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Arab nationalism in interwar period Iraq: A descriptive analysis of Sami Shawkat's al-Futuwwah youth movement

Saman Nasser

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Arab Nationalism in Interwar Period Iraq: A Descriptive Analysis of Sami Shawkat's *al-Futuwwah* Youth Movement

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Dedication

To my beloved parents: Rafid Nasser and Samhar Abed. You are my *Watan*.

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Iraq's Political Map



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¹ Britannica, Iraq Political Map, accessed on December 07, 2018, from: <https://www.britannica.com/media/print/topic/293631/2034>.

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Abstract

Historiography of Iraqi Arab nationalism has studied the Iraqi *Futuwwah* Youth Movement of the interwar period in relation to the European fascist youth model of the post-World War I era. Moreover, the futuwwah is limited by linking its objective to training high school students of Iraq in the area of paramilitary exercises. By re-reading the futuwwah lectures of Sami Shawkat, the Director General of Education and founder of the futuwwah in Iraq, this thesis demonstrates how the movement was rather at the core of Iraqi Arab nationalism. The lectures appear in Shawkat's book *Hadhihi Ahdafuna* (These are Our Goals), which was published in 1939. Conceptions of Arab nationalism, as this thesis shows by translating and analyzing the futuwwah lectures in *These are Our Goals*, exist in many pages of the work. These conceptions had both local and global contexts. Therefore, this thesis is organized around the following structure: section one is a raw translation, from Arabic to English, of *These are Our Goals* futuwwah lectures. This section forms the primary source of the thesis. Section two is an analytical discussion of the lectures uncovering major nationalist themes as they relate to historical Arab past and to Iraqi Arab nationalism of the period. However, this section will also emphasize the global context of the said themes, as they relate to the rise of nationalist movements in Europe and the world. Section three is the conclusion. This section will highlight the thesis main findings, and point to other possibilities in rethinking the futuwwah as a nationalist conception. One possibility, for example, is to suggest that Shawkat's futuwwah movement was perhaps based on the old young men's social clubs, during the late Abbasid era, by the same name.

Introduction

Nationalism is obviously a modern conception. Benedict Anderson, one of the main theoretician scholars of nationalism, has defined it as an “Imagined Community”—meaning that nationals of a bounded country, whether big or small in terms of area or demography, imagines themselves as a unique collective being, but they cannot know of each other. Despite the latter fact, they can still imagine a ‘communion’ between and among themselves. According to Anderson, this imagination among various nations of the modern world was made possible by what he calls “print-capitalism,” the emergence of modern print publications, such as newspapers.² An example of Benedict Anderson’s “Imagined Communities” is visible in the works of Arab nationalists from the interwar period, such as Sati al-Husri. He speaks in his various printed works of an *Asabiyyah* or natural relations between Arabs, primarily based on a shared language. If such is understood, then there can be an imagined ‘communion’ between Arab speakers, even if most members of the Arab nation are not aware of each other’s existence or know each other.³ This idea of an Arab imagined community is limited because of various ethnic or racial differences. Beyond the political map of the Arab nation, defined from North Africa to Iraq, also lie other nations.⁴ Anthony Smith, another major theoretician of nationalism, however insists that all modern nations have some sort of pre-modern historical consciousness, such as historical memories and claims of a mythical common

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 6-7.

³ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 315.

⁴ William Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati al-Husri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 104.

ancestry.⁵ Smith's insistence that modern nations were built on pre-modern ethnic 'ethnie' communities can be exemplified in ways Iraqi Arab nationalists, such as Dr. Sami Shawkat, who viewed the Semitic leaders of Babylon, Akkad, of the Fertile Crescent, as ancestors of modern day Iraqi Arabs.⁶

This thesis, inspired by such theoretical discussions, looks at how Iraq was imagined by Arab nationalists during the Interwar period, particularly the third decade of the twentieth century. In doing so, it explores the intellectual work of Iraqi Director General of Education, Dr. Sami Shawkat (1931-1933; 1939), analyzing and putting in perspective particularly his introduction into Iraqi high schools of *al-Futuwwah* or the Youth Movement. The analyses of the thesis are organized around three main sections.

Section one, which is the main primary source of this thesis, is a translation of Shawkat's work, from Arabic to English. I have translated Shawkat's lectures related to the futuwwah, which forms the main part of his book *Hadhihi Ahdafuna (These are Our Goals)*. Futuwwah is an Arabic word which means 'young manhood'. As a youth movement, in Shawkat's lectures, it referred primarily to Iraqi youth at various schools, mostly at high schools, who were receiving paramilitary-doctrinal training for becoming future soldiers, and to be loyal to fight and sacrifice their lives for an imagined Arab unity under the auspices of the Iraqi Arab state. The content of this translation is vast, covering many conceptual and thematic topics. The names of the lectures are a good example of the breadth of his work including: "Sina'at al-Mawt" (The Craft of Death); "Ikhshawshanu" (Toughen-Up), "Ahdaf al-Futuwwah al-Ulya" (The Elated Futuwwah Goals); "Kayf Yajib an-Nakun" (How We Ought to Be); "Ahdaf Madarisuna" (Our

⁵ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 21.

⁶ Sami Shawkat, *Hadhihi Ahdafuna* (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Tafayyud al-Ahliyya, 1939), 22.

Schools Goals) and “al-Iraq Urabi al-Nash’a al-Arabi” (Iraqi Raises the Arab Youth).

Section two is an analytical discussion of the lectures uncovering major nationalist themes as they relate to Iraqi-Arab nationalism. The themes, as we will see, also relate to general conception of Arab nationalism from the period and to an historical Arab past. However, these themes also were informed by early twentieth century global contexts, such as the rise of nationalist movements in Europe. Section three will serve as a conclusion.

Section One

**Translation: al-Futuwwah lectures of *These are
Our Goals***

The Craft of Death*

Tomorrow, your principal Mr. Darwish al-Miqdadi will go to the Defense Ministry to hold a meeting with the ministry's superiors to decide on your military studies curriculum. Do you know what these studies are and why they will be introduced, this year, into our general studies curricula? I have gathered you here today to explain this point.

We hear quite often that no political independence can be achieved without an economic independence and no independence can be achieved without education. But Egypt, whose revenues has for many years now exceeded her expenditures by millions of pounds, and who has the best of universities and schools and great scholars of the Near East, has had her independence delayed until now. The treasuries of the Indian rajas contain hundreds of millions worth of gold, an unmeasured amount of rare gems and over twenty-five large universities, that graduates thousands of youth on yearly basis, equipped with high degrees, yet India remain colonized. The level of the educated in Syria is 76 percent and most of its people are no different in their levels of sophistication, civility and culture than the people of southern Europe, but, unfortunately, Syria remains deprived of her independence.

On the other hand, we find the Afghans, who live the life of the 14th century and whose treasuries were never filled with gold, are independent. And take a look at our neighbor, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose inhabitants live on camel's milk and dates, whose schools do not teach modern arts, and whose culture does not exceed the boundaries of religion is independent. And Arab Yemen, despite her lack of money, is independent as well.

* A speech delivered to the students of the Central High School during the autumn of 1933.

Wealth and knowledge, therefore, are not the absolute guarantors of any one nation independence and are not the chief factors for nations to break the chains of colonialism and the humiliation which the latter entail.

But...

There is a factor more important than knowledge and wealth that guarantees nations honor and prevent them from falling into the chain of colonization. It is the factor of power. Power provides the soil which nurtures the plant of truth. A nation that has no power is bound to humiliation and enslavement. Material wealth without power is one of the main reasons behind the colonization of a nation. And education without power results in a plethora of wailing from the weak side and a plethora of laughter at it from the powerful side. Sometimes, this cycle of weeping and laughter lasts for tens or hundreds of years, as is the case in India and other countries. Thus, the definition of power here: is to perfect the Craft of Death.

A nation that does not perfect the Craft of Death by ways of steel and fire will be forced to die under the horse hooves and the boots of foreign troops. If to live is a right, then killing for this right is a right in itself. Had Mustafa Kemal not had forty thousand officers, well-versed in the Craft of Death during the Anatolian Revolt, we would not have seen Turkey retain the glorious past of Sultan Selim during the current 20th century. And had Reza Pahlavi not had thousands of officers whom have perfected this divine craft then we would not have seen him retain the glories of Darius. And if Mussolini did not have tens of thousands of Black Shirts, whom were brilliant practitioners of the Craft of Death, Mussolini would not have been able to bestow upon Victor Emanuel the crown of the earlier Caesars of Roma. The Albanian nation in the Balkans is independent and the Arab Iraq in the Near East is independent. The seed of cane over there has nurtured and the cedar seed over here has nurtured. The cane bush does not

expand but a few centimeters into the earth's soil, regardless of how tall it grows; but the cedar tree expands, by tens or hundreds of meters, into the earth's soil with the passing of mere few years.

Iraq's vision expands toward the rest of the Arab nation while Albania's vision cannot exceed that of its borders. Prussia dreamt of uniting the Germanic peoples sixty years ago. What stops Iraq, who fulfilled her dream of independence ten years ago, from uniting the Arab countries?

On the delta of this great river, that we see day and night, Harun al-Rashid has set up his throne upon it. And from these coastal shores, he ruled over two hundred million people. We shall never deserve taking pride in him or to call ourselves his successors if we do not restore what he built—that which the enemies of the Arabs destroyed. The spirit of Harun al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun want Iraq to have, in the near future, half a million soldiers and hundreds of fighter planes. Is there any coward in Iraq who will refuse this call? As for your military session, this year, oh youth, it will be regarding the sessions of power that your country needs and that which our glorious history demands. If we do not want to die under the horse hooves and the boots of foreign troops we must perfect the Craft of Death, the art of soldiery, the holy military craft. The mentioned military sessions will be restricted, during this year, to the Central High School in the capital, with plans to expand it to the entirety of Iraq's high schools and teachers' institutions during the next set of years. Knowledge and wealth will be in our hands and we will be able to take what we want from them once we have become powerful, as our glorious history requires as to be.

So march, oh youth, toward power and toward the perfection of the Craft of Death. March while holding the banner of Faisal, the successor of Harun al-Rashid, high to the skies.

Toughen-Up*

When Amr ibn al-As ventured with his small in size but large in terms of spirit and faith army to conquer Egypt, the High Commissioner (al-Muqawqis) who ruled Egypt under the name of the Byzantium emperor Heraclius, decided to send a delegation to al-As to negotiate a peace treaty. Upon the negotiations failure, due to Amr ibn al-As's insistence on conquering Egypt, the head delegator reported the following to al-Muqawqis: "We found a people who favored death to life. We found people who favored humbleness to boastfulness. None of them have any earthy desires and none were lovers of gluttony. They sit on the sand and they eat on their knees. Their Commander is one of them and one cannot tell the rich from the peasant nor the master from the slave from looking at them. When the call for the prayers comes they all answer the call. In preparations for prayers, they wash their limbs. And they are all in a state of reverence while praying." Ubada bin al-Samit told al-Muqawqis, when the former was sent by Amr ibn al-As to head the delegation to negotiate the delivery of Egypt to the Arabs, "our duty and desire is but to perform the lesser Jihad for the sake of God. Our rationale behind conquering the enemy of God is not for the sake of this life nor do we want more out of this life. God have permitted us such actions and he permitted us, upon victory, a share of the spoils. And it does not matter if one of us have many spikes of gold or if one barely has a coin. All we desire is for some food to satisfy one's hunger during the night and day and a piece of cloth to cover oneself with. If one of us does not have but a coin, then that will be enough. If one of us have spikes of gold, then he should spend it in the sake of obeying God and limit himself to what is necessary to live by. And we leave the enjoyment of any bliss and prosperity to the thereafter as God has commanded us to

* A speech delivered during the al-Futuwwah parade at the Central High School where the proverb "Toughen-Up: the life of luxury removes the blessings" was being displayed.

do. Our Prophet has commanded us the same. Our Prophet commanded us not to seek in this life but that which can satisfy one's hunger, a piece of cloth to cover oneself with, and to devote one's energy to the pleasing of God and to the fighting of his enemies.”



A gathering of the Central High School al-Futuwwah youth, on 11 June 1939, at the unveiling of the plaque: "Toughen-Up: the life of luxury removes the blessings."



The al-Futuwwah Youth Guard, of the Central High School, while performing the Iraqi flag saluting formalities.



The Protector of al-Futuwwah and Director-General of Education inspecting the al-Futuwwah Youth Guards from the Central High School on 11 June 1939.



The ceremony of raising the Iraqi flag by the Central High School al-Futuwwah youth on 11 June 1939.

Khalid Ibn al-Walid uttered, at the time of his death, the following “I have encountered this and that and there isn’t a single part of my body clear of a sword’s blow or a bow’s wound. But here I am dying on my bed similar to the death of a bull. May the eyes of the cowards never sleep.” Such were the attitudes of our ancestors, such were their beliefs and such were the way they spoke and acted until one third of the world was conquered as a result of their faith-based actions and, therefore, one third of the world was guided to the rightful path.

Therefore, and upon embarking on your military session O’Futuwwah of Iraq, raise your blessed sight to the sky and you shall see the spirits of Khalid Ibn al-Walid, Amr ibn al-As, Tariq ibn Ziyad, Uqba ibn Nafi, Musa bin Nusayr, Qutaybah ibn Muslim and Saad ibn abi al-Waqqas hovering on top of your youthful heads. From your ranks will emerge those who will fill the gap of the aforementioned ancestors—who opened the world to us and brought many kingdoms to their knees. We must therefore train ourselves to correctly estimate the power of our enemy and then we must train ourselves to control and hide our anger. The moment we realize that we have become more powerful than our enemy is the moment that we let our anger out like thunder-lightning and then we can attack our enemy like a flood and shed its blood. Nothing in the world can equal the taste of anger that is wrapped around the ideals of faith and victory. Equally, nothing is sweeter than ripping our enemies to pieces and shedding their blood in the locales of war. The sacred anger for the sake of the nation helps elevate the spirit to the point where life become but a small and a trivial matter. Death in this context, therefore, will be met with a sense of mockery laughter and elatedness. Bullets, swords and bombs are more honorable and more desirous than microbes, fevers and pus. Let us then die by the abovementioned methods as Khalid Ibn al-Walid would have wanted us to instead of dying in our beds clinging to fevers, germs and doctors’ medicine bottles.

There is nothing more sacred than the sacredness of a martyr who bleed for his nation. And as blessed it is for a sheep to die by being slaughtered, that same sheep would be dirty and unsanitary if it died without being slaughtered. Let us then hold death by means of being killed and martyred for the sake of God sacred and, equally, look with contempt upon dying on our beds. Let us then bow, reverently, to the “Craft of Death.”

The foreigner, according to the Iraqi futuwah, is not the one who does not hold an Iraqi Citizenship Certificate. A foreigner, in our beliefs, is the one who does not share our feeling in glorifying the dignity of Iraq’s unity even if he holds ninety Iraqi Citizenship Certificates or even if our graveyards are entrenched with his ancestors’ bones from thousand years ago. A foreigner, according to us, is the one who tries to break the Arabs’ unity and he, then, is not a foreigner from us by virtue of sharing different beliefs, faith and spirit alone; this man is our vilest enemy as well. Musaylimah al-Kadhab was a Yamaman Arab but he was a traitor, which led the Arabs to kill him and to eliminate his followers. On the other hand, Salman al-Farisi, May God Be Pleased with Him, was a Persian but one who adopted Islam and who Arabized himself. He was one who held, in a steadfast manner, to being an Arabized Muslim, something that led the Arabs to hold him in a very sacred place amongst them. The Iraqi futuwah, therefore, sees the Arabized Salman al-Farisi, who has done a lot for the Arab nation, as part of them while declaring their contempt for Musaylimah al-Kadhab and people of his example.

From here marched the soldiers of the Arab Empire to open up the world from China to the East to Central Europe to the West. We guided one third of the world, taught them to believe in God and taught them “The Chief of Wisdom is to fear God.” Also, the language of half of the Near and Central East is Arabic. Evidence tells us that the rest of these places languages had not the ability to escape the mighty effects of Arabic. Therefore, one third of the earth inhabitants

and upon being hit by any calamity, hurry seeking the help of the God of the Arabic Quran and his Arab Prophet. The army wants you to become pilots, warriors and leaders so that you can become the best nation that emerges to the people of the earth. And I call upon the Arab girls to become mothers and thus bear to us heroes and soldiers that can take the place of our heroes who die in the locales of wars and honor, God willing. And I want from these girls to bear to us only heroes and I call upon them to love none but those men who will promise them that they will die fighting for Arab unity and Arabs. Do you want me now, May God Bless you, to explain to you the meaning of the displayed proverb: “Toughen-Up: the life of luxury removes the blessings.”?

The Elated Futuwah Goals

(Uniting the Youths Cloths) **

The formation of morals is one purpose of education. The teaching of manhood and knighthood morals is as important as the teaching of the various sciences. Empirical experiences proved, though, that the best arena for the formation of the above-said morals is the army and the army's military discipline codes—that produces a brave, nationalistic and a frank individual whose overall character is thus beyond any small or trivial matter. Our contemporary youth are in need, more than any previous youth generation, to obtain training in such morals. The reason for that is due to the spreading of many urban decedent pastimes and also the spreading of a physically and morally weak individuals which correlate with the spreading of pernicious sorts of entertainments. Previous generations did not experience the above agonies because the family and the social environment(s) were penetrated with ideals such as obedience, respect of the elder by the youth, the kindness shown to the youth by the elder and the previous generations' strong attachments to religious beliefs which called for the promotion of virtue and the negation of the vice. However, the presence of cafes, theaters, cinema houses and other locales of singing and such, which have penetrated the west, is spreading a plethora of vices and only a limited amount of good in our society. The home today, unfortunately, has ceased to unite under its roof the father and the son and or the mother and the daughter, as was the case during the previous generations. The waning influence of the home has to do with work related matters on the one hand and the presence of alternate entertainment venues to the home on the other. Therefore, a person who used to spend the majority of his time at the home is now only spending the night or

* A talk that Dr. Sami Shawkat gave to *al-Istiqlal Newspaper*.

part of the night at it. As a result, the educational influence the home has had over the youth and children is waning in comparison with previous times. Also, the outside environment that the child and the youth used to take what was compatible with our honorable faith, with its promotion of virtue and forbiddance of the vice, is now taking, unfortunately, what is in contradiction with these honorable ideals. Therefore, we must establish an overall social environment that promotes the honorable manhood morals alongside creating a social environment that allows for the teaching of various sciences and the arts. The creation of such social environment(s) is the reason for the rise of many nations in our time, be they western or eastern. The aforementioned honorable ends are what convinced the Education ministry to implement the Futuwah law with its first article stating “to teach the youth how to live the rough way, how to handle difficulties, to instill in them the spirit of militarism coupled with manhood-knighthood trait and other traits that encourages the love of the system and obedience. All of the above can be achieved via the promotion of all aspects of military training.” This system, therefore, will create the necessary military atmosphere that shall penetrate all of our contemporary schools with its student population of a hundred thousand, a teacher population of four thousand and around eight hundred schools in total.

This military atmosphere with its rough and uniformed clothing attire, its strong and disciplinary system and its military ranking hierarchy demands the youth to respect his commanding elder and speak but of what’s necessary in his presence. This system teaches the youth to take and execute commands without argument, it teaches him to obey God, His Prophet and his rulers even if this obedience shall lead him to sacrifice his life for the sake of his nation and country. This readiness for sacrifice will endear to him living in a tent, living on top of sands, living in trenches, to consume the bitterest of food and it will make him cling to the

glories of his ancient past. It will further endear him to his nation and his country and what follows that of other noble traits which will transform him into a knightly man similar to our ancestors of our glorious historical past in which we served as an example, to the rest of the world, of a people with high and honorable traits. And I am confident that by executing the above-mentioned system with precision, care and faith, we shall enable our nation and society to rise from its current position—a position that is penetrated with psychological weakness, deflated spirits and low morals into a position that is filled with psychological control, strong morals and with spirits of will and progress. Every one of the aforementioned hundred thousand students is connected with at least ten societal folks which includes parents, relatives and or friends. The disease of the holy military spirit and that of the system and the honorable morals will, therefore, spread to at least one million of our Iraqi society members or about one-fifth of our overall Iraqi populace.

I, therefore, wish to simplify this speech to the respected *al-Istiqlal* Newspaper in order to enlighten my beloved nation with regards to the Futuwwah formation—which many people of this country have noticed its exterior appearances and were or are perhaps asking about what such appearances mean and what are its goals.

The Futuwwah law, naturally, will not be implemented unto the girls' schools. A girl, as in the case of the many educated and virtuous societies, is raised to be nothing but an honorable mother and a virtuous housewife. Such is our goal in raising the girls and we shall, in coordination with their teachers, enforce a dress code to discourage them from wearing skin revealing, shiny and luxurious cloths. They will be banned from wearing silken socks, expensive cloths, using shoe polish and wearing high heels in order to equate, by the appearance of cloths, the rich and the poor amongst them. And they shall adhere to the virtues of being humble, to love

the performance of duty and to obey God, His Prophet and the rulers. We shall bring to them honorable physical education teachers from the finest western universities—which are renowned in the proper upbringing of a girl to be an honorable mother and a good housewife.

And I have no doubt that the elder and the younger of my nation will support, with all their efforts and will, this Education ministry plan and will help, from the bottom of their hearts, to see the plan fulfill its sacred goals. Without doing the above, we will not be able to recover, what our fathers and forefathers were raised upon, our supply of honorable morals that were and are being diminished due to the influence of the western city's values.

How We Ought to Be*

(The Goals of the Iraqi Youth)

The ultimate purpose of a government is society's happiness. This happiness cannot be established without uniting the goals and the establishment of the foundations of friendliness and mutual love between a given society's social classes. Every society is usually formed of a big brother and many younger siblings. As duty calls for the big brother to demonstrate emotions of love, compassion and mercy toward his younger siblings, duty also calls for the younger siblings to demonstrate emotions of friendliness, faithfulness and obedience towards their big brother.

Schools, be they governmental, civil or foreign, act as fields that raise, in its spaces, the inclinations, goals and ends which are nurtured in the hearts of the youth, who will become society's leaders in the future. Therefore, a government that seeks its society's happiness must monitor and take notice of the kind of seeds that are being tossed around in its schools and support the growth of the ones that encourage the emotions of brotherhood and love and strive, as duty requires, to eliminate the seeds that work to cause a distancing between society's social classes or which will lead to clashes of ideas and goals in the society which will lead to rivalry and unfriendliness.

I am confident that each one of my brotherly headmasters, be they headmasters of foreign or governmental schools, who I am honored to address at this hour, does not carry in his head but the honorable seeds, whose planting helps in the growth of brotherhood, friendliness and love between a nation's dearly sons. Iraq is but a part of the Fertile Crescent which was and remains a

* A speech delivered by Dr. Sami Shawkat, the Director General of Education, to the headmasters and teachers of Baghdad's civil and foreign schools on 31 March 1939.

theatre that has seen waves of people come to it from the Arabian Peninsula since the dawn of history. And prior to the existence of prophets, it was a theater in which the aforementioned waves of people played important historical roles which bestowed upon humanity many blessings and happiness. Iraq here is similar to other parts of the Fertile Crescent, be they in the north, the west or in north Africa, as these locales were and remain to be a theatre unto which Semite people performed their honorable historical roles. And it was a fertile ground to display the skills and unique attributes of the Semite-Arab mind, whose only aims were for the good and happiness of the human kind.

And we have neglected one very essential point when discussing our glorious history; we marked its starting point from the appearance of The Messenger or back fourteen centuries ago. The history of our Semite-Arab nation, however, extends thousand years back when the people of Europe lived in forests, on top of lakes, in caves and between the rocks. In the meantime, our ancestors were establishing treasury houses, sculpting statues, bestowing laws and establishing the foundations for the science of medicine, engineering, astrology, alphabets and numbers. Within the Code of Hammurabi, located at the Louvre, we see, therefore, the essential law put forth by our great ancestor Hammurabi and we see one of the law's essential penal articles; an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth which preceded the bestowment of the Torah, Bible and the Quran. And we find while going through the histories of the Semitic empires, which were formed in the Fertile Crescent such as the Chaldean, Assyrian, African, Pharaonic and Cartagena, what makes us lift our heads high and makes us believe that the foundations of today's civilization is standing on the foundations which were built by our ancestors. For all of the aforementioned empires, with its states, belong to us and for us. And we reserve the right to take pride in them and their influences. We also have the right to love and be proud of the

legacies of Nebuchadnezzar, Hammurabi, Sargon, Ramses and Tutankhamen as we take pride and revere Abd al-Rahman al-Dhakil, Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, Harun al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun.

We must now revive the above historical fact that was neglected. And we must build sacred statues for it so that our youth can take pride in them and in our ancestors because those statues are decedents of them. Religion is a social system which the happiness of a society rests upon. A society or an individual who does not have a religious belief will not have any morals. And a person who does not have morals does not have integrity and, therefore, cannot be trusted. Therefore, a people or an individual who do not fear God will not hesitate to committing vice. A person who does not avoid committing vice will only produce evil works.

The monotheistic religions, consent, that the Chief of Wisdom is the fear of God. They also consent to the spreading of the good and happiness to all the creation of God. There can be no happiness for a society, as we said, without uniting the inclinations of its members. From this angel, we find that the monotheistic religions themselves require us to spread the principles of love and monotheism in a society to guarantee its happiness. And if we were to review the history of societies, be they western or eastern, and focus on the reasons behind what occurred to these societies from calamities, pain and inside turmoil, we find it was due to the clash of goals and desires of the young siblings with their big brother.

Allowing the planting of opposing and contradictory principles between a given society's fabrics, even if we observed the temporary workability of the principles, will ultimately lead to clashes. Whomever desire to spread such principles, even if circumstances allows him not to take responsibility of the clash's aftermath, his countrymen or the future generations, certainly, will feel the effects of his crime. And if the monotheistic religions and the earthly laws look upon he

who commit a felony on an individual as a criminal felon, how about the one who plant the seeds that can lead to the destruction of entire segments of the human race. This is truly a crime and a felony that overrides any other crime and felony. We say, with honor, that the history of our Arab nation did not have a single page of shame, in terms of committing an act of aggression against others, a desire for evil or a desire to bestow harm unto people. That's because an Arab loves the non-Arab as much as he loves the Arabs so long as the non-Arab reciprocate the love. And I, publicly, say to you that every individual who lives amongst us, speaks our language, and who does not hold any hatred towards us in his heart is one of us. And we, therefore, love him as we love ourselves. When Khalid ibn al-Walid and Ubaidah al-Jara'a opened Damascus and when the Arab armies entered Syria and its cities, there came the Arab King, Umar ibn al-Khatib, to *al-Sham*. When Umar headed to a mosque to perform Friday prayers he saw an old man standing near the door of the mosque with his hands extended and shivering from the cold and from the weakness of old age. Umar ibn al-Khatib, who took compassion on him, asked him about his name and the old man replied that he was a Christian. Umar ibn al-Khatib wept and turned towards his military commanders and princes and said: "we took *jizya* from him when he was strong and we, now, leave him hungry and begging when old age had humped his back and deprived him of his strength—which was his means of earning a living." He then issued a royal decree to give all the old non-Muslim population allocations and salaries to provide them security and to enable them to live a well-off life. Umar ibn al-Khatib, it must be said, did not weep in fear of anyone nor did he issue his royal decree because he was afraid of anyone. For Umar was an emperor who ruled lands whose populations were no less than three hundred million and these lands constituted about half of the earth. Umar cried and issued the royal decree because his sensitive feelings and generous soul did not permit him to see an individual

who is in pain due to hunger or to see an old age man who's shivering because of the cold and cannot find his daily sustenance, due to his physical weakness regardless of his religion or ethnicity. The psychology of Umar ibn al-Khatib is a reflection of the psychology of the entire Arab nation in that it holds nothing but the feelings of nobility, the emotions of integrity and love for all people. The nation also takes pain for other nations pains as it pains for its own. The aforementioned emotions, as they were present in our historical experiences, we see them in our psychological formation in our twentieth century. Our contemporary Iraqi-Arab society, for example, shares the feelings of nobility, and high morals which Umar ibn al-Khatib felt toward the old and miserable man. For he who loves us we love him even more. And when we receive a bounty from others, we remain at pains, until we reciprocate it with a bigger bounty.

We, therefore, honor all the monotheistic religions and will not allow for their defamation. As for the earthy principle, we will only cling to the national principle, a principle without nations will not be able to form and states will not be able to devise its laws. On the same token, there are earthly principles and laws which carry the attributes of destruction, chaos, denial of the monotheistic religions and atheism, God forbids. Not only must we inhibit the spreading of such principles to our society, especially to our schools and other sacred educating arenas, we must forbid the shadow of these principles from reaching the aforementioned holy and sacred places. And if lessons and scholastic books are a tool to the formation of thought and guidance, history books take priority in guidance and educating. Even more important than the above factors are the psychology of the teacher. The psychology of the teacher, and what it holds of purposes and intentions, is the main point of our current topic. I am confident that all of you hold nothing in your heads but the purposes and hopes that moves side to side with the purposes of Iraq's big brother. The dignity of the younger siblings can only be realized with the dignity of

their elder brother, just as the dignity of the big brother can only be realized with the dignity of the entirety of the Arab countries. Therefore, if any of the Arab countries is harmed, God forbids, the big brother will, surely, be harmed as well. And if the big brother is harmed then such harm will surely fall unto his younger siblings.

From the above you see that the interests are united and the benefits are mutual. Therefore, we must strive to foster these interests and strengthen the resolve of these benefits to unite the goals, inclinations and beliefs. I shall visit your schools and shall be honored to shake your hands as your true brother. I am also ready to fulfill every need you may have so long as such needs correlates with achieving the mentioned hopes and sacred ends. For what is the benefit of teaching the histories of states and nations which does not share any tie or interest with us and are hundreds or thousands of miles away from us. These are our Goals: those who do not believe in them are not part of us.

An educational plan as this, therefore, will only result in the formation of inclinations and compassions, unto our youth, towards a nation by studying its history in micro detail. Inculcating inclinations and compassions, unto our youth, towards nations, peoples, and foreign countries which have no relation with ours will only lead the aforementioned youth away from the inclinations, goals and sanctities of the general population. This is the truest form of both contradiction and divisiveness. Therefore, we must not teach of the histories of the foreign nations but that which is needed by our youth in terms of education and general knowledge about the workings of the aforementioned foreign nations. No history should be taught in granular and pleasing manner but the history of the Arab nation. By the Arab nation I mean the history of all the Semitic waves. I beseech you in the name of the monotheistic religions, which calls for the promotion of virtues and which forbid the vices and which we all believe in; and I beseech you

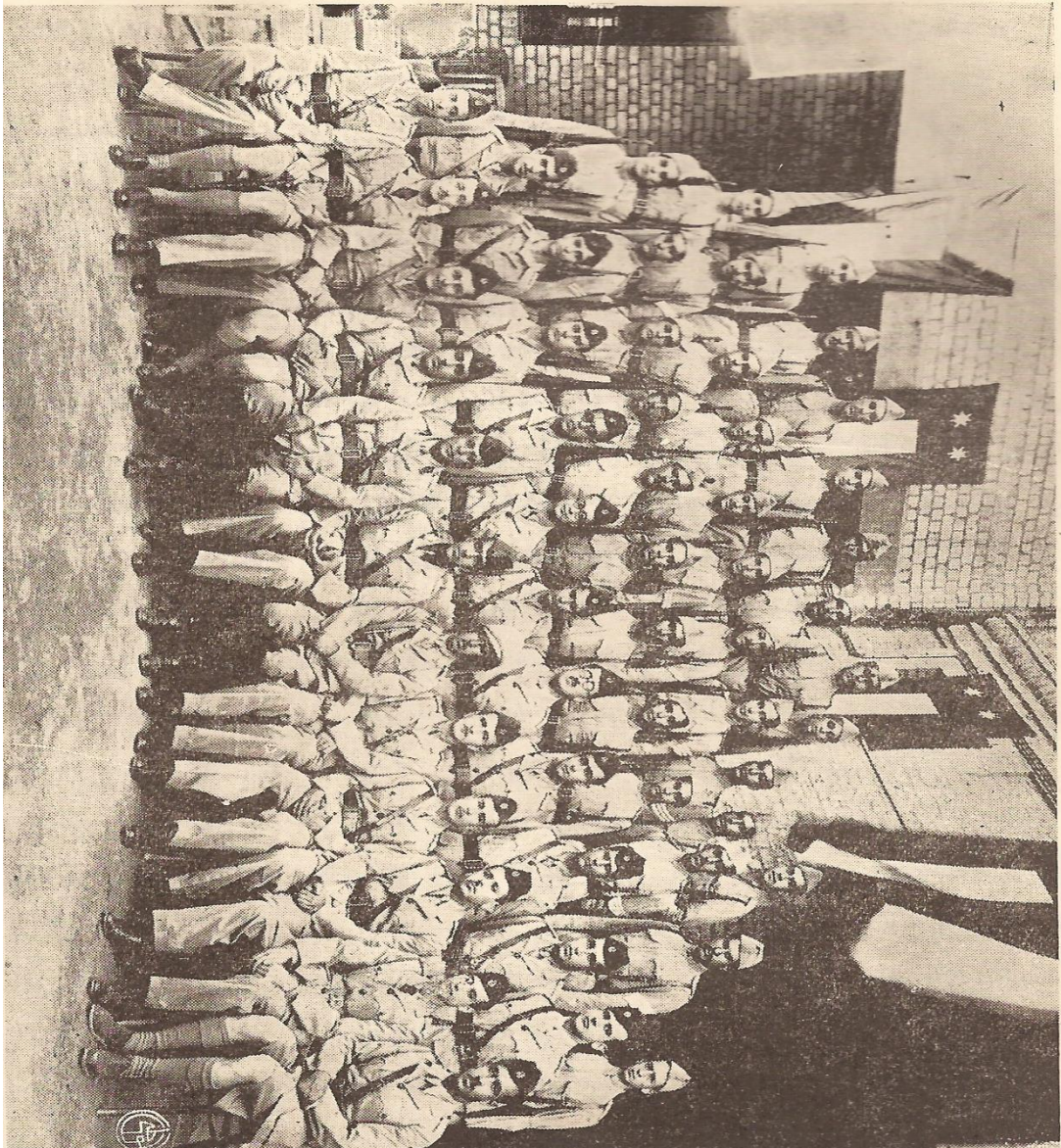
in the name of the public interest and mutual benefit to put our hands together and walk, in spiritual and psychological solidarity, towards our noble goal, which is the happiness of our society and its acquisition of love, affection, and brotherhood till eternity. Peace be upon you.

Our Schools Goals and the Foundations for Our Revival*

If we exclude Britain and America whose citizens mandate upon their governments their wills and, by default, their government are submissive to these wills; yes, if we exclude the above phenomena which the world has come to calling democracy we find that the rest of the nations peoples vary in their level of care for the abovementioned wills and that these nations rulers, who have a major say over their peoples' fortunes, can work miracles be it towards good or evil deeds. Each nation has its own special psychological attributes that overrides the many emotions and attributes that human beings, in general, share. The Germans, for example, are attributed with the spirit of soldiery, obedience and love of the disciplinary system. So if their reform would come via soldiery and the spirit of militarism then such reform would find a fertile ground for growth and prosperity. The same can be said about the Turks. Meanwhile, the French and other Latin nations, who are deeply fond of the arts, poetry and, who look sacredly upon women, if their revival would come via literature, poetry and a women's society then it will find a good stomach to digest such. The Indian and the Persian are religiously devout, therefore, if they want to revive their societies, in a speedy manner, they must first correct their religious leaders and their respective religious institutions. The Englishman main attributes, meanwhile, are his virtuous morals and personal integrity, and his revival can only be achieved from that angle. The Jew is fond of gold and cannot do without it and the Japanese is raised to hold sacred

* *al-Istiqlal* Newspaper said: I was united with the distinguished Dr. Sami Shawkat, the Director General of Education, in a meeting. The meeting's main conversation revolved around the topic of Arab nationalism, its hopes, its development and how it was formed. This topic gets hold of the doctor's emotions and he speak about it similar to the way a man of faith speaks about his strong principles. At that moment, you feel you are in the presence of one of the men of high ideals or you can call Dr. Sami what the late King Faisal used to, "the Idealist". I took the benefit, therefore, of sitting near him and asked him about what foundations should our schools be based upon and what is the goal these schools should seek. I have summarized his lengthy reply as follows:

the concept of fiery nationalism and to sacrificing his life in its sake; his revival, therefore, will arrive by nurturing this spirit and guide it towards a righteous path.



اساتذة الثانوية المركزية بلباس الفتوة في بناية الثانوية المركزية يتوسطهم
 حامى الفتوة الدكتور سامى شوكة ونائبه المقدم السيد محمود فاضل

The Central High School's teachers, in their al-Futuwwah uniforms. In the middle is the Protector of al-Futuwwah, Dr. Sami Shawkat and his assistant, Mr. Mohamed Fadhil.

The Arab main attributes, meanwhile, are in holding, steadfastly and proudly, to the virtues of his tribe and to boast about its dignity as he boasts about the positions of his father and ancestors. From that angle he shares the psychology of the English and his revival, therefore, will only come through the strengthening of his moral traits in the first place and the establishment for him of some high ideals which will be the guide for his psychology that cannot be guided by a military, economic, scientific or any other revival for that matter. His spirit and body will continue to be lost unless it sees the noble moral foundations dominating his society and have the final say over all other thoughts, principles and foundations. Only then will he flow like a flood or a ball of fire in support of the literary and materialistic revivals after he makes certain that his pure moral revival is complete. When such revivals occur, he will be able to take over half of the earth space in half a century spreading in his path justice, mercy and morality as he did during the seventh century when the world was led by Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, who were, truly, the biggest symbols of high morality. Our schools' formations and revival, therefore, must be based on the aforementioned foundations and it must strive to achieve the aforementioned sacred goal. Without such, we will continue to try and try until God wills.... And or until history, and that's inevitable, repeats itself....

Iraq Raises the Arab Youth: On the most correct of Foundations*

The official Iraqi government newspaper published a law article on the previous 15 of May known as (The System of al-Futuwwah and Boy Scouts). The newspaper defined the expected purpose of such system as follows: to teach the youth about the virtues of rough living, to bear the burden of any hardship, self-sacrifice, to inspire the spirit of militarism in youth, to nurture the values of manhood-knighthood and the many virtuous traits that would steam from the aforementioned.

The Iraqi Ministry of Education informed the educational headmasters of the provinces of its decision to place a plaque that reads (Toughen-Up: the life of luxury removes the blessings.) on all schools: be they secondary, high or elementary, the teachers house and the vocational school. The plaque must be placed at the main gate of the school (*al-Muqatam* reported on this at the time).

Furthermore, the Iraqi Ministry of Education instructed the schools headmasters to undertake a school ceremony in honor of the plaque placing. During the ceremony, the headmaster must gather all of the teachers and the students and the headmaster, then, along with any interested teachers and students should deliver lectures explaining the wisdom of the aforementioned honorable quote, which is derived from one of the Prophet's quotes, and how this quote can lead to a more moral individual and a society.

* The Egyptian newspaper, *al-Muqatam*, published this article via a journalist called, al-Farouqi.

The Iraqi Ministry of Education informed, in its letter to the regional educational heads, of its readiness to accept the aforementioned lectures in written form where it will then be published in the local newspapers. The ministry also asked the General Health Directory to help in this regards by directing its health schools to do the same. Based on the lectures, the al-Futuwwah, boy scouts and juveniles replaced their soft cloths, which they wore prior to the aforementioned Iraqi Ministry of Education directive, with the rough khaki attire. Those students, afterwards, refused to wear, inside and outside of the school, any attire but the attire of the al-Futuwwah and that of soldiery.

Before I divulge into this critical topic I must send my respect and praise to the Iraqi Ministry of Education for taking such practical step which will prepare the Arab youths a preparation that will equal with the sacred principles found in Islam and which the Prophet (Peace be Upon Him), his companions, and all of those who prepared the Arab nation towards such a transformation that have changed earth and the historical course of events encouraged. No doubt that the readers know that the history of the grand Islamic revival is full with such influential examples. When the Roman messenger, for example, went to see Umar ibn al-Khatib, May God be Pleased with Him, he found him a sleep, on the floor, with the sun blazing unto him. Upon seeing this the messenger said that a nation that possesses such a king cannot be defeated. Many contemporaries recall, especially the Iraqi heroes, that their colleague, General Aziz Ali Pasha was known, when he was a student at the Istanbul Military Academy, to sleep on an Iron bed that was without any sheets. Despite the cold of Farouq, when Aziz was asked regarding this he responded about what the Prophetic quote meant and told them that a soldier might face the reality of sitting or sleeping on an ice covered floor or on a long and barren sandy earth that burn the bodies.

Aziz Pasha had narrated to me that when he was leading a group of soldiers to fight some rebellious Bulgarians, he was forced alongside his troops to rest on huge swaths of land covered by ice. And the Ottoman troops, the sons of Romli, Anatolia and some cold locales used to fight people residing in extremely humid attitudes but they were able to cope because they were skilled in the art of rough living.

And when the Great War came and people witnessed how soldiers lived in trenches filled with water, snow and mud they realized that rough living is one of life's most essential habits. No nation can survive without this habit. Those nations, which do not acquire this habit, will surely face extinction.

Sociologists say that Europeans, during the early twentieth century, restored to organizing and installing physical sports, as a major society reform foundation, in all of the boys and girls schools so as to keep the body of the females free of weakness, which will cause a deterioration of their morals as is the case with the Persians, Romans and Arabs. For all of the above, the Iraqi Ministry of Education sought that by taking, encouraging, and publishing in the newspapers this step that it will guide the vision of the nation's youth towards the dangers of the new style of living.

Section Two

*al-Futuwwah or Youthfulness in Iraq, a Nationalist
Conception*

Introduction:

Nationalism is certainly not one conception. However, there are many objects, both tangible and non-tangible, as well as institutions, which are linked to the growth, interpretation, and meaning of nationalism across various nations. For example, in many European and non-European countries during the early decades of the twentieth century when nationalism became a formidable political and cultural force, the military became a key institution of their nationalisms. Those states emphasized in their public and educational lives militarism, the belief of a ruling-government or people that a nation-state must have a strong military and make sure to use it, both legally and illegally, when necessary, to maintain its power both at the national and global levels. These European and non-European military institutions were made of certain elite classes along with other common people being indoctrinated by various ideas of nationhood. Indeed, loyalty for the state and by implication for the country, was defined as a key element of this national being to be understood, learned, and lived with as a soldier, army officer, educator, or citizen. Moreover, other qualities, such as order, paramilitary training, and attire (in the case Japan), became inculcated in various school curricula.

However, no other category of people was targeted to be transformed into these loyal subjects as the youth of various countries were during this period. The youth were seen directly as the core subjects of both the military, and the imagined nation, who would be exemplary soldiers, officers, and citizen-subjects of their countries. As a matter of fact, according to the fascist state model of militaristic nationalism, the youth were inspired through various educational and other programs of training and indoctrination to be ready to sacrifice their lives, without any conditions, for their nations.

This realization of nationalism through militarism is most important to places like Iraq, which has a complex history of its youth, and their relationships to what can be called Iraqi nationalism, or for the sake of our discussions, Arab nationalism.

In the aftermath of the first World War and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, Arab nationalism became a key area of realpolitik in a Middle East dominated by various European colonial regimes, namely the British and French. Indeed, on 3 October 1932, Iraq, controlled formerly by the Ottomans but now under British protection, became the first of the Arab states to get full membership as an independent nation-state in the League of Nations. Although this act technically made Iraq independent from its previous status as a protectorate under the colonial indirect rule as part of the Mandate System 1921-1932, the country's foreign affairs continued to be controlled by imperial Britain.⁷ Following her independence, the ruling Hashemite Arab elites devoted more attention to the promotion and implementation of an Arab nationalist ideology to create a national identity for Iraq's heterogeneous population. No population were as central for the new Iraqi state in the implementation of such nationalist agenda than the youths of the country, educated now in the various reform nationalist programs, such as education, and above all in the military. This program of nationalist education implemented in Iraq's school system as well as the military was made of various individuals, groups, and ideologies.

⁷ Following World War I, the Allies (mainly Britain and France) gained control, under the auspices of the League of Nations, of the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire. The goal of the mandate administration was to set up state institutions, to train locals in administrative and future self-governing duties. Once those steps were done, the mandate administration would then recommend a given territory to be accepted to the League of Nations as an independent state. Until that time, power was to rest in the hands of the administrative system of one of the two major powers. Unlike Palestine and Syria, the mandate of Iraq, took a dual governing shape—The British-Hashemite. For a detailed description of the mandate system and its workings in the Arab territories see George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (Safety Harbor, FL: Simon Publications, 2001), 443-455.

Nationalism Through Education:

The nationalist educational program in Iraq was re-oriented anew by the British-backed Hashemite government to have the Arab nationalist ideology as its core. King Faisal I (r.1921-1933) brought the Syrian Pedagogue Sati al-Husri and appointed him as Iraq's first Director General of Education for that purpose. From 1921-1927, al-Husri, restructured both the elementary and secondary school curricula including giving special qualitative and quantitative attention to nationalistic themes and subjects, such as intensifying the teaching of Arab historical subjects, and Arabic language.

According to al-Husri, and following the nineteenth century German nationalist model (while rejecting its racial component), the Arab nation was viewed as a living unit, and like other nationalist thinkers in his day, he believed in its long historical existence even if Arabs were not aware of such existence. Language was emphasized as a key marker of Arab identity. Moreover, he put forward arguments that Arabs shared history, lineage, and geography. Arabic language and shared history were thus understood and defined as the main elements of the national identity of the newly created Iraqi state.⁸

With that in mind, the new curricula, sought to establish a common identity for Iraqis based on Arab culture, history and the standardization of Arabic over other locally spoken dialects, such as colloquial Arabic. al-Husri thought of other dialects as having a withering effect on the Arabic language as the core of Arab identity. He worked tirelessly to suppress other non-Arabic languages and non-standardized Arabic by diverting state funds from schools that sought to advance linguistic and or religious identities, such as Shi'ism, Christianity and Kurdish. His

⁸ Maher Charif, *Rihanat al-Nahda fi'l Fikr al-Arabi* (Damascus: Dar al-Mada, 2000), 204.

ultimate goal alongside his successors was the Arab literary awakening of the youth population of the country. He was able to use this nationalistic educational agenda to train a generation of Iraqi Arab youths who would later form the main military and political elite of Arab Iraq. Such elite would then lead Iraq in uniting the Arab countries, at least politically.⁹

By the third decade of the twentieth century, Arab nationalism, thanks in large part to the formation of a centralized and compulsory national education during the mandate years under al-Husri's auspices, became popular amongst the politically consciousness young Iraqis. Iraq became one of the main centers of Arab nationalism in the region. For example, after 1932, and with the existence of colonial rule over other Arab countries in the region, Iraq became the home of many Arab nationalists from Syria and Palestine.¹⁰ These other Arab elites coming to Iraq were integrated into the Iraqi state system including education, which expanded across the country, both in scholastic and public arena forms. Educationalist-nationalist anthems also expanded then.¹¹

As a matter of fact, Arab Iraqi nationalists, such as Sami Shawkat and Fadhil al-Jamali, succeeded al-Husri as director generals of education. They were both ideological pupils of al-Husri. They, al-Jamali at a much higher level, increased the Arab nationalist content in the history courses. They recruited more Syrian and Palestinian teachers. Those teachers were placed at various positions of power in the new educational system by serving as administrators,

⁹ Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 29. For more on al-Husri's nationalist thoughts see Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist* and Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 311-316.

¹⁰ Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq, 1932-1958: A Study in Iraqi Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 162.

¹¹ The nationalistic anthems were introduced during al-Husri's time as director-general of education. For the content of the anthem see Sati al-Husri, *Mudhakkirati fi al-Iraq*, vol. 1, 1921-1927 (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1967), 218.

teachers, and curriculum designers in all sectors of education in the new Iraq.¹² In the footsteps of al-Husri, they gave special focus to the teaching of history as a powerful nationalistic ideology. The goal of history, the teachers were told, was to deepen the love of the Arab nation, its glorious past, language, and cultures. As a result, local Iraqi issues, such as rights of the minorities, were minimized in the process. Legendry Islamic and pre-Islamic Arab heroes and of their services to Arabs became key figures of historical education. The list stretched from Muhammad as founder of the Arab nation to Iraq's founder, King Faisal I.¹³

Nationalism in Youth, and through Military:

By the mid-1930s, physical education of a paramilitary bent was also introduced into Iraqi schools. This phenomenon paralleled with the expansion of the army institution, in Iraq and many countries in western Europe, which viewed the army as the protector of both the nation-state and its socio-political doctrines and ideologies. Sami Shawkat in his capacity as Iraq's Director General of Education oversaw the establishment of the paramilitary youth movement (*al-Futuwwah*) within the Iraqi school system.

Sami Shawkat (1893-1987) hailed from a prominent Baghdadi family, whose members participated in Arab nationalist politics upon the formation of the Hashemite monarchy in the 1920s. His elder brother, Naji, twice served as prime minister and his younger brother, Sai'b, was a founding member of al-Muthanna Club in 1935— a Baghdad-based social club that gathered urban youth and intelligentsia of Arab nationalist orientation.¹⁴ In the same manner of

¹² Reeva S. Simon, "The Teaching of History in Iraq Before the Rashid Ali Coup of 1941," *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no.1 (1986): 40.

¹³ *Ibid*, 41.

¹⁴ For more detail about the working and debates of al-Muthanna Club, see Ja'far Abbas Humaydi, *Min Watha'iq al-Nawadi al-Qawmiyyah fi al-Iraq: al-Muthanna Ibn Harithah al-Shibani wa al-Ba'th al-Arabi* (Baghdad: Bayt al-Hikmah, 1998).

many of Hashemite Iraq politicians and military officers, Shawkat completed his higher education in Istanbul—graduating with a degree in medicine from Istanbul’s Medical-Military College in 1917. After serving in the Ottoman army and in the short-lived Hashemite government (under Faisal) in Damascus, he returned to Baghdad in 1920. For the duration of the mandate period, Shawkat worked in various health-related administrative positions: from Baghdad’s Health Inspector to the Director General of Health. During the early 1920s, alongside other Iraqi doctors, Shawkat pressured both the parliament and the British doctors to establish the first medical college in Baghdad, the Royal Medical College.¹⁵ As a health administrator, Shawkat enacted laws to “elevate the health standards in the land and to safeguard people from diseases” and he was instrumental in combatting the hashish and heroin addiction—products the British authorities, at the finance ministry, distributed to increase the revenues of the state.¹⁶

By the 1930s, Shawkat diverted his energies to Arab nationalism. al-Husri recommended to King Faisal I to appoint Shawkat as his successor to the post of Director General of Education in 1931. al-Husri was impressed with Shawkat’s occasional speeches on patriotic and Arab nationalist subjects, which would cement the Arab nationalist orientation both in Iraq’s school system and outside of it among the public.¹⁷

Shawkat’s Arab nationalist-educationalist thoughts emerged in the shape of public lectures to school youth and teachers, during and after his tenure as Director General of Education, and as nationalist speeches to Iraq and other Arab countries’ newspapers and to

¹⁵ According to Salem Damluji, the British doctors in Iraq and several members of parliament were concerned that Iraq did not have enough qualified students to warrant the establishment of a medical college. Salem Damluji, *al-Kuliyyah al-Tibiyyah al-Malakiyyah al-Iraqiyya: Min Khilal Sira Thatiyya*, vol. 1, 1940-1946 (Beirut: al-Mua’sasa al-Arabiyyah lil Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 2003), 125-126.

¹⁶ Ibid, 126.

¹⁷ Sati al-Husri, *Mudhakkarati fi al-Iraq*, vol. 2, 1927-1941 (Beirut: Dar al-Tali’ah, 1968), 114.

existing social clubs of Iraq during the 1930s. Shawkat, in conjunction with the Iraqi Ministry of Education, compiled and published, in Baghdad, those speeches in 1939 in book titled *Hadhihi Ahdafuna* (These are Our Goals). The lectures are divided under four sections. By summarizing and contextualizing the futuwah lectures, I seek to offer a counter-narrative to the dominant representation which sees the futuwah movement as a direct replica of the fascist youth movement in Europe then.¹⁸

The Futuwah or the Youth:

Shawkat's nationalistic program under the Futuwah or Youth Movement in Iraq had two main elements: the unity of the Arab nation, and the achievement of that by way of indoctrinating the youth. These are visible in several of Shawkat's lectures. The introduction of the factor of power or paramilitary training, in Shawkat's "The Craft of Death" speech, is fitting with the global context of military nationalism during the interwar period.¹⁹ Regimes, such as Mussolini's Italy and Hirohito's Japan, all had military nationalisms. Paramilitary training was required of all high school students in these and other countries. In 1935, it was a requirement in the Iraqi school system as well. The Iraqi military, patronized by the British, became in reality the dominant player in the country's affairs. Although it did not interfere in the daily workings of politics, it had power to question any government attitude towards any aspect of domestic or regional developments as it relates to issues concerning Arab nationalism, and its unity in the

¹⁸ These include: Stefan Wild's, "National Socialism in the Arab Near East between 1933 and 1939," *Die Welt des Islams* 25, no. 1-4 (1985), 136. and Simon's, "The Teaching," 37.

¹⁹ Shawkat, "The Craft of Death," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 5-7.

Middle East. This was not however a simple question of foreign policy as it is understood often in the historiography of Iraqi nationalism.²⁰

The role of military and nationalism through military service and military training was a vision informed by Iraq's historical and geographical identity as part of a pan-Arab nation. As such, the military encouraged the militarization of education for the establishment of an ordered society in its own visions of nationhood.²¹ But more importantly and given Iraq's independence, individual ideologues like Shawkat were also after producing trained national soldiers being ready and willing to sacrifice their lives for a grand fight of uniting the various Arab countries in the Middle East to recapture their glorious past as a powerful nation in the world.²²

Another goal behind the paramilitary training of the futuwah movement was the mental and physical improvement of the youth. In his speech, "The Elated Futuwah Goals: Uniting the Youth Clothing", Shawkat warned the youth of effeminate ways against their growth as loyal Arabs committed to Arab nationalism. Unlike previous generations, he argued that the contemporary youth should undergo character education, because of their increasing exposure to foreign ideas, such as western vices, such as amusements and entertainment, which he believed made the Iraqi youth and other Arabs morally, psychologically and physically weak. Military discipline and training, according to Shawkat, would reinstate the required manliness of the youth and reestablish the purity of familial and religious values defamed by the effeminate ways. Departing from that end, Shawkat defined the specific aims of the Futuwah system as follows: teaching the youth about how to live a rough life and to the endurance of difficulties, the

²⁰Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 43-44. For more on the role of the Iraqi military in politics, since the 1930s, see Mohammad Tarbush, *The Role of the Military in Politics: A case study of Iraq to 1941* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1982).

²¹ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 95.

²² Shawkat, "The Craft of Death," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 7 and "Toughen-Up," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 8-15.

instilling of military spirit and the traits of manhood, including chivalry, and the furthering the virtues of love of the system and of obedience. All of the above was supposed to be achieved via the promotion of military training.²³

Apart from strengthening their bodies, these trainings, with an established military ranks and attire, were meant to teach the youth to understand hierarchy, meaning loyalty to and obeying their commanding futuwah officers, parents, religion and ruler, and to love their nation and be willing to sacrifice their lives for its unity as their forefathers have done before in Arab history.

To support the above argument from a then modern perspective, Shawkat relied on the extension of physical educational training in Europe's schools, during the early parts of the twentieth century, to both improve the mental and psychological well-being of youth and to produce an obedient youth ready to serve for a higher ideal, mainly the nation.²⁴ In terms of attire and military drills and marches, the futuwah youth, as seen in the pictures in section one, clearly borrowed it from European trends of masculinity, boy scout movements and the paramilitary youth models.²⁵ The similarities of marches, and uniform attire, drew a direct comparison between the futuwah movement nationalism and the youth model nationalisms

²³ Shawkat, "The Elated Futuwah Goals," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 18 and "Iraq Raises the Arab Youth on the most correct of Foundations," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 32-34.

²⁴ Shawkat, "Iraq Raises the Arab Youth: On the most correct of Foundations," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 33. For the production of masculine European youth to meet the compulsory military service see George Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). Timothy Mitchell work on discipline, in the army and school in nineteenth century Egypt, to produce an obedient and well surveilled society is a useful reference here. See Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

²⁵ Najdat Safwat, *Khawatir wa-Ahadith fi al-Tarikh* (Baghdad, 1983), 226. Safwat, who participated in the futuwah movement, compared it to other European and East Asian youth movements of the time. Regrettably, I do not have any information about the specific training and exercises of the futuwah.

(particularly fascist ones) implemented in various military regimes of the European nations during this period.²⁶

al-futuwwah in Iraqi-Arab nationalism

Shawkat's futuwwah movement fell within a nationalistic framework in Iraq, which was a sort of military nationalism. Shawkat had several lectures around it. The main objective of the movement was the transformation of young Iraqi-Arab boys into soldiers committed to the cultural, historical, geographical, and national unity of the Arab nation. These youths had to learn to be ready to sacrifice their lives for Arab unity. In order to motivate and to underline the fighting spirit and endurance of the Iraqi Arab youth, Shawkat's lectures were made of both historical contents and political discourses. For example, old Arab-Islamic examples of warriors and leaders from Islamic history were exemplified. In "The Craft of Death", delivered in 1933 to a group of high school youths in Baghdad, Shawkat spoke about the Baghdad-based Abbasid Caliph, Harun al-Rashid, and how from his palace on the Tigris, and via many practitioners of soldiery, or craft of death, he was able to expand the Muslim Arab empire worldwide. This spirit of al-Rashid, Shawkat reminded the youth, should be a prime example for the young men of Iraq to perfect their paramilitary trainings as they did their general education. Their ultimate aim was defined as the army, which they had to join. According to Shawkat, this was necessary in order to reunite the Arab countries of the region under an independent Arab Hashemite Iraqi monarchy.²⁷

²⁶ Again, the major works which made the link between the futuwwah movement and fascist (Hitler Youth) movements were: Wild's "National Socialism in the Near Arab East," 136 and Simon's "The Teaching," 37. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to discuss or analyze such connections, I will look at them briefly in the conclusion.

²⁷ Shawkat, "The Craft of Death," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 7.

Several things are noticeable here, which are related to conceptualization of nationalism in Iraq during this period. First, Shawkat draws, what Anthony Smith called a line of common ancestry to support the legitimacy of a nation²⁸, historical comparisons between previous historical Arab warriors and his contemporary Arab leaders based in Iraq. For example, he viewed Iraq's Faisal as a successor to Caliph al-Rashid. It was however not just an appeal to the youth to view themselves and be inspired by a past example of a masculine Arab historical figure, such as Caliph al-Rashid. More importantly, Shawkat seems to have been thinking of an imaginative historical geography as well, such as Baghdad, the caliphate seat of al-Rashid. His imagination was to present Baghdad as a rallying center of Arab nationalism. Shawkat states that "we shall never deserve taking pride in al-Rashid or to call ourselves his successors if we do not restore what he built" in Baghdad, which was the center of political and culture powers in early Islamic civilization. Shawkat uses this as a clear example of reference to a specific Arab past, relating to a specific geographical place, Baghdad, to be pitched as a source of nationalistic thinking for the Iraqi futuwah youth.²⁹

However, historical imaginations of glorious pasts of the Arabs was a vast expansive topic in the mind of Shawkat, which is visible in his various futuwah lectures. For example, he talks about a story of such past in his "Toughen-up" lecture, which he delivered to a futuwah-unit gathering of Iraqi youth. He started his lecture with a tale of the conquest of Egypt during the 7th century by the Arab-Islamic warrior, Amr ibn al-As. During negotiations with the Byzantine delegation to deliver Egypt to the Arabs, Amr apparently gave an impression to the Byzantines that they were committed to take Egypt even if that means their demise. According to

²⁸ Smith, *National Identity*, 21.

²⁹ Shawkat, "The Craft of Death," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 7.

Shawkat, the Byzantine delegation reported back to the ruler of Egypt, al-Muqawqis, that Arabs were a race who favored death over life, had no earthy desires amongst themselves, and sat in the sand and ate from their knees. And there were no difference between the soldiers and commanders amongst them.³⁰ Although this is obviously an orientalist understanding and presentation, Shawkat used this tale to urge the futuwwah youth to raise their eyes and view those historical imaginations as examples for what is needed to reunify the Arab nation. Shawkat literally emphasized that it was time to replace those historical Arab heroes with heroes of the youth from futuwwah movement. The Iraqi army in the eyes of Shawkat was thus a composition of Arab youth who would function as leaders and warriors, who would be committed and informed of Arab pasts, and thus ready to fight and die for the sake of Arab unity as previous generations of Arabs have done in history. In short, in this lecture, he thought of the historical Arab warriors as a sacred generation among Arabs, who ought to be seen as role models by all Iraqi youths.³¹

Shawkat, to heighten the futuwwah morale about the glories of the Arab nation and why it's worth fighting for Arab unity, told the youth that the Arab nation's history did not start from the time of the Prophet. The history of the Arab nation is the history, Shawkat stressed, of the Semite-Arab nation/empires. From their migration to the Fertile Crescent, where Iraq is a part of, from the Arabian Peninsula, Semitic leaders such as Hammurabi of Babylon and Sargon of Akkad, helped establish today's civilization foundation's such as law, astrology, medicine and spread justice, happiness and brotherhood amongst the ruled. Those rulers and empires were the ancestors of the Abbasids and other Muslim-Arab dynasties whom enriched the world with their

³⁰ Shawkat, "Toughen-Up," *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid*, 14.

inventions and spread mercy and justice to those who they came to rule. The futuwah must come to admire and love those figures. This love can only be fostered by way of teaching the history of the mentioned Arab nation. The mentioned Arab-Islamic conquests and the Semitic empires expansion were viewed as a benevolent form of expansion (as they spread productive elements to the ruled such as language, justice, laws and medical advancements among other things) in contradiction to European forms of expansion during Shawkat's time. This hint was supposed to be an extra layer of motivation for the youth to reclaim the Arab nation and re-spread the virtuous attitudes and deeds of their ancestors, amongst those who are linguistically Arabs.

More than their minds, Shawkat was also after the bodies of the Iraqi youth, to be nationalized. For example, character formation, professional and public behaviors of the youth, and their overall appearance in society were all addressed. He argued that nothing could create these qualities of the youth than living a rough life and following military discipline. He said that discipline and living in tough situations were important historical and cultural qualities of the Arabs. For example, obedience for religion/god, the family, and ruler were viewed by Shawkat as important parcels of Arab and Islamic traditions. He thought that these qualities were in a state of deterioration by way of the mental and physical exposures of the Iraqi Arab youth to ways of western social and cultural vices. These qualities of Arab traditions, he argued, could only be reclaimed by military training and discipline. Such discipline, which shall penetrate society with time, will re-establish the chastity of the Arab-Islamic youth. Such discipline, argued Shawkat, must be accompanied by blind loyalty and obedience. For blind obedience by the younger generations of Arab youth toward their elders can ultimately make them ready in life, and thus

they will be able to face all sorts of physical and mental pressures. This way they would not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for their Arab nation.³²

These lectures of Shawkat were vital in many ways during the 1930s. They had serious consequences, which had legal, political, and educational implications for the entire country. Shortly after his “Toughen-Up” lecture, the government passed the Futuwwah Law. The law made paramilitary training for high school youth, compulsory.³³ However, apart from encouraging the militarization of education in terms of contents of curriculum, the military personnel stepped in to monitor the training. After the passage of the Conscription Law and the 1935 Futuwwah Law, military personnel were assigned in all high schools of Iraq to train and supervise the Iraqi youth in their paramilitary training. Salah al-Din al-Sabbagh, a military officer, was chiefly responsible for supervising and training the youth.³⁴

However, the implication of the futuwwah movement was not just limited to Iraq. It had regional implications among all Arab-speaking majority states in the region. As colonization of Palestine by the Zionist increased and the dismemberment of Syria by the French took place in the 1930s, the futuwwah was seen as a very important educational tool in order to unify Arab youth ideology, and make them prepared to fight for the Arab cause. Nevertheless, those regional events were not delinked from the implementation of futuwwah in Iraq because there were many Arab nationalist history teachers from all across Arab worlds in Iraq. Iraq was seen by these and other Arab nationalist individuals as the historical hub of the cultural and linguistic foundations for the Arab nation.

³² Shawkat, “The Elated Futuwwah Goals,” *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 17-20.

³³ Shawkat, “The Elated Futuwwah Goals,” *Hadhihi Ahdafuna*, 18.

³⁴ Safwat, *Khawatir*, 226. For details of his role in supervising the youth, see Salah al-Din al-Sabbagh, *Fursan al-Urubah fi al-Iraq* (Damascus: al-Shabab al-Arabi, 1956).

Appendix: Summaries of Futuwwah Six Main Lectures

1- “The Craft of Death”

- **Main argument:** No nation can achieve or retain its independence, and be free from colonial presence without the perfection of its youth of “Craft of Death”—the perfection of soldiery and its discipline. Put simply, it’s the production of military trained youth to join the army, which is the vanguard of the nation (p.5).
- Iraq, which is independent, with an expansive army, can unite the Arab countries, *under King Faisal, just as Faisal ancestor, Harun al-Rashid, did.*
- Nations (Ataturk’s Turkey and Mussolini’s Italy) produced such youth and, thus strong armies, which safely kept their independence and brought back those nation’s glorious past.
- Youth military training was restricted to Baghdad Central High for this lecture but, Shawkat argued, it will expand to all Iraq’s schools in next set of years.
- **Sum up:** *The introduction of military training into Iraqi schools (al-Futuwwah movement) will form young men, able and willing to sacrifice for Arab unity (p.5-7).*

2- “Toughen-up”

- **Main argument:** Shawkat enjoined the youth to look at past Islamic-Arab Warriors and how willingly they sacrificed their lives for the sake of Islam and spread of its Arabic word, as a result. He gave the example of the conquest of Egypt, and how the warriors were simple, full of humility, and sought only what’s enough to nourish them (*concept of rough living*). From the rank of Iraqi futuwwah, Shawkat argued, will emerge those who will replace the old warriors and reunite the Arabic-speaking lands. Death, for the sake of God, and such unity, is revered and welcome (p.8)

- **Main argument (2)** Shawkat hinted to the youth that unlike European imperial designs, the Arab conquests guided people to believe in God and bestowed upon them Arabic (which either became the language of the new territories or part of many East and Central East countries lexicon). They were also merciful and tolerate towards other non-Arab/Muslim subjects.
- **Sum up:** *futuwwah youth were directed to consider the early Arab-Muslim warriors as the exemplary model of military spirit, chivalry, humility and endurance.*

3- “The Elated Futuwwah Goals”

- **Main argument:** The Iraqi youth were psychologically and bodily weak due to the spread of western harmful forms of entertainment. Army training, with its discipline, hierarchy and uniform attire, would fix and restore proper manliness (along its non physical traits) and revive the chastity of the religion, society and traditions which were blemished by those form of entertainment. For that reason, and in this lecture, Shawkat described the Futuwwah system goal as “accustoming youth to rough living, and to enduring of sacrifices, the dissemination of military spirit, and the qualities of manliness, as well as chivalry, which entail qualities of love of the system and obedience.” (p.18)
- **Sum up:** *the military training would discipline the mind and the body, reintroduce manly virtues such as chivalry, endurance and sacrifice-- aspects which will create a youth who will be obedient of orders as they are of God and to live the rough live of their Arab ancestors. Loving the nation and its glorious past, in combination with the mentioned virtues, will lead to rise of the nation (p.8)*

4- “How We Ought to Be”

- A speech to the headmasters of Baghdad’s civil and foreign schools (1939)

- **Main argument:** From Hammurabi to Caliph Umar to Harun al-Rashid, those Semite-Arab empires and their rulers, settled in Fertile Crescent from Arabia, ruled over vast peoples. Those Semite empires of the Fertile Crescent established civilizational foundation's such as law, astrology, medicine and spread justice, happiness and brotherhood amongst the ruled. The succeeding Arab nation also spread happiness, love and brotherhood amongst their non-Arab population. These sort of empire, unlike others which distinguished between people and persecuted minorities.
- *Iraq, as part of the Fertile Crescent, and its youth must consider all the above peoples to be their ancestors and love them. The way to foster that love is by way of teaching the History of the Arab nation—which includes, according to Shawkat, the pre-Islamic Semite empires as predecessors to the Arabs.*(p. 22-23)

5- “Our Schools Goals”

- *The revival of any nation depends on the revival of that nation's specific psychological traits. The revival of the Arab nation, a key goal of the Iraqi school system, is the revival of the Arab personal integrity, loyalty to the tribe and his boastfulness about his tribe's dignity as he boasts about the past of his forefathers. Only such revival can meaningfully lead to the literary and materialistic revival of the Arabs* (p.31).

6- “Iraq raises the Arab Youth”

- Shawkat stressed the importance of ‘rough living’ aspect of the Futuwwah Law to students and teachers. (p.33)
- Shawkat gave historical and contemporary examples of how the ability to endure physical and mental difficulties, particularly in battles, allows nations to thrive.

- A side from physical-military education, and in literal keeping with 'rough living', the futuwah youth now will wear the rough military attire, throughout the day, to maintain the spirit of soldiery and help combat the mental deterioration caused by new values of the western city
- The experiences of WWI, forced the Europeans to include physical education classes to counter the moral and physical weakness of their youth.

Section Three

Conclusion

One of the main outcomes of this thesis was to bring again attention to the futuwah movement in Iraq during the interwar period. Some of the central objectives of the futuwah movement in the 1930s Iraq were to transform the youth, via paramilitary training either at the school system or elsewhere in the country, into becoming-soldiers who would be nationalized in ways to be ready to fight and die for the unity of the Arab nation. This program of indoctrination was carried out under the auspices of an independent Iraqi state, with its growing army institution. The program targeted both the physical and mental beings of Iraqi youths. Sami Shawkat was the main champion in this venture. He saw the Iraqi youths both in terms of body and mind, weak. He suggested that they needed to be disciplined in order to realize an imagined Arab nation. As this thesis has shown, Shawkat in due process relied for the implementation of his nationalistic agenda on various historical imaginations. He lectured the youth on various aspects of Arab origins and history referring to Arabs' glorious Semitic, Islamic-Arab warriors and to tales of spreading Arabism (via Islam) during the seventh century Islamic conquests. Also, he provided specific nationalistic geographical examples by presenting Baghdad as the center for the reclaiming of the Arab unity. He compared King Faisal of Iraq as the decedent of Abbasid caliph, al-Rashid. That example, as I tried to demonstrate, was meant to encourage the Iraqi futuwah to fight for the imaginary nation, as their common ancestor has done so before. In a way, thus, Shawkat, brought pan-Arab unity, that was theoretically extolled by Sati al-Husri in the school curriculum a decade prior, into a practical step, by way of preparing the youth to fight for the unity of the Arabs. And when Shawkat spoke of the Arab nation and its past glories, he made sure to include the Semites populations (Babylonians, Akkadians) of the Fertile Crescent and their humanistic achievements, as the ancestors to the Muslim-Arab peoples.

He suggested military training and discipline as the only ways to strengthen the body and the mind of the Iraqi youth, who Shawkat deemed as weak due to their exposure to city pleasures infected by various manifestations of western imperial colonialism. The immediate Iraqi-Arab nationalist and Arab world context, I argued, made the futuwwah movement a necessity. The increasing brutality of the colonizing powers in the Arab world, the Zionist colonization of Palestine, the establishment of Arab nationalist social clubs, such as al-Muthanna, and the Arabization of the school curricula by adherents of the pan-Arab ideology (including Palestinian intellectuals and teachers in Iraq's school), pressured the already then increasingly Arab nationalist army to push, albeit verbally, the Iraqi state, to use its formal independence, to take practical actions toward unity. At the same time, the army welcomed Shawkat's futuwwah program and dedicated, with the help of the state, some of their officers to oversee that the youth get a proper paramilitary training.

The futuwwah, as we saw, was also a byproduct of global context of masculine-nationalist modernity. During the 1930s, militarism became a key aspect of many nations and the former was viewed as vital institution (as in Turkey and Italy) for the up-keeping of these nations independence. As a result, paramilitary training was introduced.³⁵ However, the dominant narrative of al-futuwwah movement all but ignored the brutal consequences of global military nationalism. In its fixation to link al-futuwwah as an offshoot of the Hitler Youth, which was true in terms of marches, uniform of sorts and participation in the Berlin Youth Day of 1938 by a futuwwah delegation, the dominant narrative disregarded the possibility that Shawkat could have based his movement on an ancient form of the futuwwah clubs.³⁶ Historian Marshall Hodgson,

³⁵ Although he correctly referenced Ataturk's Turkey and its military prowess, Shawkat was wrong to suggest that the latter instituted paramilitary training in its schools.

³⁶ Wild, "National Socialism in the Near Arab East," 136. Gilbert Achcar debunked the link that the participation of the Iraqi futuwwah at the 1938 Hitler Youth parade as a link to fascism by stating the

for example, indicate the presence of futuwwah men's club organizations, in many Arab towns in the East during the late Abbasid era. Those groups were formed mostly from youth of the lower class elements of society and shared, with the modern futuwwah movement in Iraq, a uniform attire, physical discipline and organization, obedience to a hierarchy of commanding chain, and a healthy degree of military discipline—which at time was used to protect the town in case of a collapse of the social order.³⁷In the same breath, and during the time of Caliph al-Nasir, the futuwwah clubs were institutionalized in an effort to reclaim the central authority of the state in Baghdad.³⁸More studies linking or establishing a link between Shawkat's futuwwah and the decentralized futuwwah clubs of the late Abbasid era (including the institutionalized version of these clubs under al-Nasir) is, thus, needed.

participation of American and British youth movements at the event. Gilbert Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2010), 86.

³⁷ Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 126-131 and 279-283.

³⁸ For more on futuwwah at the time of al-Nasir, see Mohsen Zakeri, "The *futuwwa*- "Houses" at the Times of Caliph al-Nasir: A Few Notes," *Hallesche Beitrage zur Orientwissenschaft* 25, no.1 (1998): 222-237 and Umar al-Dusuqi, *al-Futuwwah inda al-Arab*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Nahdat Misr, 1959).

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