencies were known to interfere in such elections. Indeed, in the early 1960s, a communist member of the village council pushed for passing a resolution calling for the end of the Military Government. The mayor “refused to allow discussion of the issue, on the grounds that it was a political matter not within the village council’s purview.”\footnote{926 Cited in Cohen, \textit{Good Arabs}, p. 212. See also pp. 125, 207.} Israeli officials were
dealing with the *mukhtar* and avoiding the cooperative which had been asking without success to be able to buy land outside of the village in order to help them pay off their debts.\(^{927}\) Such land, like that “abandoned or confiscated” by Arab refugees, they informed Miner, was being held in reserve by the Jewish National Fund for Jewish immigrants and kibbutzim. There was also evidence that the village was not immune to the larger processes of rising nationalism and a hardening of Arab and Jewish attitudes. Many of Miner’s former acquaintances, out of a sense of desired paternalism or a seeking out of patronage networks not linked to the government, kept asking him when the Quakers would return to the village. However, the Muslim *mukhtar*, the one seemingly coopted by Israeli officials, did not.\(^{928}\)

In musing through any possible action, Miner was pushing against the constraints of rural development: what did it mean to be “local” in this case and where did responsibility lie after the fact? Miner agreed that continued participation in community development in the village was unwise and unfeasible, but wondered aloud to AFSC headquarters if their intervention in village life obligated them to respond in some way. He suggested they had a “right of inquiry” with the Israeli government about the situation and that AFSC could bring its influence to bear on changing Israeli policy.\(^{929}\) Such a suggestion, of course, meant overtly politicizing a purportedly neutral PVO whose

\(^{927}\) “Tur’an Revisited,” 1960, pp. 10, 3, 14, AFSCA. Miner reported speaking with Ministry of Agriculture reps in Nazareth before his visit to Tur’an, only to find the same reps having arrived in the village and meeting with the *mukhtar*; he found it notable that they did not also visit with the cooperative members on the occasion of his return.

\(^{928}\) “Tur’an Revisited,” 1960, pp. 11-12; 4, 6, AFSCA.

\(^{929}\) “Tur’an Revisited,” 1960, pp. 15-16, AFSCA.
commitment to being non-political had allowed it access to Israel in the first place.

Although personally memorable, Miner concluded by noting that the visit was professionally a “stimulating and thought-provoking exercise, especially for one who has become so involved in technical assistance and community development.”

930 “Tur’an Revisited,” 1960, p. 16, AFSCA.
“Start Small, Make Small Mistakes, and Grow as We Can”

In June 1967, Israeli armed forces preemptively attacked Egyptian and Syrian forces. The war lasted six days and resulted in an Israeli victory as striking in its completeness and it was in its short duration. Among many important ramifications, the war resulted in Israel’s occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Many Palestinian refugees were again displaced, fleeing to Jordan’s East Bank. NEF reported that the war “affected all economic development projects in the area,” including its own. After meeting the immediate needs of the refugees – now refugees twice over – consideration was once again being “given to development projects.”

By 1967, NEF work in Jordan had expanded. It maintained both community development and more conventional technical assistance programming. As the U.S. mission kicked off its community development program in Jordan with a community development pilot operation, the mission relied on NEF recommendations and the U.S. mission Director brought an NEF rep to Jordan to discuss community development with the mission’s Division Chiefs and “to attempt to convince the Chiefs that the Near East Foundation could play a very important role in the USOM/J community development

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Today, the NEF continues to emphasize the value of community, of self-help, and a human-centered form of development revolving around education.

Although departing in 1961, the AFSC would return to the region in the wake of the war to renew their reconciliation efforts. They have remained there ever since. In 1963, UNRWA asked IVS to staff their expansion of vocational and teacher training centers for Palestinian refugees; they needed “someone in each of the centres to organize and develop recreational, athletic, and other extra-curricular activities” for the centers’ residents. In general, IVS attention had been drawn to Southeast Asia. In 1964, IVS maintained 8 volunteers in the Near East region, 80 in Vietnam and 75 in Laos. Nonetheless, its commitments to rural development continued, as volunteers “worked with rather than on local culture” and did not go into a village with a program already in hand but lived among the people first, to get a sense of local needs and desires. “Our philosophy has always been to start small, make small mistakes, and grow as we can,” noted Executive Director Dr. Russell Stevenson.

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933 Today, the NEF maintains that it “helps build more sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive communities in the Middle East and Africa through education, community organizing, and economic development.” Their work is based “on a conviction that, to play an active role in the development of their communities and countries, people need opportunities and tools: the knowledge to participate in civic and economic life, a voice in public decisions that affect their wellbeing, and a means of making a meaningful living.” NEF website, https://www.neareast.org/what-we-do/ (accessed May 18, 2018).

934 IVS Reporter, January 1963 and December 1964, MCUA, IVS Collection, Series 4, Box 47, Folder 4. IVS had 6 personnel in the field by the end of 1964.

935 Personnel Review, August 7, 1964, MCUA, IVS Collection, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 1.

My intervention has been to orient scholarly attention to the “everyday” of development projects. To “start small” and “grow as we can” stands in for an ever-widening theory of change; it is how the historical actors in these pages envisioned the best way to approach “the local” as outsiders as they grappled with the collateral damage of processes of modernization. Development was one way to address problems of illiteracy, poverty, and social and economic inequality which undergird social conflict and war. Rather than leaning into urban-industrial modernization, rural developers sought ways of nation-building that enabled local societies to retain their integrity amidst change. Towards this end, advocates looked to “the local”: they sought to adapt projects to local contexts, to build on local practices and knowledge and meld “the best of the west” as seemed appropriate, to incorporate local participation and stimulate local agency, and to ensure holistic development that built communal solidarity. Primarily, rural developers sought to be educators; they valued process over outcome and saw themselves as “radiating centers of influence” or “catalytic agents” that better enabled local communities to develop the capacities, leadership, and initiative that would allow them to control processes of social change in an increasingly dynamic global environment. The theory of change behind this thinking is encapsulated in the title: “Ever-widening Circles.”

The arguments in this dissertation have proceeded at three different but related analytical levels: American development and modernization; development in the Middle East; and development in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As one of the clearest articulations of a local, democratic, participatory approach, my primary claims have been about the emergence of community development. I have argued that rural
Development was the predecessor to community development and that both were undergirded by an emphasis on practical, adapted development rooted in Progressive educational thought that transcended any one national or imperial environment. Indeed, American and British rural development remained intertwined from the interwar period to community development’s emergence first in British colonial Africa in the 1940s and then in U.S. foreign aid in the 1950s. While the historiography of U.S. development has primarily focused on Asia, the narrative I tell here weaves in U.S. and British development efforts in Latin America and Africa. But, ultimately, it was in the crucible of the Middle East after World War I and then amidst decolonization and the 1948 refugee crisis during the Cold War that U.S. community development owes its existence. In the end analysis, the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict did not lend itself to the gradual, sensitive, locally-adapted approach advocated by rural developers like the NEF. Thus, like the official top-down negotiations, bottom-up development efforts failed to bring about peace and an Arab Palestinian nation-state.

Rural Development and Modernization

Along with a growing chorus of other scholars of American development, I draw out distinctions within development efforts. In particular, I have focused on differentiating rural development from modernization, defined as development along urban-industrial lines and including the industrialization of agriculture. Modernization is embodied in this dissertation primarily by mechanizing farming practices and the TVA model. The latter prioritized making agriculture as an economic sector more efficient and introducing industrialization into rural areas rather than helping farmers remain on the
land. As the NEF’s work in Palestine in the 1930s demonstrated, rural development was not modernization; and the rural development emphasis of Point Four or community development cannot be equated with the thinking behind the TVA.

However, one of my aims has also been to demonstrate how in certain circumstances, the tension that emerges between these approaches could be collapsed. I suggest that this dynamic of divergence and convergence can be explained in two ways. First, the very origins of rural development contained the seeming paradox of modernizers being some of its primary advocates. The industrial wealth of the Rockefeller and Dodge families helped support the proliferation of agricultural extension and Progressive educational thought as means of rural revival while being primary players in the emergence of NEF itself.

Second, I argue that both modernization and rural development are undergird by a modernist faith in progress, planning, and science and technology to solve human problems. As with the Populists of the Farmers’ Alliance, rural developers did not seek to eliminate capitalism but to reform it to the advantage of agricultural producers; rural cooperatives, state regulation, and education in business techniques and marketing were all part of an ultimately modernist agenda and were reflected in the work of the NEF, Alami, ADS, and IVS, the BMEO and Point Four, and the AFSC. Moreover, moments of intense urgency have the capacity to draw out distinctions, but, alternately, they can facilitate a pragmatic plasticity in which the ends justify whatever means seem expedient. Such was the case during World War II with the MESC in Palestine and after 1948 in resettlement schemes that combined elements of the TVA and rural development. Alami himself reflected a development pragmatism, trying to import tractors before 1945 amidst
his rural development work and envisioning a Jordan Valley Authority immediately after 1948 before turning to adapted education for orphaned boys. And the AFSC similarly mixed modernization with rural development in Tur’an before turning to community development.

Thus, there was not a single American mode of modernization but rather a series of sometimes interlocking, sometimes opposing dialectics: small or large-scale projects; industrial or agrarian emphases; technocratic or participatory; a countryside of freeholders or consolidated, mechanized, industrial farming.

Transnational and Religious Influences

As with any study of development, thinking and practices about socioeconomic improvement often flowed across national, imperial, demographic and geographic boundaries. Rural development did not spring forth fully formed from an American incubator. As the leadership of the NEF demonstrated, Progressive educational thought and agricultural extension were transnational phenomena from which they drew as well as contributed to. The partnership of NEF with the British colonial authorities in Palestine is illustrative. The shared connections that rural development provided manifested again and again – from the missionary connections that linked the emergent ACEC with American scientific philanthropy and Progressive educational ideals to the incorporation of NEF personnel into various functions in the MESC to a shared commitment to community development to close cooperation between the AFSC and BMEO in Jordan.

You cannot discuss development without talking about religion. My work places religion back at the center of development, rather than simply at its beginning, inserting it
into the mainstream of the emerging historiography of American foreign aid. I have tried to outline the ongoing legacies of missionary work while suggesting that these have been more concrete than a process secularization in which state and nonstate actors alike gradually emptied social and economic assistance of its religious content. The ABCFM’s “three-self” policy lived on as developers concerned with the “local” advocated for low-impact interventions that allowed for self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating change among local communities. Many missionaries were ambivalent about transferring Western culture with all of its excesses and immorality along with the Christian message. There was an awareness of the economic, social, and psychological plight of locals who had been ostracized and alienated from their own sociocultural communities because of missionary influence. And, as nationalism and native religious revivals emerged around the turn of the twentieth century, Liberal and Moderate missiologists turned increasingly away from absolutist stances about Christianity’s superiority and toward religious respect and tolerance.937

These concerns configured the “local” orientation of rural developers like NEF which emerged directly from missionary origins. Oldham, connected with transnational Christian missionary networks as well as Progressive education and scientific philanthropic persons in the U.S. like Thomas Jesse Jones and Paul Monroe, was instrumental in bringing these ideas together in the ACEC. Thus, like the NEF itself, the

937 Indeed, the agencies in this work displayed a much more tolerant and accommodating view of Arabs at a time when much of American Christianity was embracing a Judeo-Christian heritage while still being under the spell of Orientalism. Michell Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally* (State University of New York Press, 2006); Caitlin Carenen, *The Fervent Embrace: Liberal Protestants, Evangelicals, and Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).
British colonial advisory body melded missionary experience on the ground with Progressive educational thought that crystallized into an emphasis on locally-adapted, education-driven, rural-based human development. The ACEC’s reports provided the basis for the emergence of British community development in the colonies in the 1940s. The work of the NEF, meanwhile, had become adopted by agencies in ACVAFS who provided Point Four with models of locally-based projects that sought holistic economic and social change. This helps explain the ongoing relevance of faith-based organizations to global development and peacebuilding efforts. These international projects dovetail with certain Christian theological convictions because religious thought has always been central to such work.

U.S. Community Development and the Middle East

Given its place as ACEC’s primary focus, Africa was critical to the establishment of British community development. But as the above paragraphs begin to suggest, the Middle East provided the primary geographic backdrop to the U.S. version. The NEF pioneered rural development in the region. They also became influential as the U.S. government began to assert itself more actively in the region during World War II, taking employment in the USDA and MESC. As U.S. policymakers envisioned replacing the British colonial influence with its own, they turned to development as a one way of doing so. When Point Four emerged as the U.S. rural development equivalent to the BMEO, it became very active in the Middle East in the early 1950s. Encouraged by the NEF as well as PVOs within ACVAFS and anthropologists like Margaret Mead, Point Four’s original
orientation was towards technical assistance as a combination of agricultural extension and Progressive education.

Even as the refugee in crisis in 1948 helped modernizers in the State Department justify marginalizing rural development thinking, with its “social” emphases, the Cold War implications of regional instability kept the Middle East as a primary area for U.S. intervention. Thus, when the U.S. aid agencies began promoting community development as such by the mid-1950s, country programs had already been implementing it. The work of the AFSC and IVS reflect this reality – both organizations had been stimulated by Point Four to advance rural development and the Quakers had made the turn to community development in Israel as early as 1952 while Executive Director Noffsinger ensured the young men in IVS helping Alami of the community-building aspects of their technical assistance work in 1954. IVS had been implementing community development in the region, including a large project in Iraq, before it made similar moves in Southeast Asia.  

Rural Development and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Although the NEF operated without the support of an American colonial apparatus in the Middle East, and earnestly looked to promote Arab Palestinian nation-building, their easy and eager collaboration with the British was based on a shared commitment to the mandate system and the racial and cultural baggage therein. The line between race and culture was blurred, although the NEF’s commitment to a belief in the

938 See the country project files in MCUA, IVS Collection Series 2, Box 7, Folder 1.
plasticity of culture evinced both a determination to move beyond scientific racism as well as the lingering remnants of a Western cultural chauvinism. In 1930s Palestine, NEF and British personnel like Humphrey Bowman focused their efforts of “development” on Arabs, illustrated by the school teacher training project at the Khadoorie Agricultural School in Tulkarem, rather than among Jews who were viewed as already sufficiently modern. The NEF and Bowman knew that the power differential between Arabs and Jews, measured in economic muscle as well as political clout in London, was wide. Their efforts genuinely sought to assist the Arabs and to promote socioeconomic equality. However, rural development’s built-in tension between outsider guidance and insider control came to the fore. The admirable impulse to build upon and include “the local” ran up against the Westerners’ own cultural predilections, which assumed Jews were modern enough to maintain the autonomy of their institution-building and development while Arabs were the ones in need of paternalistic guidance. The tension therefore served to work against Arab interests, rather than in their favor, and the Arab Rebellion that broke out 1936 illustrated Arab frustration and despair. The Khadoorie project aimed to respect Arab farming practices, cultural beliefs, and social organization as the best way to encourage change that was locally “owned” and therefore legitimate. However, as Zionists acquired more Arab land and evicted the tenants, as they modernized agricultural practices with widespread irrigation, machinery, and market access, as they drew on foreign investment, and as they built their own largely autonomous national organizations and leadership, Arabs could not compete.

Similar assumptions hindered the work of the MESC, which prioritized above all ensuring the success of the war effort. With industrial and agricultural policies, British
officials leaned more heavily on the Jews who, already in a more advantageous position, gleaned more benefits for future nation-building than the Arabs did. Meanwhile, the events of 1948-1949 were a watershed for the Palestinians, for the region, and for rural developers. What the “local” among Arab Palestinians now meant had been significantly altered. Rural development sought to assist farmers on the land, in discrete villages; but what did it mean to work among a conglomeration of displaced refugees devoid of their homes and livelihoods?

Musa Alami’s work through the ADS exemplified this shift, as he moved from providing debt relief, land reform, and technical assistance to Palestinian villages in 1945 to providing an experimental farm, model village, and vocational training center for orphaned boys after 1948. In the face of political impasse, rural developers like Alami and IVS went to work in service of refugee resettlement, although the refugees displayed neither a wish to engage in full-time farming nor to sacrifice their chances of repatriation. World War II had provided the opportunity for wage labor among Palestinian villagers as never before while regional politics and antipathy toward Israel engendered a militant, anti-Western nationalism in the refugee camps. Rural development, even the “local” Arab hybrid Alami crafted, was being left behind as state-level politics and “local” sentiment moved in unfriendly directions. Although a well-known nationalist by the end of World War II, Alami’s status as a Palestinian elite formerly in the service of the British authorities did not likely play well among a rural population that had revolted in 1936 against Arab elites as well as Zionists and British rule. Moreover, Alami’s efforts to secure Arab backing for his work fell apart as the Arab League devolved into rivalry politics and intrigue. He was forced therefore to rely on British and American support,
which only further tainted his efforts in the eyes of the refugees, some of whom destroyed the ADS project in late 1955.

Within Israel, the AFSC’s rural development project in Tur’an during the first half of the 1950s bore the complications introduced in 1948, not because the village housed a significant number of refugees (which it seems it did not) but because of the growing Israeli security apparatus over Arab areas which far exceeded the local reach of British colonial authorities during the mandate. The AFSC knew of the marginalization of Palestinians in Israel and of the inequities of the Military Government. Yet, they were driven by a rural development logic of nation-building and their own commitments to reconciliation. They viewed Israel with ambivalence but were convinced of its permanency. With this as a guiding assumption, they sought to provide socioeconomic development for Arabs that would allow them to meet on equal terms with Jews, build healthy relationships across the divide, and prove to both sides the economic benefits and peace dividend of Arab integration. Accordingly, AFSC personnel focused on the project at hand – boosting standards of living and building community within Tur’an. The Quakers looked to “local,” cultural explanations for the shortcomings of the project but either failed to see or explicitly acknowledge the other factors at play: namely, that the Quaker need to satisfy both the village and the Military Government worked against their objectives in Tur’an, where the cooptation of local collaborators and the Muslim *mukhtar* divided the village in new ways and reinforced resistance to being tied to government authorities.
Most historians are wont to agree that interventions characterized by universal standards, impositions from the top, and ignorance of local desires and conditions are unlikely to succeed. Peace Studies scholars tend to be more divided. The literature on the “turn to the local” divides along “effectiveness” and “emancipatory” camps. The former tend to look at how to leverage the local level and participation to make largely external-driven development and peacebuilding operations more effective. The latter question this instrumentalization and look to the local level as a way to break out of neocolonial relationships that these operations embody in their use of foreign templates imposed from above. Looking to the local for the emancipatory scholars is a way to grant agency back to local actors and to truly liberate them from oppressive, largely Western structures and assumptions.

Building on recent critiques of the emancipatory literature by Randazzo, I have sought to turn a critical lens back upon this emancipatory strand of peacebuilding scholarship by focusing on the links between community development and British colonialism. Returning to Barbara Cruikshank’s The Will to Empower, democratic empowerment strategies are ultimately political projects in which the well-intentioned hope to catalyze among the poor, marginalized, and/or disadvantaged a certain vision of citizenship. From this perspective, empowerment is a neutral tool, neither “good” (read:

939 This is a common refrain in most analyses of U.S. overseas development efforts. See for instance Jessica Elkind, Aid Under Fire: Nation-Building and the Vietnam War (University of Kentucky Press, 2016).

emancipatory) nor “bad” (read: oppressive, colonial) but a project that adapts to the intentions and execution of the actors themselves.\textsuperscript{941} Any tool of empowerment – such as encouraging ownership and participation by the marginalized, oppressed – can be coopted by special, entrenched interests. Thus, given their colonial roots, we will not find pure resources for development, even within local, culturally-sensitive, empowerment molds.

The story told in these pages is, in the main, one of failure. Most accounts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are. But one of the successes of rural development has been advocates’ and practitioners’ ongoing insistence on attention and sensitivity to “the local.” Despite its many shortcomings, this important commitment has been bequeathed to new development and peacebuilding paradigms. Indeed, despite the dominance of modernization theories, community development lived on. It remains an approach among social workers to this day.\textsuperscript{942} And, most associated with strands of rural development, many practitioners and scholars across the 1970s and 1980s looked to the deficiencies of what they saw as dominant approaches to international development: top-down technocratic projects designed by outsiders, the mere delivery of projects and inputs, an uncritical view of development as a harmonious process, and dissatisfaction with GDP growth as a marker of progress. Participatory Action Research and Participatory Rural Appraisal comprised international development’s underbelly. And they offered a human-

\textsuperscript{941} Cruikshank, \textit{Will to Empower}.

centered precursor to Amartya Sen’s work, which put the issue on the international agenda in the 1990s through such things as the Human Development Report. These approaches have been subjected to, rightly, their own set of critics.

In the field of Peace Studies, the ideas of Paulo Freire became influential. Freire was dismissive of “colonial education” in which prepackaged, largely outsider, knowledge was to be poured into indigenous students as if they were empty vessels. Seeking to address the plight of the poor and illiterate, Pedagogy of the Oppressed was a call for education and learning to be practical and rooted in local contexts. Teachers were to be facilitators and co-learners, not experts. Students themselves were to take charge of their own education; to be subjects, not objects; to take charge of their own fates; and to shake them from their existing mental geographies and challenge the status quo. In other words, students were to be the agents of their own emancipation. Notably, Freire cut his teeth in rural education in Brazil and his ideas have been traced to not only Karl Marx, but compared to those of John Dewey. Freire’s ideas influenced the “first wave” of

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local turn literature headed by the work of John Paul Lederach who advocated an elicitive model in which local actors are seen as resources, not obstacles.\footnote{John Paul Lederach, \textit{Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures} (Syracuse University Press, 1995).}

Actors throughout this dissertation grappled with rural development’s internal tensions and what it meant to try to create partnerships across cultural divides. I have suggested that even as groups like the NEF, IVS, and AFSC retained elements of cultural parochialism, their local embeddedness and commitment to “the local” enabled them to push against a simple cultural imperialism. Their strivings and struggles should give comfort to practitioners in our own time about the timelessness of attempts to forge such bridges even as it should remain a reminder that self-reflexivity in development and peacebuilding work should never be underestimated.

Indeed, promoting development and local participation should not be abandoned. (1) Development can provide positive, constructive opportunities for cross-cultural engagement. One of the most successful aspects of rural development was the way it built genuine human relationships, despite all of the messiness involved in crossing the cultural divides. (2) Development can help provide a basic universal standard of living, especially regarding health, education, and the necessities of life. This was the basis for Margaret Mead’s support for technical assistance; she was concerned that anthropologists had a tendency to “sentimentaliz[e] hunger and disease and primitive simplicity.”\footnote{Quoted in Mandler, \textit{Return From the Natives}, p. 272.} (3) Without development or an equivalent venture, we risk losing a sense of collective
responsibility to the welfare of others and a greater good outside of our own individual or national self-fulfillment.


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