Progressive Education, Modern Schools and Egyptian Teachers: 1922-1956

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St. Antony's College

Trinity Term 2023

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of History

The University of Oxford

In Loving Memory of Laura Laurella (1921-2020)

Ballet instructor, adopted grandmother, and the greatest teacher I ever had

Acknowledgements

If I were to conjure a tale about how this dissertation was written in my stars, it would begin with the apartment where I grew up in Cairo, which was fatefully located at the intersection between Taha Husayn and Muhammad Anis streets; the first referring to the famous former Minister of Education and the latter to the leftist Egyptian historian. This happy coincidence would have served as the building block in the story of how, from the beginning, I was meant to write a thesis about the history of progressive education in Egypt.

Whether or not fate was at play, it is not the stars to which I feel indebted. As the saying goes, "it takes a village", and for this dissertation to see light, I was lucky to have the support of a loving, encouraging and diverse village to whom I am deeply grateful.

This dissertation is about the history of teachers and their contribution to pedagogical thought in Egypt. This is not a coincidence. I have been lucky to have encountered marvelous teachers throughout my life who have awakened my intellectual curiosity and shaped the person I am today—among them my first history teacher, Dieter Grosch. The dissertation has been written with them in mind.

I am particularly indebted to my supervisor, James McDougall, whose incessant support and encouragement has been incredible. His brilliant and piercing insights always gave me a new lens through which to reexamine my own work. Without his patience, humour and outstanding advice, this thesis would have never seen light.

I am also grateful to Catherine Sloan for believing in my work and for introducing me to a host of relevant networks and sources. I owe special thanks to the History of Childhood Centre at Oxford, and specifically to Sian Pooley, Kathryn Glydle, Christina de Bellaigue and Irem Yildiz for giving me the opportunity to serve as the graduate representative of the

history of childhood steering committee and to share my work with this wonderful network. In the midst of pandemic blues, the centre became my lifeline and I am forever grateful for their presence and their words of encouragement.

The truth is that I was lucky to have the support of not one, but two academic centres at Oxford: The Middle East Centre at St. Antony's college graciously welcomed me back after an eight-year hiatus. I am thankful to Eugene Rogan, Walter Armbrust, Michael Willis, Susann Kassem and Nate George.

I am also particularly grateful to everyone at St. Antony's College and at the History Faculty: my college advisor Michael Fradley who patiently listened to my updates and shared his insights, the St. Antony's Registry team especially Thea Teasdale and Lesley Collins, and of course Joe Shepherd, Maya Blackwell, and Avalon Floyd from the History faculty graduate office for enduring my emails and always providing assistance and advice. A special thank you goes out to our wonderful porters at St. Antony's College: Malcolm Tyrrell, Paula Higa, Maxwell Mushumba, and Andrew Colquhoun. My DPhil has been graciously supported by the Oxford-Sheikh Al-Maktoum Scholarship without which I could have never undertaken this journey.

I am also indebted to the teachers-turned colleagues at my alma mater, the American University in Cairo, who supported me throughout this journey. A special thank you to Abdel Aziz Ezzelarab, Pascale Ghazaleh, Michael Reimer, Hanan Kholoussy, Sherine Emad and Nevien Morsy.

As one among hundreds of unlucky graduate students who are routinely denied entry to the Egyptian National Archives, the research for this dissertation would have been impossible had it not been for the kindness of complete strangers who magically came to my rescue.

I am particularly indebted to three brilliant and generous booksellers: Muhammad Sayyid Ibrahim, Samir Muhammad and Husayn al Rashidi who helped me find the majority of the sources for this dissertation. I am also grateful to Mahmoud Karim and Rania Abdallah who went out of their way to photocopy materials from the University of Asiyut and deliver them to Cairo even though they had never met me before. I have been humbled by their kindness. I owe special thanks to Hoda el Sadda and Ola Essam from the Women and Memory Forum, Leah Johnston at the UCL Special Collections Library, Ikram Noshi at the Ramsis Wisa Wasif Art Centre in Haraniyya, Malcolm Madden at Chatham House Library, Alex Duthie at the British Psychological Society Archives, Alexandre Coutelle at UNESCO Library, Mr. Muhammad at the Ministry of Education Archive and all the staff at Dar al-Kutub and at the National Archives in London. I am also grateful to Nada Yassen, Mostafa Taha, Stephen Urgola and Ola Seif from the Rare Books and Special Collections Library at AUC for helping me locate invaluable material for my dissertation. I must also thank Professor Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali who welcomed me into his office despite his illness and shared his insights with me.

I have also been tremendously lucky to have a dynamic and supportive academic network of friends and colleagues who have been gracious and patient enough to read through earlier manuscripts of my work, engage in conversations about my arguments and challenge my ideas. I am particularly grateful to the Political Economy and Culture Reading group, specifically Juan Neves-Sarriegui, Peter Hill, Chihab el Khashab and Marilyn Booth for always pushing me forward and coming to my rescue. I am also grateful to Laura Tisdall, Katy Phipps, Olga Verlato, Mezna Qato, Susanna Furgeson, Faridah Zaman, Nader Andrawos, Hussam Ahmed, Anne Clement, Mai al-Khamissi, Ifdal Elsaket, Hala Osman, Andres Giut, Amr Leheta, Heba ElSherif, Yasmine Shash, Malak Labib, Mireille El Magrissy, Omar Cheta, Hani Sayed, Hussein al-Haj, Muhammad Yehia, Ingy

Ghali, Laila Marei, Zeina Morad and my constant supporters Ali Atef and Hana Shahin for their ideas and their comments. I owe special thanks to the late Nourhan Nassar for generously sharing her sources with me a mere few months before her untimely passing. I will forever remember her kindness and generosity. I am also indebted to my Oxford friends whose support has incessantly pushed me forward: Emilie Curryova, Shamara Wettimuny, May Tamim, Neha Shah, Christel Zunneberg, Jessica Anania, Angelo Marcelo Vasco, Tommy Lo, Matthew Lau, Temitope Ajileye, Pegah Zohuri, Kira Allman and Tania Saeed.

I am grateful to my incredible family for their support. My dearest parents Myra and Mounir's unconditional love and encouragement has been the butter to my bread. I thank them in particular for enduring my ever-growing invasive book collection and my frustrations. My aunt, Carol and my grandmother Nabila have been an immense source of encouragement throughout this journey alongside my dear relative Farida Hanna.
This dissertation is also dedicated to my guardian angels who are no longer with us: my three grandmothers—Louise, Ginette and Laura—my beloved grandfather Ramzy, and my dear uncle Fadel. I hope they are proud of me. Finally, I am indebted to my backbone and cherished confidantes: My sister Malak and my beloved life partner Sameeh. No words can adequately describe my gratitude. I hope they know that none of this could have been written without them.

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Note on Transliterations and Archives

My request to access the Egyptian National Archives was denied in 2019. I have therefore had to rely on alternatives including the Women and Memory Forum (WMF), the Egyptian Ministry of Education's Museum-Archive, the National Archives in London, the Archives of the New Education Fellowship at the Institute of Education UCL, the Egyptian National Library, The American University in Cairo Rare Books and Special Collections Library, the National Institute for Educational Research and Development Library, and the kindness and ingenuity of a few backstreet booksellers at the Saturday book market in Cairo.

All Arabic names and nouns have been transliterated as per the guidelines set by the International Journal of Modern Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES) with the exception of notable historical figures (e.g., Gamal Abdel Nasser), and when referencing works left behind in English by the dissertation's historical interlocutors.

The names of the interviewees from the WMF oral narrative collection have been abbreviated in compliance with the center's privacy and publishing policies.

Abstract

This dissertation sets out to understand how and why progressive education was adopted in Egypt between 1922 and 1956 by focusing on the lives, experiences and contributions of Egyptian pre-University public schoolteachers. It traces practicing teachers and more senior pedagogues from their initial training, to the first encounter with real-life classrooms, to their active engagement within syndicates and associations, in an attempt to historicise the formation of a professional identity. Progressive education is the thread that weaves these different professional and life episodes together, it therefore occupies a central and pivotal role in the project precisely because it was a pedagogical movement that many teachers believed in. Since the project tells the story of the emergence of a professional identity, it is divided into three parts that follow teachers at their institutions: *Tadrib* (training), *Tadris* (teaching), and *Tanzim* (organizing and advocacy).

The dissertation argues that progressive education allowed senior pedagogues and teacher trainers to engage with the latest academic research in the field of pedagogy and was therefore intellectually appealing to them. Given its emphasis on freedom and independence, it also allowed ordinary practicing teachers to advance a democratic project that was part of their anti-colonial struggle. Finally, calling for progressive education was a way to demand better salaries and to draw attention to teachers' disadvantaged socio-economic situation.

In adopting a teacher-centric approach, the project proposes what cinematographers refer to as a *reverse* angle shot: From the standpoint of the actors themselves, teachers and their pedagogical ideas—such as progressive education—become the entry point to the history of education rather than nationalism, religion or state-formation. In other words, teachers become the main historical interlocutors. This project therefore moves beyond

approaches that treat Egypt's education system as a mere by-product of nation building, thereby uncovering a much more dynamic and rich pedagogical landscape operating in Egypt in the early 20th century.

Long Abstract

On February 27th, 1945 *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya* (The Association of Graduates of the Institute of Education) organised a large conference titled "The Methods of New Education" in Cairo, Egypt. The conference lasted for three days and was attended by hundreds of teachers, Ministry advisors and high-level bureaucrats. Also present were key members of *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (The New Education Fellowship). In the first session, a sub-committee of conference organisers presented their assessment of the state of education at the time and charted ways to adopt progressive practices moving forward:

> It is only fair that we acknowledge that there have been genuine attempts to adopt the methods of the new [progressive] education in our education system. The recent emphasis on school activities (…) school trips, and the use of cinema and radio are a testament to this development. But we regret that the majority of these attempts have been cosmetic (…) they have not ushered in the true spirit of progressive education in our schools.[1]

The conference title, the content of its sessions and the name of the associations that were present, suggest that what historians of education refer to as 'progressive' or 'new' education was alive and well in 1940s Egypt. Such an observation however leaves us with more questions than answers. Who were these pedagogues promoting progressive education, what kind of progressive methods were they interested in, and why did they adopt them?

This dissertation suggests answers to the above questions by focusing on the lives, experiences and contributions of Egyptian teachers between 1922 and 1956. It traces different groups of teachers along their professional trajectory beginning with their initial training, to their teaching practices within schools and ends with an account of their activism within syndicates and associations.

[1] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1945), 41.

Through this 'reverse angle shot' which explores the history of education from the standpoint of the actors most intimately linked to the education process, pedagogical ideas such as progressive education become the entry point to the history of education rather than nationalism, religion or state-formation. Teachers and their experiences become the main protagonists, and the most important interlocutors. If we (as historians looking at the history of education) reduce education and the richness of the intellectual debate behind it to an expression of larger nation-building processes alone, we are deprived of thinking about the ideas themselves and about the actors advancing them. This thesis therefore moves beyond approaches that treat Egypt's education system as a mere by-product of nation building, or which views teachers as nationalists first, and teachers second. In so doing, the thesis uncovers, via an exploration of progressive education, a much more dynamic and rich pedagogical landscape operating in Egypt in the early 20th century than has generally been recognised.

My emphasis on teachers is reflected in the dissertation's structure which follows the professional cycle of the average teacher as they move between three different modes: training, teaching, and activism.

The introductory chapter provides three crucial contexts. First, it contextualizes Egypt of the interwar period to highlight the socio-political framework under which Egyptian teachers were operating. It also discusses the complications of finding an appropriate definition for progressive education suggesting the use of psychology as the marker to differentiate early 20th century progressive ideas from other pedagogical trends. As such, it shows how an interest in, indeed an obsession with psychology, came to dominate pedagogical thought and to pose new questions about how best to teach. Lastly, the introduction examines the reasons for the historiography's silences on to the history of Egyptian progressive thought and proposes new ways of engaging with the sources in a

manner that both address such silences in the scholarship while being mindful of the richness of the intellectual pedagogical debate in early 20th century Egypt.

My aim is to go beyond a simple mapping exercise; I am far more interested in asking *why* Egyptian teachers and senior pedagogues adopted progressive practices than just to demonstrate that they did so. The more obvious answer to this question would explain this by way of a centre-periphery dynamic in which a British pedagogical centre influenced actors operating in Egypt within a diffusionist relationship. In other words, Egyptian pedagogues adopted 'British' progressive education because of Britain's cultural, political and economic hegemony over Egypt at the time. While the country's semi-colonial context certainly allows for this argument to be made, a closer look at the writings of Egyptian teachers suggests a slightly different reading. Consequently, each of the following parts of the dissertation is meant to introduce reasons why Egyptian teachers adopted progressive education that go beyond the more obvious dynamics of colonial power.

Part I of the dissertation *Tadrib* (Training) is concerned with how teachers were trained in the early 20th century and consists of two chapters. The first explores the history of teacher training facilities and the professional trajectory of practicing teachers and senior pedagogues through an analysis of conference reports, institutional publications and the press. It argues that a history of progressive teacher training facilities is incomplete if not brought into conversation with the history of academic psychology. In other words, the progressivism advanced by Egyptian pedagogues of the early 20th century was ideologically tied to the nascent field of psychology so much so that trainers employed by such institutions were normally trained in psychology.

The second chapter in *Tadrib* analyses the pedagogical curriculum which was taught at these institutions using teacher training manuals, pedagogy textbooks and journal

articles published by the leading trainers at the time. It argues that progressive trainers were able to develop a distinct philosophy of education which was based on what I refer to as 'Middle Ground Psychology', an approach which sought to tread a fine line between Freudian psychoanalysis, on the one hand, and developmental psychology, on the other, all while being extremely critical of behaviourism. Collectively, both chapters demonstrate that progressive education was popular because it was intellectually appealing since its model of psychology lent itself to experimentation and gave teachers freedom in their classroom. Given its call to experimentation and its internal contractions, it allowed Egyptian educators to produce and experiment with ideas as committed, serious, and active co-creators in a global analytic tradition of progressivism. By employing an institutionally conscious approach that examines the multiplicity of actors involved in the process of knowledge production, we can begin to understand Egyptian pedagogues not as blind imitators of international ideas but as active contributors to a growing field of pedagogy studies within their institutions. Within the vast field of progressive education, Egyptians were able to carry out intelligence tests, psychological experiments, and engage with an academic tradition as equals.

We can therefore understand Egyptian educators not merely as objects of analysis who were docile recipients of an Anglo-American theory of progressive education, but as active co-creators of progressivism who were intellectually curious and interested in the academic debates that this movement had to offer.

In Part II *Tadris* (Teaching), the dissertation moves from teacher training institutions and follows teachers as they set foot inside public schools. In the absence of a concrete archive left behind by ordinary practicing teachers, this part of the dissertation attempts to re-create the material, institutional social and professional contexts of an average teacher using a combination of ministerial reports, textbooks, examination

booklets as well as the pedagogy press. The first chapter explores the structural impediments to the application of progressive practices in Egypt's public schooling system. It discusses issues of centralisation, budgetary restrictions and the pedagogical failures of progressivism in other geographies to understand the reasons behind progressivism's modest implementation in Egypt arguing that many of these disadvantageous features plaguing the education system were perceived as 'residues' from the British occupation.

As for the second chapter, it discusses different experiments in progressivism including the successful introduction of school activities, the establishment of experimental classrooms, and the application of certain progressive methods despite the system's impediments. Through these playful acts of 'experimentation' teachers could resist the boundaries imposed on them by the education system and create languages of possibility for their students and for society as a whole. The sources used for this chapter suggest that teachers saw progressive education as a grossly important experimental project in democracy. With its utopian ideals of freedom and its promise to take care of children's individual needs, it foregrounded a blueprint for the training of children in democracy and independence. In other words, the movement's promise of a brighter and fairer democratic future encouraged teachers to at least try to implement progressive methods even when all odds were against them.

Finally, Part III of the project, *Tanzim* (Activism/Organizing), follows teachers as they actively and collectively organized to build syndicates, associations, networks and alliances to defend the rights of their profession and simultaneously call for the implementation of progressive education.

The first chapter discusses the emergence of teachers' associations and syndicates such *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (The New

Education Fellowship). The few historians to have discussed teacher activism in the historiography assume a certain dichotomy between groups that put forward an economic rights-based agenda and called for better pay and treatment, on the one hand, and groups that were academically interested in progressive education, on the other. By contrast, using reports about these associations and their internal minutes of meeting, the chapter demonstrates that while some networks were most certainly more vocal in their defence of teachers' socio-economic rights, the majority of teachers' associations were advocates of improved economic conditions even when they did not articulate such ideas directly. By calling for progressive education, teachers could indirectly lay claim to financial and social compensation and command the respect of society since progressive education, by design, necessitates enormous skills, training and knowledge. Even the most 'subdued' groups used progressive education to advance teachers' standing in society.

The second chapter explores the relationship between progressive pedagogues and the press suggesting that an active engagement with the public via the press was an important arm of their activism. The chapter looks at the particular relationship between some of Egypt's top pedagogues and *Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr* (The Committee of Authorship, Translation and Publishing) a Cairo-based publishing house which published hundreds of books on progressive pedagogy and psychology. It demonstrates how pedagogues were able to shape the pedagogical discourse through this direct relationship by leaving behind a rich publishing trail that included their own research as well as translations of important pedagogical texts into Arabic. While senior teacher trainers (and some practicing teachers) were able to dynamically dictate the parameters of the debate on education until 1952, things began to change once the Free Officer regime was established. During the early Nasser period, progressive education continued to play an important role in public discourse despite the sudden regime change—at least initially. This is primarily

due to the fact that the regime's initial years came with promises of a bright and democratic future. It was therefore natural for progressive educators to align themselves with the new order. However, the chapter also demonstrates how this initial period of optimism was followed by the gradual disappearance of magazines and the ultimate control over pedagogical discourse during the second half of the 1950s as power was consolidated in the hands of Nasser. Many progressive pedagogues were able to adapt to these changing conditions because of the malleability of progressive education which allowed them to pick and choose facets of their philosophy and practices that were most attuned to the new regime's discourses and preferences.

Introduction

Over a period of six months in 2004, Rania ‘Abd al-Rahman, Assistant Professor of English Literature at Cairo University conducted interviews with more than twenty retired female schoolteachers. The interviews were part of a project launched by the Women and Memory Forum (WMF) of which she is a founding member, titled: The Women’s Pioneer Collection. Echoing the broader mission statement of the WMF, these interviews aimed to bring to light the often-silenced histories of Egyptian women and the role they played in the making of modern Egypt.

In reading the transcripts of these interviews one is immediately struck by the interviewees’ vision and depth of perception. One also quickly realizes that they were extremely well versed in the pedagogical theories of their day. When ‘Abd al-Rahman asks a teacher by the name of M.K. about what she remembers wanting to teach her students, K. quickly replies:

> You mean other than play and activities? Well, that’s it, really. I wanted to encourage play, and outings, and school trips. You know children don’t have to go on a trip, they can simply visit the florist or the grocer next door. (…) Leaving school is always a joyous occasion for children and it’s also educational because they learn how to cross the street, observe the pavement, how the butcher prepares his meat, and how the police do their work.[2]

M.K. became a teacher in the late 1940s. What I find most intriguing in her interview is her answer to a question about the consequences of *not* introducing methods such as play, activities and excursions in the curriculum. Her response is categorical and certain: “Of course, (…) there won’t be free and independent thought because when you allow children to choose, there is freedom and independence, children love freedom and independence and they often don’t experience them in their homes or their schools.”[3]

[2] K., M. Interview by Rania Abdel Rahman. Transcript, n.d. Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women’s Oral History, The Women and Memory Forum.
[3] Ibid.

This was not the first time I had come across such pedagogical ideas. My first encounter with a historical document containing similar notions about the importance of activities, school trips and critical thinking skills was in 2009 when I purchased a teacher training manual first published in 1928 and titled *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris* (The Origins of Education and the Art of Teaching). Unbeknownst to me at the time, the book echoed what historians of education today refer to as 'progressive' or 'new' education—an intellectual movement which emerged in the late 19th century and became popular around the world in the early 20th century. This dissertation examines the propagation of progressive education in pre-university public education in Egypt between 1922 and 1956 by focusing the lives, experiences and practices of Egyptian teachers. It seeks to highlight the contributions of teachers like M.K, and Amin Mursi Qandil, the author of the above-mentioned teacher training manual (and the many others like them) who were active contributors to a transnational movement of progressive education during the first half of the 20th century.

Defining Progressive Education

The term 'progressive education' is difficult to define. Various historians have identified it as a pedagogical movement emerging sometime in the late 19th century in response to the austere pedagogical methods practiced in the nascent national schooling systems in Britain and North America.[4] Such definitions usually trace the movement to the intellectual contributions of British philosopher Herbert Spencer, American psychologist and pedagogue John Dewey, or Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget who critiqued education

[4] See Raymond Allen Morrow and Carlos Alberto Torres, *Social Theory and Education : A Critique of Theories of Social and Cultural Reproduction*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp.290-291.

for its excessive reliance on rote memorization, its hierarchical methods of instruction, and the centrality of outdated curricula to the learning process. However, in the preface of his seminal work, the *Transformation of the School*, America's most prominent historian of progressive education, Lawrence Cremin, famously admits that his reader will "search in vain for any capsule definition of progressive education."[5] Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the term was coined in the 1960s and 1970s by some of the movement's famous historians including Cremin and was applied retroactively to the interwar period.[6] In fact, in most cases, including that of Egypt and Britain (not the United States where a Society of Progressive Education was founded in 1919)[7], these methods were termed by the many interwar educators who adopted them "New"/Modern rather than progressive. Yet, this is not purely a question of semantics and indeed, throughout this dissertation, I will be using the analytic categories 'new' and 'progressive' interchangeably. The more serious problem is the plurality of often competing visions, methodologies and political inclinations which have traditionally been lumped under the term progressive education. While Cremin maintains that this very plurality was a tenet of the movement in North America since "its (…) practitioners had taken great pride in its diversity," more often than not, it has resulted in confusion and a blurred sense of what the term really means and which pedagogical methods and ideas belong to it.[8] Consequently, there are multiple ways in which these pedagogical trends can be classified.

One way of making sense of progressive education is to excavate its 'lineage', by pursuing a sort of genealogical exercise, which identifies founding texts, leading thinkers

[5] Lawrence A Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Knopf, 1961).
[6] Shaul Bar-Haim, "The Liberal Playground: Susan Isaacs, Psychoanalysis and Progressive Education in the Interwar Era," *History of the Human Sciences* 30, no. 1 (2017): 94.
[7] See for examplePatricia Graham, "A History of the Progressive Education Association, 1919-1955" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1964).
[8] Randall Law, "Humanity's Workshops: Progressive Education in Russia and the Soviet Union, 1856–1927" PhD diss., (Georgetown University, 2001), 11.

and important practices from the 18th century linking them to their 20th century "equivalent." This approach usually considers as progressive all 20th century pedagogical movements that draw—or claim to draw—inspiration from 18th and 19th century 'founding fathers' of progressivism. Many studies of the history of progressive education have followed this logic. For example, while the first chapter of Randall Law's extensive dissertation on progressive education in the Soviet Union proposes a working definition of progressivism that is loosely based on Deweyan thought, it also contains a genealogy of progressivism which traces such ideas back to a number of distinct Russian and Western thinkers from the late 18th and early 19th century most notably Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel among others. Randall also mentions the rise of certain institutions and the influence of the modern sciences as part of this genealogical exploration. However, his particular framing which centres a progressive intellectual genealogy has two underlying implications. First, there is a sense that 20th century progressive pedagogy can lay claim to progressivism insofar as it can trace its own ideas back to the founding fathers of the 18th and 19th centuries. In other words, being a part of this intellectual and pedagogical lineage is *the* marker of progressivism. Second, it implies that 20th century pedagogical practices that are not considered 'progressive' either deviated from their heritage by developing radically opposing approaches or that they must trace their lineage to a different set of thinkers altogether.

Another way to demarcate early 20th century progressive education from non-progressive education would be to take its followers' word for it. That is, to deem thinkers, pedagogues and teachers as progressive if they consider themselves followers of this tradition. While both approaches can be useful, they are not very well suited to the Egyptian context and to the particular ways in which progressivism developed in early 20th century Egypt and indeed they may not be useful for other geographies. The first approach

is problematic because as any intellectual historian of education will note, today's schools, whether considered 'progressive' or not, can trace every aspect of their operations, raison d'être and function to the same set of founding fathers cherished by progressives. Just as Froebel has been praised by progressives for his encouragement of self-activity, games, and children's freedom, those considered by progressives as traditionalists must also thank him for the propagation of the standardised kindergarten model and its adoption by every schooling system around the world.[9] As for the second approach, it cannot account for the oftentimes contradictory ideas and practices that operate side by side under the same umbrella of progressivism. If we only take progressive pedagogues' word for it, we will be left with a diluted sense of what progressivism is given the great diversity within the movement. How does one make sense of a movement which calls for the complete eradication of hierarchy within the school on the one hand, and simultaneously champions meticulous and highly rigid tailored programmes for children, on the other? In other words, who are progressive pedagogues exactly?

To overcome such dilemmas, this dissertation proposes to use modern psychology as *the* marker for a definition of progressive education in Egypt as well as other geographies. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, an understanding of progressive education's rootedness in psychology allows us to recognise in spaces in which it has remained invisible. For now, it suffices to say that progressive education had something to do with knowledge emerging from the field of psychology, that it offered playfulness, and emphasized critical thinking skills and that many teachers like M.K. believed these methods to be central to the establishment of a sound and modern education system. Gone were the days of rote memorization, dull learning and violence in the classroom as early

[9] Friedrich Froebel, *The Education of Man*, trans. W.N. Hailmann, (New York: Appleton, 1887.); Friedrich Fröbel, *Froebel's Letters on the Kindergarten*, trans. Emilie Michaelis and H.K. Moore (London, 1891); Joachim Liebschner, *Foundations of Progressive Education: The History of the National Froebel Society* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1991).

20th century teachers embarked on these new methods in order to revolutionize the learning process.

Both M.K and Qandil come from the same world. In her interview, M.K. tells us that she graduated from The Institute of Education for Female Teachers in 1947 after having spent four years learning about psychology, pedagogy and teaching methods. Similarly, Qandil discusses teaching methods, the importance of child psychology and school activities. Even though *'Usul al-Tarbiya* made its first appearance in 1928, the book continued to be published regularly until at least the 1970s. M.K did not attend the training institution where Qandil was teaching, but she undoubtedly came across the ideas he had published since Qandil was in close contact with all the major teacher training colleges in Cairo.

Interwar Egypt

In the preface of his book, Qandil, suggests that he intended his work to reach fellow teachers so that they may prepare future generations for the "new life."[10]
To understand what he meant by the term 'new life', we must look at the world inhabited by Qandil and M.K which provides the backdrop to the story of our progressive pedagogues: Egypt of the interwar period.

In March and April 1919, mass protests erupted across Egypt against the British occupation which had plagued the country since 1882 in what came to be known as the 1919 Revolution.[11] The revolution was considered to be Egypt's first large-scale popular movement as it took hold in villages, towns and major cities where citizens protested, cut

[10] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1928), d.
[11] Afaf Lutfi Sayyid-Marsot, *A History of Egypt: From the Arab Conquest to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 95–97.

railway and telegraph lines, and boycotted goods in the name of freedom and liberation.[12] Historians have theorized that not all participants in the protests harboured aspirations of political liberation from the British, as some were undoubtedly motivated by economic grievances against their Egyptian landlords.[13] Irrespective of motives, the 1919 Revolution became a rallying call against the occupation—especially by the Egyptian political elite.

While the reasons for these protests are multifaceted, most analysts agree that they were instigated by the economic and political conditions imposed on Egypt during World War I. In 1914, when Britain declared war on the Ottoman Empire, it simultaneously declared Egypt a British protectorate and deposed Khedive ‘Abbas Hilmi replacing him with his more pro-British uncle, Husayn Kamil. Though Egypt had technically been ruled by the British since 1882, nominally, it was still an Ottoman province. As a British protectorate however, the Egyptian state was forced to officially cut ties with the Ottomans and volunteer men to serve as part of the labor corps for the British army. By 1918, over one million men had been dispatched to the European warfront to construct railroads and roads leaving families and entire villages distraught. In addition, the British declared martial law in Egypt and suspended the general assembly. The Egyptian agricultural sector, which comprised the majority of the country’s economic activity, was placed in the service of the war effort. As a result, the Egyptian population lived under extremely dire and desperate socio-economic conditions.

In November 1918, a group of Egyptian nationalists led by Sa‘d Zaghlul, approached British High Commissioner Wingate demanding Egyptian independence and autonomy and declaring that the group would form a delegation (*Wafd*) to make the case for Egyptian

[12] Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[13] Reinhard C. Schulze, “Colonization and Resistance: The Egyptian Peasant Rebellion, 1919,” in *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), 171–202.

independence at the Paris Peace Conference.[14] When Zaghlul was subsequently arrested and exiled, mass protests erupted in his support: The 1919 Revolution had begun.
As a direct result of months-long strikes and demonstrations, Zaghlul was eventually allowed to return and the British were forced to re-think their relationship to Egypt. By 1920, the British had sent a commission of inquiry, the Milner mission, to assess the situation which declared that Egypt's protectorate status had to be abandoned thereby paving the way for the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1922. However, despite nominal independence, the British retained control over foreign interests in Egypt (and the Sudan), over the Suez Canal, security of communications and retained the right to defend Egypt against foreign aggressors. Nevertheless, this new era allowed the Egyptian state to promulgate its first ever constitution in 1923 which established a frail but somewhat functioning parliamentary democracy and a multi-party system.

Given the role it played in the 1919 Revolution, the *Wafd* party—and Sa'd Zaghlul in particular—became the most important civilian player in this new constellation of power.[15] The *Wafd* won with a landslide in the first democratically held elections in 1924. At the same time, the period saw the rise of newspaper publishing, the formation of thousands of societies, a thriving literary, artistic and musical scene and a vibrant cultural life. Thus, during the interwar period, the country experimented with semi-democratic system, relatively free and relatively fair elections, an opening for freedom of expression and assembly. But the political system which was established through the 1923 constitution was extremely fragile because it left much power to the palace and the landed elite who sought to limit mass political participation, control the labour movement and

[14] Sa'd Zaghlul was a lawyer by training who became Minister of Public Instruction in 1906 and later served as Minister of Justice from 1910-1912. He also served as President of the Legislative Assembly in 1913.
[15] Marius Deeb, *Party Politics in Egypt: The Wafd and Its Rivals, 1919-1939*, St. Antony's Middle East Monographs (London: Ithaca Press for the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford, 1979).

enshrine election laws that secured power in the hands of the few. Consequently, politicians came and went while real power was shared between the *Wafd,* the palace and the British in what came to be known as the political triangle of the interwar period. With the on-going (veiled) British presence and the persistence of dire economic conditions, the vast majority of the Egyptian population continued to suffer from poverty, neglect and destitution.[16] By the 1930s, politics had become more radicalized as Egyptians forged political groups which espoused more forceful notions of political change such as anarchism, communism, fascism and the Muslim Brotherhood, established in 1928.[17] The volatility of the parliamentary period was such that the entire political system was brought to an end in the 1952 when a group of military officers orchestrated a coup against the monarchy in what came to be known as the 1952 Free Officer Coup/Revolution. The coup marked the beginning of a long period of military rule in Egypt that was cemented under Nasser in 1954 and has dictated politics in the country ever since.[18]

In this 'new life' after 1922, and especially after the promulgation of the 1923 constitution, Egyptian teachers believed that Egypt was on a path to becoming a free and independent nation, with a somewhat functioning political system and a desire to rise above the shackles of its colonial past. When Qandil speaks of a new generation of Egyptians, he means Egyptians who would be educated under the new conditions of independence in the post-1922 context, an age of possibilities thanks to the British exit

[16] Selma Botman, *Egypt from Independence to Revolution, 1919-1952*, Contemporary Issues in the Middle East (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1991).
[17] I Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam, and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930*, Studies in Middle Eastern History (New York, N.Y.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Richard P Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[18] Mériam N Belli, *An Incurable Past: Nasser's Egypt Then and Now* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013); Joel Gordon, *Nasser's Blessed Movement: Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Anouar Abdel-Malek, *Egypt: Military Society : The Army Regime, the Left, and Social Change under Nasser*, [1st American ed.] (New York: Random House, 1968); Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt*, Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011). Sherif Yunis, *Nida' al-Sha'b: Tarikh Naqdi li-l-Idiulujiyya al-Nasirriyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2012).

from the field of education. Both M.K. and Qandil believed it crucial to introduce younger generations to the methods of progressive education because they saw them as a key to freedom and independence and as indispensable to the safeguarding and development of this "new [albeit fragile] life" that was created in the post 1922 moment.

Silences around progressive education

This dissertation demonstrates that progressive education was not just an auxiliary of pedagogical thought but rather, that it was *the* spectre haunting the educational establishment in Egypt during the first half of the 20th century. Yet, making the claim that it was a ubiquitous movement automatically begs the following question: Why, if indeed it was widespread as this dissertation will be elucidating, has this movement escaped historians of Egypt and the Middle East? Indeed, the literature makes very scarce references to Egypt's and the larger Middle East's pedagogical traditions—especially in the English-speaking academy. There are four main reasons for such silences.

The first, and most significant of these, is the absence of teachers from the historiography. By and large, historians of Egypt have neglected teachers as historical interlocutors in their analysis of educational thought and practice. With the exception of works such as Hilary Falb Kalisman's *Teachers as State-builders* which only focuses on teachers in Jordan, Palestine and Iraq and Iman Farag's *Eduquer les educateurs*, the literature has mostly focused on the contributions of public intellectuals, parliamentarians and nationalist leaders in lieu of the real and most important actors in this equation.[19] It has—for the most part—neglected the work and writings of some of the country's leading

[19] Hilary Falb Kalisman, *Teachers as State-Builders : Education and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Princeton, 2022); Iman Farag, "Éduquer Les Éducateurs : Les Revues Pédagogiques Égyptiennes de l'entre-Deux-Guerres," *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée* 95, no. 98 (2002): 337–54.

pedagogues, thereby failing to identify their appreciation of progressive education. Moreover, there have not been any significant attempts to uncover the views, ideas and practices of ordinary practicing teachers, at least not in a systematic manner. Historian Barak Salmoni maintains that "Unlike in Turkey, there is not a substantial amount of appreciative writing or pedagogical hagiography emerging from within the educational arena or on the state's initiative."[20] He also suggests that the material left behind is scarce consisting only of "rare essays eulogizing recently deceased educators, autobiographical hints in the context of professional reflections, infrequent entries in biographical dictionaries, and changing by-lines of educational workers who published regularly in educational or general cultural periodicals thereby making it extremely difficult to portray collective educational development and professional progression, except for a few individuals."[21]

In other words, Salmoni believes that an engagement with the real-life practices, experiences and writings of practicing Egyptian teachers is difficult because they did not leave behind a tradition of pedagogical hagiography. Contrarily, this dissertation will demonstrate that it is possible to trace the intellectual milieu, the thoughts and practices of Egyptian teachers in early 20th century in a systematic manner despite the absence of pedagogical hagiography and the difficulty of the task at hand.[22]

The second reason is loosely related to the first. Due to the centrality of education to the nation-building process, historians have often only been interested in it because it

[20] Barak A Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism: Teaching Socio -Political Community in Twentieth-Century Turkish and Egyptian Education," PhD diss., (Harvard University, 2002), 125.
[21] Ibid., 127.
[22] With the exception of Iman Farag's work, most historians of Egypt including historians of the Egyptian labour movement have ignored ordinary teachers, teachers' unions and the teachers' movement as a whole. See Iman Farag, "Éduquer Les Éducateurs : Les Revues Pédagogiques Égyptiennes de l'entre-Deux-Guerres," *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée* 95, no. 98 (2002): 337–54.

allowed them to make larger claims about nationalism, the state and religion.[23] In other words, Middle East historians have tended to discuss education to advance larger (and in their eyes more important) academic interests in socio-political questions and grand narratives. Using education as an entry point to make claims about 'larger' issues is also prevalent in works dedicated to issues of gender and nationalism in Egypt, such as Lisa Pollard's *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing and Liberating Egypt* and in Mona Russel's *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity*.[24] This interest in nationalism via education has also spearheaded a number of studies on the influence of textbooks on nationalism.[25] As a result, the historiography views teachers as nationalists/Islamists first and educators, second.

One could argue that this trend was started in 1988 with the publication of Timothy Mitchell's seminal work, *Colonising Egypt* which has dictated the parameters of the debate on education ever since. In this work, Mitchell weaves 19th century education into a larger

[23]See Misako Ikeda, "Sociopolitical Debates in Late Parliamentary Egypt, 1944-1952," PhD diss., (Harvard University, 1998); Donald M Reid, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt*, Cambridge Middle East Library (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Hoda A Yousef, "Seeking the Educational Cure: Egypt and European Education, 1805-1920s," *European Education* 44, no. 4 (2012): 51–66; Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[24] See Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation : The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing and Liberating Egypt (1805/1923)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Mona L Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education, and National Identity, 1863-1922* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).; Ikeda, "Sociopolitical Debates in Late Parliamentary Egypt, 1944-1952."; Gabriel Piterberg, "The Tropes of Stagnation and Awakening in Nationalist Historical Consciousness: The Egyptian Case," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, by Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[25] Yoram Meital, "School Textbooks and Assembling the Puzzle of the Past in Revolutionary Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 2 (2006): 255–70.; See also Atef Boutros al Attar's "Reconfiguring the Past: History, Memory and Ideology in Egyptian History Textbooks between 1932 and 2009" which discuss the changes in textbooks in the twentieth century, Laurie Brand's *Official Stories: Politics and National Narratives in Egypt and Algeria*, Hana A.S. Hegazy's "Values and Attitudes Expressed in Egyptian Primary School Readers: A Comparative Study of the pre-1952 and the 1970 Readers"; Gabriel Piterberg's "The Tropes of Stagnation and Awakening in Nationalist Historical Consciousness: The Egyptian Case;" the most comprehensive work in this category remains Barak Salmoni's unpublished PhD dissertation "Pedagogies of Patriotism Teaching Socio-Political Community in 20th Century Turkish and Egyptian Education".

narrative of state formation arguing that the aim of the education system was to "seize upon the individual" and "make him or her into a modern political subject—frugal, innocent and, above all, busy."[26] Mitchell maintains that the appearance of the new politics of the modern state began with the establishment of the new modern schools in 1867-1868.[27] "Education was to be set up as an autonomous practice, spread over 'the entire surface of society', with a distinct purpose (…) to produce the individual citizen."[28] As soon as it was published, *Colonising Egypt* arguably set the stage for future engagements with the history of education in Egypt, at least in the English-speaking academy. Heavily influenced by Foucauldian technologies of power, Mitchell presents the history of education in Egypt as subordinate to the history of modern nation-building.

Paul Sedra's pioneering work on the history of Missionary schools in Egypt follows a similar line of reasoning. Sedra would "venture so far as to suggest that evangelical missionaries were the pioneer purveyors of Foucault's and Mitchell's modern technologies of power, throughout the colonial world"[29] thus continuing to focus on the schooling project as a homogenizing programme aiming to control the population in the interest of the elite.

Even though historians have advanced critiques of Mitchell, these tend to adopt one of two approaches. They either focus on the role of agency in the classroom to show how the homogenizing effects of education are challenged once one steps into a real classroom, or they focus on disciplinary power's lack of predictability and the unintended consequences of schooling which reshape and renegotiate educational and state power.[30]

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[26] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt,* 75.
[27] Ibid., 65.
[28] Ibid., 69.
[29] Paul Sedra, "Textbook Maneuvers: Evangelicals and Educational Reform in Nineteenth-Century Egypt" (PhD. diss., New York University, 2006), 62. See also Yoni H Furas, "In Need of a New Story: Writing, Teaching and Learning History in Mandatory Palestine", (PhD diss., The University of Oxford, 2015).
[30] Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics, and Religious Transformation in Egypt,* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998). Benjamin Fortna's Imperial Classrooms should also be mentioned here

Both Benjamin Fortna and Gregory Starett present a critique of the sort to Mitchell's approach. Historian Khaled Fahmy suggests that Mitchell offers us "a concise history of the idea of discipline as formulated by British (and Egyptian) educationalists and not a historical account of the performance of Egyptian schools, which, while they attempted to follow the Lancaster system in all its Foucauldian details, could not be expected in all probability to have done so in the neat and automatic manner assumed by Mitchell."[31] In other words, Mitchell discusses the ideas of discipline which were part and parcel of the newly introduced modern education system without discussing precisely how these were applied in reality. This realization—by Mitchell's own admission—serves as the entry point for major critiques of *Colonising Egypt* including the work of Fahmy, Gregory Starett, and Benjamin Fortna. That is, critics of Mitchell admit that modern educational forces were 'planned' to be disciplinary and merely maintain that there was a discrepancy between the plan and the reality. At no point do they challenge the 'plan' itself. Thus, both Mitchell and his critics continue to tell a story of nation-building, (or about resistance to it). Mitchell's critics look at education as a subordinate to nation-building, as a "prism though which to view sociocultural change in Egypt"[32] even in their acknowledgment of its limitations to the nation-building project. By contrast, this dissertation questions the disciplinarity of 'the plan' itself by showing how through their call to progressive education, Egyptian teachers were actually trying to provide tools, languages and practices for an anti-colonial and pro-democratic project within their institutions. It also disrupts the

even though it focuses on Ottoman education because it too presents a compelling argument against viewing 19th century education as a monolithic, almighty project without looking at spaces of negotiation and the role of agency. See Benjamin C Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[31] Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 30–31.

[32] Ibid.,iii.

always assumed subordinate status of education to nation-building by focusing on educational thought and practices in their own right.

Even studies that tend to focus on the history of a particular institution are not immune from larger discussions of the nation, religion and state formation.[33]

As historian Barak Salmoni would argue: "Especially during the early years of modem educational writing, Egyptians expressed views on education as a component of the larger nationalist intellectual discourse."[34] Education was only valuable to those advancing it—and those studying it eighty years later—insofar as it was a gateway to discursively challenge imperialism and secularism or advance nationalism. Either way, education was a vehicle to speak about the nation.[35]

In its investigation of education *as part of* nation-building, the majority of the literature has overlooked the pedagogical trends which were fashionable at the turn of the century thereby resulting in a failure to identify Egyptian progressivism altogether. The few works which rightly recognize that a new approach to childhood was emerging in Egypt at the turn of the 20th century, such as Heidi Morrison's *Childhood and Colonial Modernity*, for example, never seem to call a spade a spade and fail to link such practices to the broader transnational progressive movement of the time period.[36]

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[33] See Hilary Kalmbach, "From Turban to Tarboush: Dār al-ʹUlūm and Social, Linguistic, and Religious Change in Interwar Egypt" (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2012), 8. See also Donald M Reid, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt*, Cambridge Middle East Library (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) which presents Cairo University as a major site of nationalist contestation.

[34] Barak Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism", 190.

[35] J Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt* (London: Luzac and Co., 1939); Roderic D Matthews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1949); Ahmad 'Izzat Abd al-Karim, *Tarikh al-Taʿlim fi ʿAhd Muha,* (Cairo: Matbaʿat Misr, 1938). Yacoub Artin, *L'instruction publique en Égypte* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1890). Jirjis Salama, *Athar al-Ihtilal al-Britani fi-l-Taʿlim al-Qawmi fi Misr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlu al-Miṣriyya, 1966); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Qadaya al-Taʿlim fī ʿAhd al-Iḥtilal* (Cairo: ʿAlam al-Kutub, 1974).

[36] Heidi Morrison, *Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). Another example hinting at the existence of 'alternative' educational practices in early 20th century Egypt is Anthony Gorman, "Anarchists in Education: The Free Popular University in Egypt (1901)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 41, no. 3 (2005): 303–20.

Relatedly, a third major reason for progressivism's absence from the historiography is its mistaken association with 'western', 'foreign' or colonial mechanisms of power. One can see, for example, how the movement could be considered by some historians as a naive illusion of freedom imposed by a foreign power.

A cynical view might regard these pedagogical approaches as a covert attempt to exert control over students whether indirectly by foreign/western agents within a project of intellectual colonial subjugation—or directly by local elites via modern state institutions disguised as a call to freedom and self-expression.

Critical engagements with education, particularly those emerging in the wake of post-colonial theory may regard the entire modern education project as a tool of control and subjugation in the service of the modern state, much like *Colonising Egypt*.

As such, all forms of modern education—irrespective of their adoption progressive language —become forms of indoctrination and control. As C.G Prado maintains: "It is possible to argue in a Foucauldian manner that the new education was less progressive than manipulative treatment of learners, despite being perceived as a significant step forward in education."[37] Surely, the fact that progressive pedagogy was predicated on the birth of psychology as will be demonstrated in the coming chapter, and given Foucault's mistrust of this area of knowledge which he found "as much the product of power as are

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Gorman looks at the history of this little-known turn of the century anarchist university which was free of charge and was aimed at the working class to support their class struggle. While it showcases the role played by a collective of anarchists in the promotion of a wide-ranging curriculum for the working class it does not necessarily comment on the pedagogical methods employed at the institution. Nor does it dwell on the pedagogical philosophy of its founders and instructors nor their possible connections to the international progressive movement of the time.

Among the few studies to have identified progressive pedagogy as an intellectual force operating in Egypt in the early 20th century, we find Salmoni's, "Pedagogies of Patriotism"; Mahmoud Kombar, "Isma'il Al-Qabbani (1898-1963)," *Prospects : The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education (Paris, UNESCO : International Bureau of Education),* XXIV, no. 1/2 (1994): 355–74; AbdelHady M El-Nagar and Eva Krugly-Smolska, "Modernization of Education in Egypt: The Liberal Movement Towards Dewey 's Ideas," *Canadian and International Education/ Education Canadienne et Internationale* 40, no. 1 (January 6, 2011): Article 5." A critique of the ways in which such works deal with progressivism can be found in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

[37] C.G. Prado, "Educating the Self: Foucault and Dewey," in *John Dewey and Continental Philosophy*, ed. Paul Fairfield, (Carbondale [Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 187.

institutional or individual perspectives", one could easily imagine him arguing that "that what passed as enlightened realization of the importance of experience in education" was actually the establishment of a system of control.[38]

Yet, there is something extremely uneasy and perhaps a little too simplistic about regarding all forms of modern pedagogic thought from the 18th century onwards as nothing more than discourses of control or forms of power/knowledge. Indeed, there exist other ways to read and interpret Foucault which are not diametrically opposed to the ideas put forward by progressivism's most important proponents. Such new perspectives have already been put forward by contemporary philosophers and have emerged from the field of critical pedagogy studies but are yet to be grappled with by historians of Egypt.

Critical pedagogy, a field which emerged in the early 1980s following the writings of Henry Giroux, Maxine Greene, Michael Apple and bell hooks to name a few, complicates such basic assumptions about progressive education precisely because it claims "to bring an array of divergent views and perspectives to the table, in order to invigorate the capacity of radical educators to engage critically with the impact of capitalism and gendered, racialized and homophobic relations on students from historically disenfranchised populations."[39] In other words, critical pedagogy aims to dismantle the inherently asymmetrical power structures of the school and those of society at large through a kind of radical education that empowers its students. What is particularly interesting here is that critical pedagogy normally evades the kinds of criticism levelled at early 20th century progressive education, despite being indebted to the ideas of early 20th century pedagogues. This debt is acknowledged by the movement's main founders who incessantly refer back to early 20th century progressive principles as the building block of

[38] Ibid., 180.
[39] Antonia Darder, Marta Baltodano, and Rodolfo D. Torres, eds., *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), 2.

their own project and consistently "insist that critical pedagogy emerged form a long historical legacy of radical social thought and progressive educational movements, which aspired to link practices of schooling to democratic principles of society and transformative social action in the interest of oppressed communities."[40]

Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, for example, discuss the importance of John Dewey to the critical pedagogy movement of the latter half of the 20th century:

> Our position is indebted to Dewey but attempts to extend his democratic project. Dewey's struggle for democracy was primarily pedagogical and largely failed to develop an extended analysis of class relations and historically conditioned inequalities in society. Conversely, our position accentuates the idea that schools represent only one important site in the struggle for democracy.[41]

For many critical pedagogues therefore, progressives like John Dewey provided "a language of possibility."[42] Early 20th century Egyptian pedagogues who operated within this framework were part of a long line of thinkers who worked through, debated and created these languages of possibility.

But the invitation to re-think progressivism should not just be based on the movement's close affinity to critical pedagogy, it must also come from a new reading of the same theories that have often been used to critique it. Beyond the tendency to consider the progressive education of the early 20th century as a misguided project, as would a more mainstream understanding of Foucauldian power/knowledge, the invitation in this dissertation is to re-think Foucault as a proponent of experimentalism, and in this respect as philosophically aligned with progressive theorists such as John Dewey.[43]

As philosopher Colin Koopman suggests:

> The complex idea that Foucault was striving to articulate and that so many of his critics misunderstood was that freedom and power can neither be dissociated nor

[40] Ibid.
[41] Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren, "Teacher Education and the Politics of Engagement: The Case for Democratic Schooling.," *Harvard Educational Review* 56, no. 3 (1986): 238.
[42] Darder et al., *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*, 3.
[43] Prado, "Educating the Self: Foucault and Dewey,"187.

> assimilated. They must be deployed simultaneously so that we can work within the internal tensions of their relationships. Foucault therefore found himself working as an experimentalist at the interstices where freedom and power connect.[44]

One compelling reading of Foucault's notions of power/knowledge therefore encourages us not to think of power/knowledge and freedom as two distinct realms but as persistent relationship whose tensions can be grappled with through experimentation. According to Koopman:

> Foucault did not in his late work abandon his earlier theses about modern power in order to elaborate a theory of modern freedom, which these theses had explicitly invalidated. On the contrary, Foucault's late work elaborates a conception of experimental freedom that specifically aims to address the very problem established by our reciprocal but incompatible practices of modern disciplinary power and modern autonomous freedom.[45]

Since experimentalism was embedded both in Egyptian and international educators' pedagogical practices, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, their calls for progressivism can be viewed as an attempt to create new political possibilities through an active practice of resistance to colonial power.

As Koopman maintains: "Both Dewey and Foucault looked forward to a culture that would sustain itself by simply trying things out as an alternative to that cultural self-containment implicit in the modern will to purify."[46] It is precisely in both their calls to "experimentalism" that we can begin to read progressive education not as an illusion that is blind to its own inherent disciplinary force, but rather as part of a solution offered to the 'problems' of modernity.[47]

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[44] Colin Koopman, "The History and Critique of Modernity: Dewey with Foucault against Weber," in *John Dewey and Continental Philosophy*, ed. Paul Fairfield (Carbondale [Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 206.

[45] Koopman, 207.

[46] Koopman, "The History and Critique of Modernity: Dewey with Foucault against Weber," 195.

[47] See Peter S Hlebowitsh, "John Dewey and the Idea of Experimentalism," *Education and Culture (Iowa City, Iowa)* 22, no. 1 (2006): 73–76; See also John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938). As one of the founders of American pragmatism, Dewey has often been viewed as diametrically opposed to Foucault but new readings of their work reveals much overlap. This is evidenced in both thinkers' position on habit as they share a similar conception of the modern subject as being shaped/disciplined by habit. See Elizabeth Caldwell, "Embodiment and Agency: The Concept of Growth in John Dewey's Philosophy of Education" (2012), 192. Both traditions also share a common take on

The similarities between both traditions therefore make it imperative that we refrain from blindly transposing a Mitchellian understanding of education onto 20th century manifestations of progressive education in Egypt. They invite us to think of Foucault's work as complementary to the progressive tradition—even its most conservative iteration.[48]

A final reason for the historiography's silence on progressive education is its limited engagement with the rich Egyptian/Arab historiography on pedagogical thought in the country which dates back to the early 20th century. One of the first historians of Egyptian education was, of course, Ahmad 'Izzat 'Abd al-Karim, student of the founder of Egyptian historical studies, Shafiq Ghurbal. In 1938, 'Abd al-Karim published his dissertation, *Tarikh al-Ta'lim fi Misr min Nihayat Hukm Muhammad 'Ali 'ila 'Awa'il Hukm Tawfiq* (The History of Education in Egypt from the end of Muhammad 'Ali's reign to the beginning of Tawfiq's reign). The book represents an important contribution to the study of Egypt's 19th century public education system. But the historiography on Egyptian education has come a long way since then.

In the 1970s and 1980s a new generation of Egyptian historians emerged which was interested in the history of education and came to identify the pedagogical trends that are central to this dissertation. Chief among them, Professor of Pedagogy at 'Ayn Shams University, Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali, who has emerged as one of the most prolific writers on matters pertaining to the history of the country's education system.[49] Following 'Ali's

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modernity, As Koopman suggests "we find not an anti-modern Foucault and a pro-modern Dewey but a more complex synthesis in which "Dewey and Foucault were complexly both for and against modernity." See Koopman "The History and Critique of Modernity: Dewey with Foucault against Weber," 195.

[48] See discussion on freedom and controlled freedom and experimentation in Chapters 2 and 4.

[49] Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli and Saʿd Mursi Ahmad, *Tarikh al-Tarbiya fi Misr* (Cairo: ʿAlam al-Kutub, 1971); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Tarikh al-Ta'lim fi Misr al-Haditha* (Cairo: ʿAyn Shams, 2000); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Tarikh al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim fi Misr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-'Arabiyya lil-Dirasat al-Tarbawiyya, 1985); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli *Nazarat fi-l-Fikr al-Tarbawi* (Cairo: Dar Saʿd al-Sabah, 1993); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Tarikh al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr al-Haditha* (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Misriyya al-'Amma li-l-Kitab, 1989); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Dirasat fi-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Falsafa* (Cairo: ʿAlam al-Kutub, 1972); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Dawr al-Taʿlim al-Misri fi-l-Nidal al-Watani* (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-Misriyya al-ʿAmma li-l-Kitab, 1995); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, "Al-

footsteps, fellow scholars and some of his students have ventured into the complicated history of Egyptian pedagogical thought. These include for example, ‘Abd al-Salam Dayf whose analysis of the intellectual contributions of Egypt’s most prolific progressive pedagogues, Isma‘il al-Qabbani, remains the most thorough and critical analyses of Egyptian pedagogical thought. [50] They also include ‘Ali Abu-l-‘Unayn’s work on the philosophical origins of pedagogical thought in Egypt and Hassaan Muhammad Hassaan’s groundbreaking dissertation on the history of pedagogical thought during the interwar period.[51]

It is important to note however, that these studies do not observe the history of progressive education as a transnational phenomenon. In some sense one could say that the specificities of the country have overshadowed the transnational reality of progressive education. The fact that progressivism was actually revered on every continent—especially during the interwar period—has escaped historians’ view both in the Egyptian and English-speaking academy, but it remains an important angle for this dissertation.

A new Approach

This dissertation tries to address these four historiographical lacunae by presenting a history of the Egyptian teaching profession between 1922 and 1956. It is, to the extent that this is possible, a story about teachers by teachers as it aims to centre their views on pedagogy, their thoughts and their aspirations through the sources that they themselves left

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Abʿad al-Iqtisadiyya wa-l-Ijtima‘iyya li Harakat al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr fi-l-Fatra min 1882-1923” (Cairo, Kuliyyat al-Tarbiya, ʿAyn Shams University, 1969); Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Al-Fikr al-Tarbawi al-ʿArabi al-Hadith* (Kuwayt: Matabiʿ al-Risala, 1987).

[50] ʿAbd al-Salam Shawqi Dayf, “Fikr Ismaʿil Mahmoud Al-Qabbani wa Atharihi ʿala Tatawwur al-Tarbiya wa-l-Taʿlim fi Jumhuriyyat Misr al-ʿArabiyya”, (master's thesis, Asiyut University, 1977).

[51] ‘Ali Khalil Abu-l-‘Unayn, “Al-’Usual al-Falsafiyya li-l-Tarbiya fi Misr Bayn al-Fikr al-’Islami wa-l-Fikr al-Tajribi”, (master's thesis, Tanta University, 1980); Hasaan Muhammad Hasaan, “Ittijahat al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr Min 1923 ’ila 1952”, (master's thesis, ‘Ayn Shams University, 1981).

behind. As such, this project is an attempt to give a voice to the paradoxically voiceless—a profession that is assumed to have tremendous power over the children of the future, but which has often been overlooked and ignored.

The thesis adopts an institutional approach by 'visiting' teachers at their various institutions to understand them on their own terms thereby questioning the existing literature on the history of education in the Middle East, which has largely looked at teachers (and at education as a whole) as a building block for the nation-building project. In so doing, the dissertation joins more recent scholarship in its move "beyond the engagement of the 1980s and 1990s with nationalism and political thought (both Islamist and liberal) to other realms of intellectual and academic production" echoing historians Yoav Di Capua and Omnia el Shakry whose work on Egyptian historians, Arab existentialists, and psychoanalysts, centres the *contributors* to these intellectual traditions.[52] And while Di Capua and Shakry tend to focus on particular individuals rather than larger institutional frameworks, this dissertation adopts an institutional approach which complicates simple transfer narratives and allows for there to be a multitude of relevant local actors who were simultaneously engaged in the global production of progressive thought and practices.

Through an engagement with the more contemporary Arabic historiography, the pedagogy press, teacher training manuals, textbooks, school magazines, Ministerial reports and oral narratives—in other words, sources that allow us to 'visit' teachers at their institutions and better understand them on their own terms—this dissertation argues that Egyptian teachers were by and large supporters of progressive education during the first

[52] Liat Kozma, "Omnia El Shakry, The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt," *Psychoanalysis and History* 20, no. 2 (July 2018): 253–55;Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past: Historians and History Writing in Twentieth-Century Egypt*, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2009); Omnia S. El Shakry, *The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

half of the 20th century. This support for progressivism's main tenets should not be misunderstood as a blind and misguided adoption of a Western model of education. Rather, the dissertation demonstrates that Egyptian pedagogues saw themselves as contributing to a larger progressive movement that had a strong element of anti-colonialism. Precisely because progressive education provided tools for resistance in the classroom, teachers believed that it was the perfect blueprint to safeguard and maintain Egypt's nascent democracy in the face of continued (but veiled) British control. It also allowed teachers to academically contribute to a global analytic movement of progressive pedagogy studies, which many of them found to be intellectually thrilling and fulfilling. Moreover, progressive pedagogy provided opportunities for teachers' associations to demand better salaries and by extension secure their professional advancement. This attachment to progressive education did not therefore purely or necessarily stem from a nationalist agenda, but from a set of more complex pedagogical, social and local concerns that can only be unearthed by listening to teachers' voices.

Though the project does not compare Egypt to other territories, it does approach progressive education from a transnational perspective with an understanding that similar ideas were being explored on every continent at the same time. It is mindful of progressivism's ultimate 'failure to launch' in Egypt (and on practically every one of these continents) as the 20th century progressed. But it also suggests that the reasons for its failure were institutional and pedagogical rather than due to the insincerity of its original emancipatory message or the illusions and naiveté of its supporters.

I start in 1922 because this was a decisive turning point after which the material and qualitative investment in education expanded. Progressive pedagogy—which had been modestly fashionable in Egypt since the early 1900s—became one of the most important pedagogical and intellectual movements in Egypt. The country's semi-colonial context

between 1922 and 1952 actually gave the Egyptian educational bureaucracy much room to manoeuvre, it was an anomaly in a larger region plagued by more forceful forms of colonialism. In this context, progressive education was tied to an experimental democratisation project that aimed to cement what was largely believed to be a post-colonial reality already. In that sense, the Egyptian case of progressive pedagogy has much to say about the politics of progressive education in non-strictly-colonial, non-western and non-militarised contexts in the early 20th century.

Because of the project's focus on teachers as the primary historical interlocutors, it ends in 1956, the year after the publication of *Majallat al-Ra'id* (The Pioneer magazine) by the Teachers' Syndicate. *Majallat al-Ra'id*, became the mouthpiece of the Nasser regime which overthrew the Egyptian monarchy in1952. With its publication, other teachers' magazines lost much of their relevance thereby resulting in a slow but steady homogenisation of educational publishing while simultaneously signalling the new regime's gradual control over the pedagogical narrative.

Part I: *Tadrib* (Training)

Chapter 1
Psychology and Teacher Training Institutions

M.K: "Our professors developed in us a deep awareness. They believed us to be the most qualified for this job precisely because we were specialized in this field [of pedagogy]. They taught us that if your foundations are sound, everything else will be alright."

-K., M. Interview by Rania 'Abdel Rahman. Transcript, n.d. Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women's Oral History, the Women and Memory Forum

"I am speaking to you now of the psychology of crime (…) You may know all about cigarettes and match ends, Monsieur Giraud, but I, Hercule Poirot, know the mind of man."
-Agatha Christie, Murder on the Docks

If one were to try and locate Egyptian teachers in the history of education, where would one start? Where does one begin in order to understand teachers on their own terms, make them visible and steer the gaze towards their contributions? After all, as historian Yoav Di Capua notes, "scholars inevitably end up portraying the persona of the Arab intellectual as a static signifier of an idea rather than as a contextualised and dynamic human being. Thus, whereas Euro-American intellectuals regularly benefit from a fine-grained consideration of their inner motivations, urges, and character, most Arab intellectuals, remain fundamentally unknown."[1] This is not just true for Arab existentialist thinkers, the subject of Di-Capua's work, but it is also true for Egyptian educators whose presence in the literature has almost been non-existent.

This chapter is therefore an attempt to remedy the historiography's transgressions by making pedagogues visible through an appropriate contextualisation of their educational endeavours. Di Capua proposes to use "storytelling" as an analytical tool that can help uncover the lives and contributions of his previously obscure historical

[1] Yoav Di-Capua, *No Exit: Arab Existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Decolonization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 19.

interlocuters because of its ability to embed human subjectivity in its original social context, validating their deeds, thoughts and memories with the understanding "that we become who we are by virtue of operating in such contexts—rather than viewing narrative as a violent and imprisoning agent of modern power."[2]

Loosely based on Di Capua's approach, the act of 'storytelling' here encompasses the history of institutions, rather than the story of particular individuals—and for the purposes of this chapter, teacher training institutions. In other words, the chapter locates teachers at the first stop along their professional trajectory and centres a particular group of senior pedagogues who were employed at such institutions to understand the development of pedagogical thought in early 20th century Egypt at large.

The chapter argues that an institutional history of training colleges is necessary for the understanding of 20th century pedagogical thought with its intellectual entanglements, originality and vibrancy and for an understanding of how a new kind of teacher trainer emerged. It further argues that such an approach would be incomplete without the exploration of the influence of psychology on teacher training, since psychology was not merely one of Egyptian progressive education's many subfields, but rather its main building block. Finally, the chapter maintains that an institutional approach does not simply render teachers more visible, it also sheds light on the multiplicity of local contributors to the process of knowledge production in the field of pedagogy, thereby complicating the simple Western transfer narratives that has long been assumed by historians.

[2] Di-Capua, *No Exit,* 21–22.

'Knowing the Mind of Man'

In the introductory chapter of the dissertation, I suggest that the defining marker of 20th century progressive education was psychology. Despite its contradictions and eclectic origins, the new field of psychology, which rose to prominence by the late 19th century, came to offer novel ways of making sense of children's learning experiences. Through the work of a number of early psychologists such as Stanley Hall, psychology was "ensured (…) a place at the table in the national conversation about child development."[3] Armed with an arsenal of what these thinkers considered 'scientific truths', it was now thought possible to scientifically improve the material, mental and aesthetic aspects of education. As such "modern psychology transformed education from a speculative branch of philosophy into a scientific investigation of the sources of human behaviour" and that of the human mind.[4] At the same time, psychology came to legitimize earlier ideas about education which had previously been circulated by philosophers and pedagogues including Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel who all believed that education should promote children's activity and sensory experience because it 'proved' that a child's growth "was largely a matter of developing sensory skills."[5]

This new experimental approach to psychology, emphasised that psychological truths could be extracted by subjecting human beings to experiments—just like the natural sciences. One of Hall's most pervasive principles was the assertion that children could be better understood through the use of psychology and in fact, he dedicated much of his career to the understanding of children's minds.[6] Such insights became instrumental in

[3] Jacy L. Young, "G. Stanley Hall, Child Study, and the American Public," *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 177, no. 6 (2016): 195.
[4] Law, Humanity's Workshops, 39–42.
[5] Ibid., 42.
[6] It is important to note that not all progressive pedagogues of the 20th century were interested in how children learn and how their minds operate. As is demonstrated in the next chapter, certain utopian progressives like A.S. Neill had no interest in children's learning abilities as he and others like him drew their inspiration from psychoanalysis rather than developmental psychology and were therefore far more

cementing education as *a science* that had the ability to prescribe concrete and defined mechanisms for child instruction. The notion that psychology was important to pedagogy quickly gained traction and was widely circulated in the late 19th century through the writings of popular philosophers including Herbert Spencer who maintained that the 'art' of teaching must be based on science.[7] Spencer, for example, famously wrapped his pedagogical ideas "in the prestige of science, claiming them not as a set of philosophical speculation (…) but as scientific hypotheses."[8]

The birth of psychology as an independent academic discipline in the late 19th century accelerated such views. Despite there being no agreed upon date marking psychology's official separation from philosophy, the realm of knowledge which traditionally housed the debates about the human mind, consciousness and human behaviour, it is possible to say that by the 1880s psychology had become an independent academic discipline dedicated—among other things—to the understanding of children's minds.[9] Yet, it is necessary to point out that there was never a 'single' psychology. From the outset it was a field which had arisen rather eclectically, housing a number of contending approaches, ideas and subfields. In the late 19th century, these included a mishmash of ideas that we today would classify as experimental psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, behaviourism and psychoanalysis.[10]

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interested in providing learning environments that fostered total freedom for children. However, even in their psychoanalytic inspiration, this camp was evidently still influenced by modern psychology as a broader discipline.

[7] Herbert Spencer, *Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects*, *Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects* (Auckland, New Zealand: Floating Press, 1911), 131.

[8] Kieran Egan, *Getting It Wrong from the Beginning: Our Progressivist Inheritance from Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 13.

[9] One possible date is 1879 when the first experimental psychology laboratory was established by Wilhelm Wundt at the University of Leipzig, another would be 1883 when such a laboratory was established at John Hopkins University by Wundt's student Stanley Hall, and a third would be 1875 when William James established a laboratory at Harvard University. The latter was not experimental but was used for teaching demonstrations.

[10] A similar development had already taken place in the early 19th century with pedagogy studies. Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), the German philosopher who came to occupy Immanuel Kant's position as Chair of philosophy at the University of Königsberg can be largely credited for establishing education

In short, while an exact date for psychology's grand entrance into the academic field of pedagogy is unclear, we can maintain that by the late 19th century in Europe it was no longer possible to speak about education without psychology and vice versa. Within this context, the stage had been set for a new institutional framework that simultaneously sought to study how children learn and/or how one should teach them. This is precisely what distinguished 20th century progressivism from seemingly similar ideas about learning or childhood which preceded it. Progressive education of the 20th century was entangled with- and influenced by-psychology.

Early 20th century's most prominent progressive pedagogues including John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Susan Isaacs, Bertrand Russel, and Jean Piaget inherited this legacy as they came to embrace psychology with open arms. While espousing radically diverse methods and competing philosophies, their works directly or indirectly drew on the assumptions that psychology offered. By the early 20th century, academic centres across the world came to introduce psychology within their teacher training programmes. Most famously, Columbia Teachers College introduced a programme in education psychology in the early 20th century with the help of John Dewey, (who served as President of the American Psychological Association). At the University of London, the first meeting of the British Psychological Society was held in 1901 and a psychology laboratory was subsequently established there. The laboratory was presided over by psychologist William McDougall, followed by Charles Spearman. Historian Laura Tisdall suggests that in England and Wales, "links between training colleges and the education departments of universities

(Pädagogik) as a *science* within the academy. Herbart essentially subjected pedagogy to academic inquiry by establishing it as an academic field of knowledge. Through his life-long work on teacher training, and his multiple works on education and psychology, such as *Psychologie als Wissenschaft neu gegrundet auf Erfahrung, Metaphysik, und Mathematik* (1824) and *Allgemeine Pädagogik* (1806), Herbart maintained that education could be studied and applied methodically and that one could arrive at the formulation of pedagogical principles through reason.

began to emerge from the 1930s."[11] These links were strengthened when Area Training Organisations (ATOs) were established to coordinate the work of training colleges and Institutes of Education which "brought training college practice into closer contact with academic research" and by extension closer to research emerging from the field of psychology.[12] Tisdall also demonstrates that while there were different ways of teaching psychology and competing schools of thought, it remained an important cornerstone of any teacher training course from the interwar period onwards.[13]

Comparative developments took place throughout the course of the 20th century in places such as Russia, Switzerland, Mexico and Italy where psychology enthusiasts founded programmes in order to understand children's minds and use their findings to ameliorate education.[14] In short, psychology had not only become the recipe for the 20th century's most successful crime novels, it had also become the marker of a forward-thinking and 'sound' pedagogical practice that changed the landscape of education.

The History of Egyptian Psychology

If global pedagogical trends of the early 20th century became so enmeshed with psychology, what exactly was transpiring in the Egyptian context?

[11] Laura Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?: How Childhood Changed in Mid-Twentieth-Century English and Welsh Schools* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 58.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Laura Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 58–62. Tisdall maintains that In 1962, 10-15 per cent of the total course in 109 training colleges was devoted to educational psychology which is significant insofar as it demonstrates the degree to which psychology had penetrated teacher training even if Tisdall nevertheless points that these courses were taught by inexperienced and not highly qualified instructors.
[14] See for example Victor Colotla and Samuel Jurado "Contributions to the History of Psychology: XXXIV. Enrique O. Aragon, a Pioneer in Mexican Psychology," *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 1983;57(3):1013-1014; See also Virginia Staudt Sexton, and John D. Hogan, eds., *International Psychology: Views from Around the World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Herbert J Walberg and Geneva D Haertel, "Educational Psychology's First Century," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 84, no. 1 (1992): 6.

As demonstrated in the introduction, historians of Egypt have misidentified progressive education for various reasons. Their failure to take into account the relationship between progressivism and psychology is one of them. It is through this relationship that one can truly discover the extent —and depth —of Egyptian engagements with progressivism, by bridging together two histories that have traditionally been explored as separate realms, but which together furnish new understandings of pedagogical thought. Indeed, the history of Egyptian psychology is noticeably understudied when compared to that of Egyptian education, perhaps because psychology's links to the nation-building project are not as straightforward as those of education thereby eschewing the interest of historians of the 1980s, 90s and 2000s.

The historiography locates the origins of modern Egyptian psychology in the late 19th and early 20th century with a particular focus on the 1920s and 1930s. Often depicted as a linear timeline, psychology is said to have emerged within modern educational institutions such as *Fu'ad I* University. For example, Fouad Abou-Hatab's chapter on the history of psychology in Egypt in *International Psychology: Views from around the World* briefly examines pre-modern iterations of psychological thought in Egypt/the Arab world before moving to a comprehensive overview of the development of psychology throughout the 20th century. It highlights the rise and fall of particular psychologists and provides an institutional history of the major sites, spaces and people involved in the practice of psychology.[15] A similar trajectory is followed by Ramadan A. Ahmed in his chapter on Egypt in the *Oxford Handbook of the History of Psychology: Global Perspectives*. While both these contributions are extremely valuable surveys of the development of psychology, the nature of their entries does not allow them to move beyond a rudimentary empirical

[15] Fouad Abou-Hatab A-L.H., "Egypt," in *International Psychology: Views from around the World*, ed. Virginia Sexton Staudt and John D. Hogan (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

survey of the field. Raja Ben Slama's work by contrast, attempts to theorize the reasons for which psychoanalysis experienced a decline in Egypt after its alleged peak in the 1950s and 60s.[16]

The most groundbreaking analytical work on the history of psychology in Egypt remains Omnia El-Shakry's *The Arabic Freud*. El-Shakry grapples with the genealogical and epistemological history of Egyptian psychoanalysis by focusing on one of its main founders, Yusuf Murad, thereby offering an interpretative analysis of the ways in which psychological thought was understood and practiced in mid-century Egypt.[17] As indicated in the introductory chapter, Shakry's work—much like Di Capua's—attempts to centre the contributions of a particular psychoanalyst rather than explore him as an agent of the larger nation-building project. However, it does not examine his larger institutional framework or the work of his contemporaries.

Despite this literature on the history of psychology, references to psychology's early beginnings within the field of education have been ignored, rarely exceeding a brief mention in the footnotes. Abou-Hatab, Ahmed and El-Shakry were far more interested in more straightforward starting points for the history of Egyptian psychology such as the launch of Egypt's first specialised psychology journal—*Majallat 'Ilm al-Nafs* (The Journal of Psychology) —in 1945. Indeed, there is little incentive to explore psychology's more humble beginnings as a subfield of pedagogy studies. This blind spot has resulted in insufficient attention to the central role played by psychology for the intellectual and practical development of progressive education in Egypt. Despite being heavily intertwined, both historiographies have not been brought into conversation with each other, at least not in the English-speaking academy.

[16] Raja Ben Slama, "La psychanalyse en Égypte," *Topique* 110, no. 1 (2010): 83–96.
[17] Omnia S. El Shakry, *The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

By contrast, the intimate relationship between psychology and progressive education has been noted by Egyptian historians of education (in Arabic)—most notably by Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali and Hasaan Muhammad Hasaan and others.[18] However, such engagements usually refer to psychology as only one of several components making up progressivism. They are also usually far more interested in what progressivism meant for the larger nation-building and Islamic reform project following the fashionable academic trends of the 1980s, 90s, and 2000s. Building on this existing historiographic legacy, the following combined analysis of senior pedagogues and their institutions will show how psychology was *the* building block of Egyptian progressive education, rather than merely a sub-field.

Egyptian Teacher Training Institutions

In the early 20th century, there were multiple teacher training colleges operating in Egypt. These institutions trained hundreds of teachers each year and collectively came to form a clear and institutionalised locus of knowledge production in the field of pedagogy. Such facilities fostered progressive ideas, emphasized the field of psychology and taught equivalent courses to generations of aspiring teachers. The most prominent were *Dar al-'Ulum* (The School of Science), *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Uliya* (The Higher Institute for Teachers) and *Ma'had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu'allimin* (The Institute of Education for Male Teachers) which was established in 1929.

Established in 1873, *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* was set up to train teachers in modern subjects and prepare them for the newly emerging public schools of the late 19th

[18] Hasaan Mohamed Hasaan, "Ittijahat al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr", 1993; ʿAbd al-Salam Dayf, "Fikr Isma'il Mahmoud Al-Qabbani",1977.

century.[19] As for *Dar al-'Ulum,* it was originally founded in 1872 to serve two functions. The first was to train judges in the personal status courts and the second was to train teachers for the secondary schools.[20] When a separate school for judges was established in 1907, *Dar al-'Ulum's* focus shifted to the training of future Arabic language teachers for all levels of education. That is, its students who were graduates of the *Azhar* schools were to be trained so that they may teach at the modern schools in Arabic.[21] The founding of both institutions should be understood as a part of the Egyptian state's attempts to modernise education in the 19th century.[22] Courses in psychology were introduced at *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Uliya* as early as 1907 when the school was still named *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-Khidiwiyya* (The Khedival Teachers Institute). The course was titled *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa ma ma'aha min al-Mantiq wa-'Ilm al-Nafs* (The Foundations of Education and the Accompanying Principles of Logic and Psychology). [23] At *Dar al-'Ulum*, students were taught classes in psychology as of 1929, a course which was more detailed in its exploration of psychology than its predecessor *al-Tarbiya al 'Ilmiyya wa-l-'Amaliyya wa-l-Mantiq* (Theoretical and Applied Pedagogy and Logic). [24] Even though these two institutions are the most famous, they were not the only ones. In 1900 *Madrasat al-Mu'allimat al-Saniyya* (The Saniyya School for Female Teachers) was established for female teachers. As of 1914, it offered courses in 'applied and theoretical pedagogy' a course which was equivalent to the courses taught at *Dar al-'Ulum* and *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*.[25] Similarly, in the early 20th century there were two separate training

[19] J Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education*, 439.
[20] Roderic and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East*, 97.
[21] Hilary Kalmbach, "From Turban to Tarboush", iii.
[22] 'Abd al-Mun'im Ibrahim al-Jami'i, *Tarikh Madrasat al-Muʿallimin al-ʿUliya.* (Cairo: al-Gabalawi, 1995), 32.
[23] Jamʿiyyat al-Muʿallimin, *Al-Kitab al-Dhahabi li-Madrasat al-Muʿallimin al-ʿUliya* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1937), 71.
[24] Muhammad ʿAbd al-Jawwad, *Taqwim Dar al-ʿUlum* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1947), 60–61.
[25] Amin Sami, *Al-Taʿlim fi Miṣr fi Sanatay 1914 wa 1915* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿarif, 1917), Appendix 26.

institutions for *kuttab* teachers, one for men and the other for women.[26] Both institutions, which were later transformed into training colleges for elementary and compulsory schoolteachers, offered courses in applied and theoretical pedagogy.[27]

The introduction of psychology courses at Egyptian teacher training colleges marks the beginning of a growing interest in child psychology, children's well-being and the basic principles of progressive education more broadly. It is safe to assume that all teachers graduating from these training colleges in the 1910s and 1920s had obtained some notion of psychology and by extension of progressive education. Despite these modest beginnings, psychology's importance to teacher training grew steadily from a subfield of pedagogy studies to *the* building block of teacher training. This was partially achieved through the establishment in 1929 of *Maʿhad al-Tarbiya*:

When Egypt gained nominal independence in 1922 and with the subsequent promulgation of the 1923 constitution, which guaranteed the right to education for boys and girls, a number of changes were carried out especially under the tenure of the new Minister of Education, 'Ali Mahir, whose Ministry launched a series of reform projects in 1925. With the British exit from the field of education and the retirement of controversial British advisor Douglas Dunlop in 1919 (Dunlop had cultivated many enemies in Egypt as the originator of the widely criticized elitist two-tier education system), Egyptian ministry officials, advisors and teachers were now able to carve out educational policies freely for

[26] Kuttab schools were pre-modern spaces of learning in which young children of different ages were taught to memorize the Qur'an. Similar spaces existed for Christian and Jewish children. In the late 19th century, the Ministry of Public Instruction sought to oversee the process of kuttab learning in an attempt to standardize its content and harness such networks for the eradication of illiteracy. As suggested by Hoda Youssef, the Ministry aimed to "counter the inherent plasticity of kuttab education" by introducing more mandatory reading, writing and arithmetic through a standardized teacher training programme designed for the kuttab schools. See Hoda A. Yousef, *Composing Egypt: Reading, Writing, and the Emergence of a Modern Nation, 1870-1930*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2017), 152.

[27] Sami, *Al-Taʿlim fī Miṣr*, Annex 26-28.

the first time since the British occupation of 1882.[28] Budgetary restrictions which had previously restricted reforms were lifted and a new spirit of reform made its way into Egypt's pedagogical institutions.

Within this context, in 1928, the Ministry of Public Instruction sought the expertise of two international advisers for the purpose of assessing Egypt's education system and more specifically, its teacher training programmes. The choice of advisors is quite telling since it included renowned professor Édouard Claparède, a Swiss neurologist, child psychologist and pedagogue who had founded the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in 1912, and M.O. Mann an inspector of teacher training colleges in Britain.

Both advisers submitted reports with their general findings that heavily critiqued the state of affairs of Egyptian education. In fact, their reports were deemed so critical that the Ministry of Public Instruction was accused by some headmasters and teachers of publishing fewer copies of the reports than originally planned in an attempt to keep the public in the dark about their content.[29] Whether such critiques were warranted remains unresolved, especially given the fact that those critiquing their lack of distribution seem to have gotten access to them after all. Claparède's 'fact finding mission' was meant to answer a series of questions pertaining to education in Egypt, questions that were directly posed by the Ministry itself. Many of these were related to teacher training and sought to solve an existing institutional conundrum: whether *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* should be joined with the Faculty of Arts at *Fu'ad I* University or whether it should remain as an independent institution. Several other questions touched upon the type of curriculum that

[28]For an excellent overview of the ramifications of British colonial rule on the Egyptian education system see Muhammad Abu-l-Isʿad, *Siyasat al-Ta'lim fi Misr Taht al-Ihtilal al-Britani* (Cairo: Tiba li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 1993).

[29] See 'Ali Hasan al-Haki''s statements in ʿAbd al-Hamid Matar Fahmi, *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr* (Alexandria: Matba'at Madrasat Muhammad 'Ali al-Sina'iyya, 1939), 142. This point was also raised by historian Iman Farag in "Isma'îl al-Qabbânî et la mesure de l'intelligence," *Egypte/Monde Arabe* 18 (1994): 55

Madrasat al-Mu'allimin should adopt and how reforms would be carried out in light of the expansion of *Fu'ad I* University, its nationalization in 1925, and the general educational reforms carried out by the Ministry.[30]

Answers to the Ministry's questions were submitted by Claparède in a report as recommendations. Given his background as a child psychologist, a neurologist and a pedagogue, he found it necessary that the government establish a quality teacher training institution with a clear focus on psychology and on progressive methods of education.[31] A few months later, in October 1929, the Ministry of Public Instruction decided to establish *Ma'had al-Tarbiya.*[32] The Institute was conceived as a new department of pedagogy at Fuad I University in Egypt and was meant to replace the aforementioned training facilities thereby effectively taking over the enterprise of teacher training in the country. [33] In reality, after its establishment, the Institute remained under the Ministry of Public Instruction and would not be joined to a university department until 1950 when it became part of the newly established Ibrahim Pasha University now 'Ayn Shams.

The Institute's curriculum included mandatory courses in psychology, theories of pedagogy, the history of education, experiential learning, library research methods, art and physical education.[34] Most striking was the founding of so-called 'experimental classrooms' attached to the department and in which teachers could test out 'modern' teaching methods and experiment with them on the ground.[35] The Institute also included a

[30] See Édouard Claparède, "Taqrir 'Am Marfu' 'ila Wizarat al-Ma 'arif al-'Umumiyya Min al-Duktur Claparède," Report (Cairo, 1929), Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.
[31] Ibid., 74.
[32] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East*, 98.
[33] See Law No. 58 of 1929 on the Establishment of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*.
[34] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in the Arab Countries of the Near East*, 99.
[35] A more detailed account on the experimental classrooms can be found in Chapter 4 "Progressive Experimentation".

department of experimental pedagogy which developed and carried out intelligence tests.[36] In addition, *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* boasted a psychological laboratory and a psychological clinic and required its students to spend at least three hours a week pursuing their hobbies.[37] The Institute's library was organized according to a modified version of Dewyan classification methods and encompassed, by 1949, 37500 books on education and psychology.[38]

In short, the Institute became a bastion of progressive pedagogy and psychology long before a department of psychology was established at *Fu'ad I* University. By 1946, there were 418 male students enrolled at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*.[39]

Although the Saniyya School for Female Teachers was turned into a secondary school for girls in 1930, three years later, the Ministry of Public Instruction established a new cohort of aspiring female teachers within the school which would later become *Ma'had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu'allimat* (The Institute of Education for Female Teachers). [40] The institute for female teachers was modelled after *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and followed its main pedagogical principles. By 1945/1946, the department was officially established in the district of Zamalek and boasted 144 students, a number which by 1949 had risen to 202.[41] As for *Dar al-'Ulum* it was joined under *Fu'ad I* University and by 1945-46 its students had to complete their final two years at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*.[42] The establishment of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* accelerated the interest in psychology in some of the country's older

[36] Isma'il al-Qabbani, *Qiyas al-Dhaka' fi-l-Madaris al-'Ibtida'iyya fi-l-Qahira* (Cairo: Al-Matabi' al-Amiriyya, 1938), 68. More on the intelligence tests carried out by al-Qabbani and others can be found in Chapter 2 of this dissertation: "Middle Ground Psychology."
[37] Ibid.
[38] 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *al-Sijil al-Thaqafi li Sanat 1949* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi li-l-Tiba'a wa-l-Nashr, 1950), 101.
[39] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in the Arab Countries*, 101.
[40] Ahmad 'Atiyatallah, *Taqwim al-Ta'lim fi Misr* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1934), 87-89.
[41] Ibid., 102;. Abu Khuldun Sati' al-Husari, *Hawliyyat al-Thaqafa al-'Arabiyya* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1949), 484.
[42] Ibid., 97.

teacher training institutions such as *Madrasat al-Muʿallimin al-Uliya,,*which by 1935 had graduated 2,235 male teachers in total since its establishment in the 1870s.[43] The 1930s and 1940s also witnessed a significant increase in the number of teacher training facilities for the primary and secondary schools. In 1947, the following teacher training schools were operational:

Type of Teacher Training Facility	**Number**	**Number of Students**
Madaris al-Muʻallimin al-'Awwaliyya (The Elementary Teachers Colleges for Men) scattered across various governorates	11	1729
Madaris al-Muʻallimat al-'Awwaliyya (The Elementary Teachers Colleges for Females) scattered across various governorates	15	1898
Madaris al-Muʻallimin al-'Ibtida'iyya (Male Primary Schoolteachers Colleges)	5	1308
Madaris al-Muʻallimat al-'Ibtida'iyya (Female Primary Schools Teachers Colleges)	1	32
Al-Maʻhad al-'Ibtida'i lil-l-Tarbiya al-Badaniyya li-l-Muʻallimin (The Primary	1	104

[43] Jamʿiyyat al-Muʿallimin, *Al-Kitab al-Dhahabi,* 244.

Institute for Physical Education for Male Teachers)		
Ma‘had al-Tarbiya al-Badaniyya li-l-Mu‘allimat (The Institute for Physical Education for Female Teachers)	1	122
Ma‘had al-Musiqa li-l-Mu‘allimat (The Music Institute for Female Teachers)	1	84
Ma‘had al-Funun al-Jamila li-l-Mu‘allimat (The Institute of Fine Arts for Female Teachers)	1	77
Ma‘had al-Tadbir al-Manzili wa-l-Funun al-Tarziyya (The Institute of Home Economics)	1	123
Ma‘had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu‘allimin Cairo/Alexandria (The Institute of Education for Teachers)		501
Madrasat al-Mu‘allimin al-‘Uliya (The Higher Institute for Teachers)	1	620
Ma‘had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu‘allimat Cairo (The Institute of Education for Female Teachers)	1	202
Total		6800

Table 1: Teacher training facilities in 1947—Source: Abu Khuldun Sati‘ al-Husari, Hawliyyat al-Thaqafa al-‘Arabiyya,1949, 484.

If by the 1920s, graduates of the older training colleges had received some level of training in psychology and were consequently familiar with the basic principles of progressive education, as *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and newer training institutes were established in the 1930s and 1940s, teacher training became inseparable from these principles. Even the institute of physical education for male teachers included courses in theories of education and psychology.[44]

Egyptian Psychologist-Educators

An important by-product of historian's interest in larger questions of nationalism and nation-building, is that many end up relying on public intellectuals, politicians and nationalist leaders as their main archival interlocutors, (rather than teachers) to understand Egyptian pedagogical thought.[45] As a general rule, everyone tends to have opinions about education, which—from a methodological perspective—makes it easy to find an abundance of ideas on education in the writings of the Egyptian elite irrespective of their actual proximity to the teaching profession. This might explain why historians like Barak Salmoni rely on the writings of Egypt's most famous public intellectuals, Nahda thinkers, and members of the intelligentsia to understand Egyptian pedagogical thought but whose writings on education were couched in nationalist and/or Islamic-revivalist language such as Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid or Rashid Rida. While Salmoni does attempt to give a voice to professional teachers, he primarily does so by investigating the press, a few pedagogy magazines, and by tracing the speakers at various pedagogy conferences to determine the

[44] Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in the Arab Countries*, 101.
[45] An important exception is Raja Adal's work on aesthetic education in Japan and Egypt whose protagonists are prominent educators and state bureaucrats rather than public intellectuals. See Raja Adal, *Beauty in the Age of Empire: Japan, Egypt, and the Global History of Aesthetic Education*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2019).

notoriety and relevance of their work for the broader educational establishment.[46] In short, his approach is rather eclectic as he looks for the shapers of pedagogical thought in a variety of places rather than try to locate them where one was most likely to find them: At teacher training institutions.

By revisiting some of the sources previously discussed in the literature, it is possible to trace the professional trajectory of Egyptian teachers. One source in particular promises to elucidate where the graduates ended up and whether they went on to become teachers who could, in theory, put the progressive ideas they were trained in into action. *Al-Kitab al-Dhahabi li Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Uliya* (the Golden Book of Higher Institute for Teachers) demonstrates the types of careers that young teachers embarked on following their graduation from *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Uliya*: Published by *Jami'iyyat al-Mu'allimin* (The Association of Teachers), in 1936/7 to commemorate fifty years since the graduation of the school's first cohort, this publication happens to contain the names of all the graduates of the school and their professional affiliations following the completion of their studies including whether they had later trained abroad, thereby making it possible to observe general patterns amongst teachers.[47] Of the 1,941 graduates between 1915 and 1934, 70% of them were employed as teachers at Egyptian public schools at the time of the Golden Book's publication in 1936/1937.[48] In addition, approximately 86% were employed by the Ministry of Public Instruction as teachers, headmasters or Ministry employees. That is, while the majority of the graduates may have started off as teachers,

[46] See for example Farag, "Éduquer Les Éducateurs" and Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism".
[47] The full list of graduates of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* can be found in Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin, *Al-Kitab al-Dhahabi*, 131–239. The list contains the names of the college's graduates, their year of graduation and their professional affiliation at the time of the book's publication. Occasionally, the list will include the references to other academic degrees obtained by the graduates including master's or PhD degrees obtained abroad.
[48] To calculate these percentages, I broke down the list of graduates into four main categories according to their professional affiliation at the time of the book's publication: teachers, teacher trainers, bureaucrats and headmasters. I proceeded to count the number of graduates in each category and to calculate the percentage they represent in relation to the total number of graduates from 1915 to 1934.

many moved up the professional ladder within the Ministry of Public Instruction either by becoming headmasters or Ministry inspectors and advisors thereby gaining access to the larger decision-making process and the prestigious process of textbook development within the Ministry.[49] A minority of these teachers ended up training teachers themselves, particularly at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and at the various primary school level training colleges scattered around the country. A similar development can be observed with the graduates of *Dar al-'Ulum*: While a comparable comprehensive list of all graduates is not available, Muhammad 'Abd al-Jawad's history of the institution published in 1947 alludes to the fact that most graduates ended up in the teaching profession, or in professions tightly connected to it, while a few others excelled in other fields.[50] Much like the graduates of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*, a few graduates from *Dar al-'Ulum* returned to the institution as trainers and many were later hired by *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* when it was established in 1929.

By tracing graduates of these institutions who later returned as trainers and including those with a specialization in psychology, a much larger (and more systematic) field of players can be imagined than what has traditionally been accounted for in the literature. The following table follows the professional trajectory of a few (but representative) senior pedagogues and trainers from the late 1910s to the 1950s. The profiles of teaching instructors at these institutions can be inferred through various sources. For one, *al-Kitab al-Dhahabi* contains lists of instructors at the time the book was published—particularly pedagogy instructors. Those at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* can be inferred through their by-lines in the press and pedagogy textbooks and teaching manuals which they authored, and through the lists of conference organisers instead of the list of presenters which was consulted by Salmoni.

[49] For a more thorough analysis of the role of inspectors in the textbook development process see Iman Farag, "Les manuels d'histoire égyptiens," *Genèses* 44, no. 3 (2001): 4–29.
[50] ʿAbd al-Jawad, *Taqwim Dar al-'Ulum*, 401.

Name	Degree 1	Degree 2	Position 1	Position 2	Position 3
Amin Mursi Qandil	Diploma Madrasat al-Mu‘allimin al-‘Uliya (MMU) 1914	BA from Sheffield 1919	Ministry of Public Instruction Inspector 1940s	Professor of Pedagogy Ma‘had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu‘allimin (MTM) 1936	Under Secretary of MTM 1936
Isma‘il al Qabbani	Diploma MMU 1917	BA University of London 1926, MA University of London	Teacher at Assiyut Secondary School 1926	Professor of Pedagogy MTM 1936	Dean of Ma‘had al-Tarbiya 1940s+ President of the Egyptian Association for Psychological Studies
Habib Jurji	MMU 1915	Certificate of Art Education London 1923	Inspector of Art ME 1930s		
Ahmad Shafiq Zahir	MMU 1918	Certificate of Art Education London	Inspector of Art ME 1930s	Head of the Art/Drawing Department at MTM 1940s	
Ibrahim Salama	Diploma Dar al-‘Ulum (DU) 1918	Education and Psychology Sorbonne+ Diploma Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute (1930s)	Teacher Damanhur School 1919		Professor of Education and Psychology at Dar al-‘Ulum 1937
Muhammad ‘Attiya al-Ibrashi	Diploma DU1921	Diploma of Education and Psychology	Teacher at various primary schools (1921-1924)	Professor of Pedagogy at DA 1930s	ME inspector (1940s?)

		Exeter University 1927			
Muhammad Husayn al-Makhzanji	Diploma MMU 1925	BA Birmingham 1927, MA in Education Birmingham 1931	Member of the British Psychological Association	Professor of Pedagogy Ma‘had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu‘allimat (Female Teachers College)	Dean of MTM Alexandria
Muhammad Khalafallah	Diploma DU 1928	BA Philosophy University of London, MA in Psychology University of London 1937	Teacher at ‘Abdin School	Professor Fu’ad I University	
Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid	Diploma MMU 1914	Cairo Law School 1924	Dean of MTM	Undersecretary of Dar Al-Kutub (National Library) 1940s	
Muhammad Fu’ad Jalal	Diploma MMU 1929	University of London Psychology 1942	Professor of Psychology MTM 1940s		
‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi	Diploma from MMU 1928	BA MA, PhD PhD University of London 1931. 1933, 1934	Member of the British Psychological Association	Professor of Psychology MTM 1930s	President of MTM 1950s
Muhammad ‘Ali Hafiz	Diploma MMU 1928	Diploma in Physical Training and Health from Scotland and Sweden 1932	Professor of Physical Activity MTM 1930s	President of Physical Activity Department at MTM 1940s	

Ahmad Zaki Muhammad	Diploma MMU 1927	B.Sc 1931 in Psychology M.Sc 1933 in Psychology Diploma of Education		Professor MTM 1930s	
Muhammad Khalifa Barakat	?	BA and PhD in Psychology University of London	Member of the British Psychological Association	Professor MTM 1940s	
Riad Muhammad ‘Askar	Diploma MMU 1928	BA Birmingham 1932 MA Birmingham 1934 (Psychology)		Professor MTM 1940s	
Yusuf Ibrahim Al-‘Afifi	MMU 1928	Certificate of Art Education London 1932	Inspector of Art ME 1930s	Professor at MTM 1940s	
Sumayya Fahmi	BA University of London 1934 Psychology (Diploma from Madrasat al-Mu‘allimat al-Saniyya ?)	MA PhD Indiana University 1955 (studied under Jean Piaget from 1934-1937)		Professor of Psychology at Female Teachers College 1940s	
Salih ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (Shihata)	Diploma MMU 1933	PhD University of London in Psychology	Member of the British Psychological Association	Teacher Farouk Secondary School 1936	Professor MTM 1940s
Asma’ Fahmi	BA History Fu’ad I University 1925	MA University of London in Educational Psychology 1937	Undersecretary of Ma‘had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu‘allimat		

			(Female Teachers College)		
Ihsan al-Qusi	BA American University of Beirut	PhD University of London	Inspector of Secondary Schools (1940s)	Dean of the Cairo School for Social Work	

Table 2: List of Influential Egyptian Teacher Trainers

The term *psychologist-educator* is best suited to capture the essence of this group of trainers and the role they came to play as thinkers and producers of knowledge at teacher training colleges in Egypt. Psychologist-educators' academic career encompassed a combined specialization in both pedagogy and psychology. By looking at the profiles of these instructors, a general pattern emerges: Members of the teaching staff were male and female graduates of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin, Dar al-'Ulum* and *Madrasat al-Mu'allimat*. Many of them obtained secondary degrees, a Master's or a PhD in the United Kingdom in psychology or pedagogy and they were often members of the British Psychological Society.[51] When in 1934, a young and promising scholar by the name of 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi returned to Egypt after a four year doctoral programme the University of London, he was immediately hired as a lecturer at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya. Al*-Qusi had just completed a Master's and PhD in psychology that same year and his research on the visual perception of space had been published by Cambridge University Press.[52] Al-Qusi was also a student of British psychologist Cyril Burt. In this respect, Britain was to Egyptian students of pedagogy what France was to Egyptian students of law.

[51] The full list of Members of the Society can be found in the *British Journal of Psychology*, 33, no. 4, (Apr 1, 1943). It includes Constance Bloor and Muhammad Kamil al-Nahhas from the Institute of Education for Female Teachers in Zamalek, 'Abde al-'Aziz al-Qusi and Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz Shihata.
[52] Abd al-Aziz El-Koussy, *An Investigation into the Factors in Tests Involving the Visual Perception of Space*, British Journal of Psychology. Monograph Supplements ; 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935).

Relying on a handful of examples such as Amir Buqtur who graduated from Columbia Teacher's College in 1924 and Ya'kub Famm who obtained a Master's degree from Yale in the 1920s, Salmoni suggests that by the late 1940s, "Britain had been eclipsed in Egyptian's educational studies" as they now preferred studying at American centres of education especially Yale and Columbia.[53] While Salmoni's observation is not necessarily incorrect, we should note that if British institutions were replaced by anything, it was actually *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* which began to attract young aspiring teachers as of the 1930s, including those who had graduated with degrees from other local institutions. Younger generations whose academic careers began after the nationalization of *Fu'ad I* Univeristy and after the founding of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, would often pursue higher studies there rather than travel abroad.[54]

Teachers employed by one institution often co-authored works with their colleagues from other institutions thereby assuring a cross-fertilization of ideas and an inter-institutional collaboration between training colleges. Beyond the Egyptian border, these training colleges collaborated with similar institutions in the wider Arab region most notably in Iraq, the Hijaz and in Palestine. In fact, a number of graduates from *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* were employed by training colleges in Iraq. For example, Muhammad Amin Ibrahim who obtained a B.A from Bristol in 1930 (in addition to his Diploma from *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*) went on to teach at the Teachers College in Baghdad.[55] Through their institutional affiliation, and the academic positions they occupied, psychologist-educators authored over fifty books on child psychology and education in the

[53] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism, 139- 143.
[54] The list of graduates from *Madarasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Uliya* (listed in al-Kitab al-Dhahabi) includes the first entry of a secondary degree from *Ma'had al-Tarbiy*a in 1931. Between 1931 and 1935 four graduates from *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* opted for a secondary teaching degree from *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*. Other popular secondary degrees included the Diploma of the Institute of Antiquities from the Faculty of Arts and a *licens*e in Arts from Fu'ad I University.
[55] Jamʿiyyat al-Mu'allimin, *Al-Kitab al-Dhahabi,* 231.

period between 1915 and 1956.[56] In addition, many psychologist-educators gave public lectures and wrote articles in the press.[57] For example, in 1949, psychologist-educators gave a series of public lectures on education and psychology at a variety of venues including *Dar al-'Ulum*, *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin*, *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, the Association of Young Muslim Men in Alexandria, the 'Urman Model School, the British Institute in Cairo, the Alliance for Free Education, and the American University in Cairo to name a few.[58] Psychologist-educators also organized academic conferences and—during the years in which they were actively teaching—lectured thousands of students in psychology and pedagogy.

In their training manuals, psychologist-educators put forward the idea that psychology was a science and that the scientific methods espoused in the natural sciences could be applied to the realm of the human mind. Gone was the age in which one speculated and theorized about the human mind and human behaviour. Now, educators believed, one could actually put theories to the test and extract generalizable principles following good old-fashioned (but modern) scientific thinking—via psychology. There are iterations of this notion as early as 1903 with the publication of 'Abd al-'Aziz Jawish's *Ghunyat al-Mu'addibin fi-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim*.[59] In his introduction, Jawish maintains that his work is meant to help teachers in their profession by addressing "everything

[56] See Appendix 1
[57] Collectively, the twenty instructors listed in Table 2 authored over 300 articles in the press between 1920 and 1950. Most of their work was featured in journals such as *al-Thaqafa* (Culture), *Al-Majalla al-Jadida* (The New Magazine) and *Al-Risala* (The Letter/Message). Muhammad Khalaf-Allah alone published 48 articles in *Al-Thaqafa* during this time period, while Asma' Fahmi published 12 articles in *Al-Risala.* More on the role of teachers in the press can be found in Chapter 6 of this dissertation.
[58] For a thorough breakdown of the lectures delivered on the topic of education in the year 1949 see 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi li Sanat 1949*, 164–65. The list of lectures includes those that were delivered by international visiting professors at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* such as Sir Fred Clark and Dr. William Grey but it also includes lectures by Egyptian psychologist-educators such as Isma'il al-Qabbanni, Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid, 'Ali Muhammad Shaltut, , Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf and Muhammad 'Abd al-Malik al-Kashif.
[59] Saʿid Ismaʿil ʿAli, *Tarikh al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr al-Haditha*, 138.

needed to teach the young" and "a bit of psychology."[60] A similar line of reasoning is followed ten years later in 'Ali 'Umar's 1913 *Hadayatu al-Mudaris li-l-Nizam al-Madrasi wa Turuq al-Tadris* (The Guidance of the Teacher to the Schooling System and Teaching Methods) which claims that "the foundation of the science of education is psychology *('Ilm al-Nafs)*."[61] Pedagogues maintained that psychology was the foundation of their practice while often expressing disdain for teaching practices that were not couched in this 'new science.' For example, Muhammad 'Ali Mustafa and Mansur Sulayman inaugurate the introductory chapter of their 1933 manual *Al-Tadris 'Usuluhu wa Tara'iquh* (Teaching: Its Foundations and Methods*)* by claiming that "educational methods must be based on psychological and scientific facts."[62] There are echoes of this sentiment in Amin Mursi Qandil's 1928 manual *'Usul a-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris* (The Foundations of Education and the Art of Teaching) in which he declares:

> Many people have spoken about education (…) and there have been contending opinions about how to educate children but (…) thanks to the development of sciences such as psychology (…) the rules of nature have been clarified (…). Education is now moving in the right scientific direction; it is built on scientific principles instead of these contradictory theoretical ideas which are not grounded in any real experience nor proper scientific experimentation.[63]

At the risk of painting a simplistic image of a large echo chamber, it suffices to say that in almost every teacher training manual published by psychologist-educators between 1910 and 1956, there is at least a brief mention of psychology and some variation on the notion that education must be predicated on its 'scientific principles.'[64] Practicing teachers also echoed these ideas in the education press: In 1942, Mitri Amin, a young teacher, published

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[60] Abd al-Aziz Jawish, *Ghunyat al-Mu'addibin fi-l-Turuq al-Haditha li-l-Tarbiyya wa-l-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Sha'b, 1903).
[61] 'Ali 'Umar, *Hadayatu al-Mudaris li-l-Nizam al-Madrasi wa Turuq al-Tadris*, 8th ed. (Cairo: Matba'at Hindiyya, 1924), 5.
[62] Muhammad 'Ali Mustafa and Mansur Sulayman, *Al-Tadris 'Usuluhu wa Tara'iquhu,* (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Rahmaniyya, 1933), 3.
[63] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris*, 2.
[64] For an overview of the textbooks used at Egypt's top teacher training facilities see Appendix 1. Most of the textbooks on this list emphasize the role of psychology as an essential component of pedagogy.

an article on the usage of psychology in everyday life declaring in a very 'matter of fact' manner that modern civilization was predicated on scientific thinking and that this thinking "must be applied to human beings as it has been applied to all other natural non-human aspects of life. Amin suggests that "psychology affects all areas of our lives and we now use its discoveries in different areas to the extent that we cannot find an area in life which does not have a psychological dimension."[65] Amin was neither the first nor the last to write about the importance of psychology and the sciences for a true understanding of education and modernity.

Alongside teacher training manuals, psychologist-educators also authored psychology textbooks as of 1915. For example, 'Ali al-Jarim and Mustafa Amin's *'Ilm al-Nafs wa Atharihi fi-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim (Psychology and its Impact on Education)* was arguably the first psychology manual published in Arabic by Egyptians. In it, the authors maintain that the position of psychology vis-à-vis teaching was comparable to that of our bodily organs vis-à-vis medicine. "Just as a doctor cannot excel in his profession unless he has complete knowledge of our organs, so too must a teacher's work rest on knowledge of human psychology *(al-Nafs al-Insaniyya)*."[66]

Even Qandil ventured full force into psychology with the publication of his two-part text titled *'Usul 'Ilm al-Nafs wa Atharuhu fi-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim* (The Foundations of Psychology and its Impact on Education) in 1925. *'Usul 'Ilm al-Nafs* echoed a similar yet more nuanced position towards psychology, one in which Qandil acknowledged that there was "no single definition of psychology that all researchers could agree on."[67]

It is therefore not surprising that pedagogues such as Sumayya Fahmi, 'Abd al-'Aziz al Qusi and Isma'il al-Qabbani, Ihsan al-Qusi and Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal were among the

[65] Mitri Amin, "Istikhdam 'Ilm al-Nafs fi-l-Haya al-'Amaliyya," *al-* '*Ulum* 9 (1942): 68–69.
[66] 'Ali Al-Jarim and Mustafa Amin, '*Ilm al-Nafs wa Atharihi fi-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim* (Cairo, 1915), 8.
[67] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul 'Ilm al-Nafs* (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-'Arabiyya, 1925), 6.

founders of the Egyptian Association of Psychological Studies in 1948, which was founded at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* on the eve of February 23rd 1948.[68] The literature has remembered these pedagogues as psychologists even though they spent the bulk of their professional and academic careers training future teachers.

As trainers, psychologist-educators cultivated strong relationships with their students and often acted as mentors.[69] For example, Habib Jurji, Yusuf al-'Afifi and Ahmad Shafiq Zahir who are remembered as important Egyptian artists, were first and foremost teachers who "promoted a radical departure from the university- and academy-centred focus for the arts" and supported more radical surrealist students such as Ramsis Yunan whom Jurji admitted to *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* after he had dropped out of the School of Fine Arts in 1935.[70] But psychologist-educators were also heavily criticized by their students when they failed to uphold the principles of progressive pedagogy in their own practice. In the first edition of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*'s student magazine published in 1937, a student by the name of Muhammad 'Abd al-Hamid Abu-l-'Azm criticized the headmaster of the experimental classrooms that were attached to the Institute and in which young teachers could experiment with different teaching methods as part of their training:

> The headmaster of the experimental classrooms oscillates between the new education and the old one (…) But perhaps we should be more forgiving of his actions? Surely, he must be mixing both methods intentionally. Why should he not be allowed to experiment? After all, is he not the headmaster of the experimental classrooms?[71]

[68] More information on the origins of the Egyptian Association of Psychological Studies can be found on its official webpage: https://eaps-eg.com/page/Abouttheorganization.
[69] See Sumayya Fahmy's note on Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid in *Al-Hadana: Nafsiyyat al-Tifl fi-l-Sanawat al-Khams al- 'Ula*, (Cairo: Matba'at Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1946); and Salih 'Abd al-Aziz's praise of Isma'il al-Qabbani in the introduction to his translation of Percy Nunn's work in Percy Nunn, *Al-Tarbiya Madatuha wa Mabadi'uha al-Awwaliyya Ta'lif T.P. Nunn,* transl. Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz, (Cairo: Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim, 1961).
[70] Patrick Kane, "Art Education and the Emergence of Radical Art Movements in Egypt: The Surrealists and the Contemporary Arts Group, 1938-1951," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 44, no. 4 (2010): 95–119.
[71] Muhammad 'Abd al-Hamid Abu-l-'Azm, "Nazir al-Fusul", *Sahifat Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, 1, no.1 (1937): 164.

The sarcasm with which the headmaster's failures were mocked by Abu-l-'Azm demonstrates a level of ease and a certain willingness to create a learning atmosphere that was open to criticism and debate inside the walls of these training colleges—and especially at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*. This is most evident in the subsequent issues of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*'s student magazine which was renamed *al-Jaras* (The Bell): In its May 1944 issue, the students published a series of sarcastic essays, caricatures and musings poking fun at their teachers. One of them consisted of a list of technical terms from the field of psychology followed by an accompanying name of one of their teachers. While al-Qusi's name was listed after 'escapism', Riad 'Askar's was listed under 'self-esteem' and Mr. 'Attiya, the telephone operator, was listed under 'curiosity and exploration'.[72] The opening page of the April 1948 issue displays a massive caricature of the 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, who at the time served as Dean of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* holding a tennis racket in one hand a psychology textbook in the other. The caption reads: Holding the Institute in one hand and psychology in the other.

[72] "Nasibuhum Min 'Ilm al-Nafs," *Al-Jaras*, no. 1 (1944): 36.

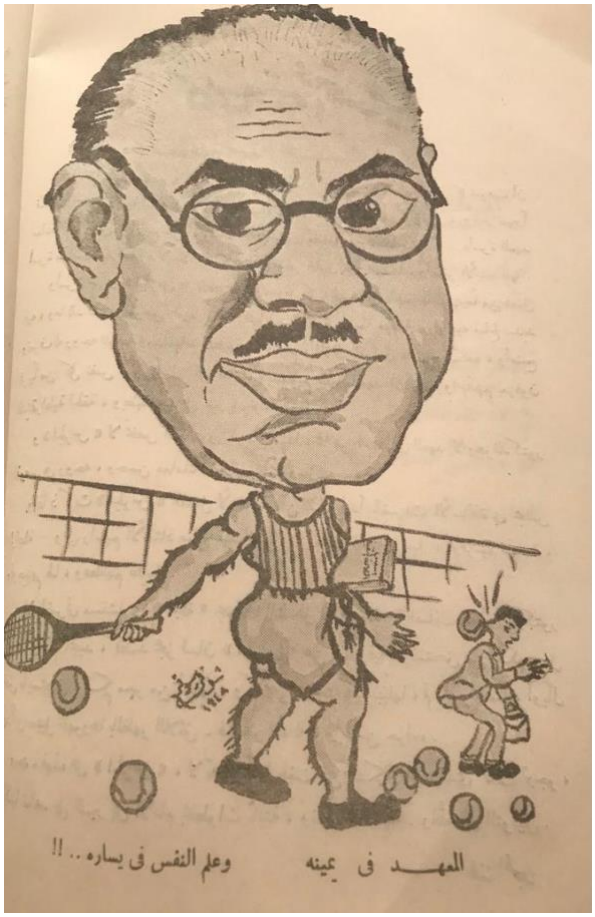


Figure 1: Caricature of 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi in al-Jaras magazine, 1948 "The Institute in his right hand, psychology in his left" hand")

Within this atmosphere of debate in which students and psychologist-educators reflected, experimented and trained, young teachers were far more likely to turn to their mentors for advice than to the elite public intellectuals that are disproportionately featured in the literature. Likewise, given their continuous deployment between the training colleges and their inspectoral role within the Ministry of Public Instruction, psychologist-educators were often solicited as advisors and weighed in on important policy issues as will be discussed in Parts II and III of this dissertation.[73] In other words, psychologist-educators such as Amin Mursi Qandil, Sumayya Fahmi and 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi were far more involved with—and had a much more direct relationship to—members of the teaching

[73] Isma'il Mahmud al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim,* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1951).

profession than Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, Rashid Rida or even Taha Husayn. They were *the* progressive pedagogues in early 20th century Egypt.

The Merits of an Institutional Approach

This brief investigation into the institutional mechanisms responsible for the emergence of Egypt's public teaching profession helps us identify who progressive pedagogues were and sketch an image of their professional development. Yet, one element remains unresolved: What are we to make of the relationship between psychologist-educators and Western (primarily British) academic centres? Should this be considered a form of passive reception and a classic case of Western transfer? After all, many of the protagonists of this story had trained at the University of London, which as discussed earlier, was among the first academic centres to have incorporated psychology into their pedagogy studies programmes. The rest had come into contact with Western centres of learning including American, French and Swiss institutions. Some of the existing literature on the history of education in Egypt seems to adopt such a position. The few studies to have recognized the intellectual force that progressive education came to play in Egypt, do so by following either of the following approaches (or a combination of both): On the one hand, they assume a mono-discursive relationship between a dominant and homogenous American progressive pedagogue—John Dewey—and a docile Egyptian thinker, Isma'il al-Qabbani.[74] This approach focuses on these two individual actors, one located in the Western 'centre', the other in the Egyptian 'periphery' and assume that their connections followed clear monodirectional and diffusionist lines with "fixed centres of arrival and

[74] Kombar, "Isma'il Al-Qabbani (1898-1963)"; El-Nagar and Krugly-Smolska, "Modernization of Education in Egypt: The Liberal Movement Towards Dewey 's Ideas"; Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism"; Dayf, "Fikr Isma'il Mahmoud Al-Qabbani"; Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali, *Tarikh al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr al-Haditha*; ʿAwad Tawfiq ʿAwad and ʿIssam Tawfiq Qamar, *Fikr Isma'il al-Qabbani fi Tahsin wa Tatwir al-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Al-Markaz al-Qawmi li-l-Buhuth al-Tarbawiya wa-l-Tanmiya, 2015).

departure."[75] On the other hand, if they recognize the multiplicity of actors involved in the exchange, they will most certainly focus on the Anglo-American 'origin' of progressive thought suggesting, as historian Barak Salmoni does, "it is no exaggeration to assert that Egyptian educators were positively enthralled by what they perceived as a peerless Anglo-American educational system and spirit."[76]

Recent scholarship on the transnationality of the history of education critiques such simplistic transfer paradigms by highlighting their shortcomings.[77] Not only do such paradigms fail to interrogate the very category of the West, they are also not able to capture the often complicated, multi-directional, multi-layered vectors of knowledge circulation between different geographies. However, even when more transnational approaches are adopted, ones that try to critique Western hegemony by giving agency to actors in the periphery and highlighting their equal contributions to knowledge production or those that emphasise a shared global history and connections between non-Western peripheries, we are left with an incomplete picture which obfuscates the asymmetrical power dynamics between the colonial and the colonised. Transnational approaches that emphasise a shared history, criss-crosses and entanglements tend to focus on a handful of individuals across two or more geographies and/or trace the circulation of particular texts.[78] But what happens when there is more than just one actor on each 'side' of the

[75] Noah W. Sobe, "Entanglement and Transnationalism in the History of American Education," in *Rethinking the History of Education : Transnational Perspectives on Its Questions, Methods, and Knowledge*, ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 96.
[76] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism", 355.
[77] Eckhardt Fuchs and Eugenia Roldán Vera, *The Transnational in the History of Education: Concepts and Perspectives*, Global Histories of Education (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). Joëlle Droux and Rita Hofstetter, eds., *Border-Crossing in Education: Historical Perspectives on Transnational Connections and Circulations* (New York: Routledge, 2018). Barnita Bagchi, Eckhardt Fuchs, and Kate Rousmaniere, *Connecting Histories of Education: Transnational and Cross-Cultural Exchanges in (Post-)Colonial Education* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014); Thomas S. Popkewitz, ed., *Rethinking the History of Education : Transnational Perspectives on Its Questions, Methods, and Knowledge* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Thomas S Popkewitz, ed., *Inventing the Modern Self and John Dewey: Modernities and the Traveling of Pragmatism in Education*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
[78] This approach is not particular to Egypt, as studies of the history of progressive education in other countries also focus on the diffusionist circulation of John Dewey's ideas. See for example, Jeremy Cole,

transnational encounter? How does one make sense of intellectual encounters when entire academic departments are engaged and not just a handful of individuals? What happens when actors in the 'periphery' are aware of, inspired by and engaged with, developments in other 'peripheries'? Historian Raja Adal suggests that "the increasing globalization of the world in the twentieth century leads us from a history of traceable transnational flows to a more nebular global history of contacts and shared experiences."[79] Indeed, even Salmoni whose work emphasizes Anglo-American influences, acknowledges the more global nature of Egypt's engagement with progressive education. By analysing the coverage of non-Western education in the Egyptian pedagogy press, particularly *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, Salmoni concludes that "expanding on an interest demonstrated even before 1910, Egyptian educators and pedagogical theorists were deeply and consistently concerned with educational developments around the world from 1923 to 1952. The geographical scope of their interest was likewise extremely broad, exceeding in many ways the breadth of Turkish educational thinkers' foreign interests."[80] In comparison to Turkey, "Egyptian educational literature focused on a broader, more diverse group of foreign countries (…) [including] India, China, Iran, Iraq, and other Arab countries."[81] Interestingly, Mexico occupied an important position in the writings of Egyptian educators particularly during the years of the Mexican Revolution. In pedagogy magazines, educators debated the Mexican primary education system, the country's rural education

"Democracy Exported, History Compounded: John Dewey's Trip to Turkey," *History of Education*, 2014, 1–20; Sabiha Bilgi and Seçkin Özsoy, "John Dewey's Travelings into the Project of Turkish Modernity," in *Inventing the Modern Self and John Dewey: Modernities and the Traveling of Pragmatism in Education*, ed. Thomas S Popkewitz, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Marcus Vinicius Da Cunha, "John Dewey, the Other Face of the Brazilian New School," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 24, no. 6 (2005): 455–70; Victor Kobayashi, "John Dewey in Japanese Educational Thought," (PhD diss., University of Michigan,1964) ; Zhixin Su, "A Critical Evaluation of John Dewey's Influence on Chinese Education.," *American Journal of Education* 103, no. 3 (1995): 302–25; Sor-Hoon Tan, "China's Pragmatist Experiment in Democracy: Hu Shih's Pragmatism and Dewey's Influence in China," *Metaphilosophy* 35, no. 1-2 (2004): 44–64.

[79] Adal, *Beauty in the Age of Empire*, 12.

[80] Salmoni, Pedagogies of Patriotism, 348.

[81] Ibid., 349

and the plight of Mexican teachers—especially the massacres committed against teachers during the Revolution.[82]

With the institutionalisation of teacher training colleges such as *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* in the 20th century, entire academic traditions were established creating an intellectual reality in which the points of departure and the points of arrival were continuously blurred not just by virtue of the globalised historical moment that Adal points towards, but also by virtue of there being a multitude of actors within these institutions who continuously and simultaneously research, write and produce. Nowhere is this rich academic atmosphere better captured than in al-Qusi's opening remarks as Dean of the Institute in *al-Jaras* magazine in 1948. After stating that, over the years, the institute had welcomed a number of international experts in the field of pedagogy and psychology, including British psychologist Charles Spearman and American philosopher of education Boyd Henry Bode who occupied short term lectureship positions at the Institute and had a lasting impact on the students, al-Qusi suggests that "the establishment of the institute, the development of its philosophy, and the formation of its foundations was not just thanks to contributions of these international experts."[83] For al-Qusi, the institute was built on the shoulders of local actors such as Isma'il al-Qabbani, Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal, 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Majid, Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz, Muhammad 'Abd al-Hamid Abu-l-'Azm, 'Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim, Yusuf al-'Afifi, Sa'd al-Khadim. He suggests that all of these actors were prolific writers, brilliant researchers and active contributors to the field of pedagogy and child psychology: Fu'ad Jalal was the mastermind behind an important pedagogical experiment, a summer camp retreat which profoundly impacted the ways in which the curriculum was developed

[82] Ahmad Musa, *Al-Fihris al-'Am min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 1947), 230.
[83] 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Qusi, "Risalat al-Ma'had," *Al-Jaras*, April 1948, 7–14. Charles Spearman was a renowned British psychologist who advanced theories on the measurement of intelligence. Al-Qusi mentions that he was in direct conversation with him while studying in London. Boyd Henry Bode was an American philosopher of education.

in the future.[84] Salih ‘Abd al-‘Aziz published a number of important works on pedagogy, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Abd al-Majid developed important experiments in the teaching of basic literacy (reading and writing) in Egypt and the Sudan, and Yusuf al-‘Afifi was the founder of a new school of art education.[85] Above all, al-Qusi was very proud of the fact that the Institute had managed to invite Sati‘ al-Husari, Syrian pedagogue and Nationalist leader to join its teaching staff.[86]

Herein lies the merits of an institutional approach which takes into account the multiplicity of actors involved in the process of knowledge production as a collective. The story of these training colleges and their contribution to pedagogical thought is a story of institution building, dynamism and exchange. Teacher training colleges provided institutional scaffolding which allowed for the creation of exchanges within and between local, regional and European centers of learning. Beyond the twenty teachers listed in Table 2 for example, there were a total 68 teacher trainers who had graduated from *Madrasat al-Mu‘allimin* between 1915 and 1935 and who went on to train hundreds of other teachers. This was not merely a transnational exchange that rested on a few individual connections between a Western expert and an Egyptian thinker, it was an institutionally driven, large-scale, and systematic engagement with the latest debates on pedagogy and child psychology around the world in a relatively free manner and on equal footing.

[84] Al-Qusi, "Risalat al-Ma‘had,” 9.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 11.

Conclusions

This chapter has tried to depart from previous scholarship on the history of education by focusing on teachers as the primary historical interlocutors. In order to do so, it begins with the 'first stop' along a teacher's professional journey, teacher training institutions, arguing that a more nuanced and accurate image of the teaching profession can only be achieved by looking for teachers within their institutions of origin, so to speak. It further shows how psychology was a central building block of the progressive education espoused at these institutions and that it demarcates this 20th century movement from similar ideas predating it. The institutional approach adopted in this chapter allows us to identify a distinct group of senior pedagogues, 'psychologist-educators' who became the leading figures in the development and production of progressive ideas. Finally, this institutional approach allows us to be mindful of the multi-directionality of intellectual exchanges without diluting the larger asymmetrical power dynamics imposed by Egypt's semi-colonial reality. It allows for the possibility that academics and students (relatively) freely produce knowledge and 'push back.' Exactly how they did so, will be the subject of the following chapter which looks more closely at the particularities of psychologist-educators' progressivism and the uniqueness of their brand of psychology which they promoted at their institutions. Far from being a simple case of Western transfer, in which Egyptian educators were docile recipients of an Anglo-American theory of progressive education, psychologist-educators created an academic tradition predicated on their understandings of psychology at their respective institutions.

Chapter 2
'Middle Ground' Psychology

During your time at the Institute, which professors had a lasting impact on you?
I.Z: I used to love Sumayya Fahmi who had just returned from her studies abroad. She was our psychology instructor. She taught us theories of psychology—theories that we had never heard of before."

- Z., I. Interview by Rania Abdel Rahman. Transcript, n,d. Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women's Oral History, The Women and Memory Forum.

Khayr al-'Umur Awsatuha (The best things are in the middle /All things in moderation)

-Arab Proverb

On the 9th of June 1963, famed Egyptian intellectual, Luis 'Awad, published an opinion piece in *Al-Ahram*, Egypt's most popular daily newspaper. The article titled "The Trojan Horse of Imperialism: The University and the New Society" was an attempt to narrate the history of Egyptian institutions of higher learning during the interwar period. For 'Awad the matter was very simple: teacher training institutions, led by Isma'il al-Qabbani, were the embodiment—and extension—of Douglas Dunlop's colonial education policies. Dunlop used them as a pretext to subvert the university project and to undermine its establishment. Later, they became a stepping-stone to complicate the work of the university and that of its graduates, especially those who wanted to join the teaching profession. The University, led by Taha Husayn, by contrast, was the epicentre of revolutionary anti-imperial struggle. 'Awad went as far as to suggest that: "Teacher training institutions were platforms for the brainwashing of the country's youth to completely isolate them from the revolutionary thought emanating from the university."[1]

[1] Luis ʿAwad, "Husan Tarawuda al-Istiʿmar fi Hayatuna al-Thaqafiyya: Al-Jamiʿa wa-l-Mujtamaʿ al-Jadid," *Al-Ahram*, June 9, 1963.

He also accused *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* and what he deemed as its later extension—*Ma'had al-Tarbiya*—as centres whose sole purpose was to graduate civil servants and bureaucrats and offer nothing but "technical information" devoid of critical thought. 'Awad may have been drawing on some of Taha Husayn's early writings on the topic during the 1920s: historian Hussam Ahmed explains that as early as 1923, Husayn believed that the Ministry of Public Instruction (which supervised the work of teacher training colleges) "was incapable of ridding itself of the British influence over its policies any time soon."[2] But this critique in the early days following the British exit from the field of education was primarily levelled at education policies and not the training colleges or their intellectual offering per se. Given the timing of 'Awad's article, it is more likely that he was articulating a larger position that became increasingly popular among Egypt's intellectual elite in the early 1960s. The first to identify this new trend was historian Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali whose 1993 *Nazarat fi-l-Fikr al-Tarbawi* (Viewpoints in Pedagogical Thought) posits that the rise of Nasserist (and Arab Socialist) thought among Egypt's intelligentsia between 1964 and 1971 resulted in the demonization of Isma'il al-Qabbani, progressive education and pragmatism. "Progressive education", 'Ali suggests "became a conservative and infiltrating ideology, its proponents were deemed defeatists, and everything they did was seen as a tool in the hands of imperialists and conservative forces to deplete the country of its own talents and resources. (…) this view turned them into dark pages that smell of treason."[3]

Perhaps unbeknownst to 'Ali, one year after the publication of his critique, historian Iman Farag would remind her readers of 'Awad's view. In her 1994 article "Ismâ'îl al-Qabbâni et la mesure de l'intelligence," Farag not only cites 'Awad but also suggests that the

[2] Hussam Ahmed, "Statecraft and Institution Building between Two Revolutions: Taha Hussein and Egypt's Road to Independence (1919–1952)" (PhD diss., McGill, 2018), 209.
[3] Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali, *Nazarat fi-l-Fikr al-Tarbawi*, 136.

conflict between the independent university, and the Ministry of Public Instruction's teacher training colleges was a conflict between "the intellectual elite and the bureaucrats, the University against Ministry."[4]

There are two main insinuations in 'Awad and subsequently Farag's presentation of the conflict between these institutions. The first—and perhaps more straightforward—is the accusation that Egyptian teacher training institutions were nothing more than bastions of colonial thought where Egyptians were taught to blindly copy Anglo-American progressivism within a more diluted semi-colonial context. The previous chapter has tried to complicate this assumption by demonstrating the ways in which progressive knowledge was neither diffused from an 'Anglo-American centre', nor blindly adopted by an 'Egyptian periphery' made up of a handful of individuals. But it is the second and perhaps more insidious insinuation that this chapter will be addressing: that teacher training colleges were somehow not *real* academic institutions insofar as they were nothing more than technocratic spaces of higher learning, technical schools, if you will, where students were shielded from rigorous and stimulating intellectual debates, revolutionary politics and meaningful knowledge production, an early 20th century equivalent of today's business schools as viewed by some academics in the humanities and social sciences.

But this is not necessarily how Egyptian pedagogues of the interwar period viewed their own institutions. To be sure, some of them were critical of the ways in which teacher training was carried out. For example, at the conference on 'The Methods of New Education' which was organised by the Association of Graduates of the Institute of Education in 1945, a sub-committee comprised of Amin Sami Hassuna, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-

[4] Iman Farag, "Isma'îl al-Qabbânî et la mesure de l'intelligence". For an analysis of the early 20th century debate over whether teachers should be trained within *Fu'ad I* University or within specialized teacher training institutions see "Mostafa Abdel Rahman Darwish, "A comparative Study of some Problems in Teacher Education in the United Arab Republic (Egypt) and the United States of America", (PhD diss., University of London Institute of Education, 1967).

Qusi, Asma‘ Fahmi, and a group of teachers and headmasters delivered their findings on the state of progressive education in the country and critiqued teacher training more specifically. Their intervention decried the contradictory teaching methods that aspiring teachers were left to grapple with throughout the course of their training. According to their report, there was a vast difference between the methods espoused by pedagogy instructors and those encouraged by instructors of other subjects: “the Head teacher asks [the teacher] to stick to the curriculum, to the textbook, to a particular teaching style and to take examinations and the Ministry’s inspectors seriously. By contrast, pedagogy instructors encourage [the teacher] to focus on activities in the classroom, to inspire students, and widen their horizons.”[5] But many pedagogues were very proud of the intellectual standard being offered, especially at *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya*. In fact, the same members of the sub-committee admitted earlier on in their report that the state of teacher training had tremendously improved after the establishment of *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya* and other similar institutions, i.e. after 1929.[6] After all, in February 1937, the then president of *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya*, Amin Sami Hassuna, published a highly positive review of this teacher training facility in *Al-Muqtataf* (The Excerpt): “This summer,” he wrote, “I travelled to England to participate in the International Conference on Education and to learn about the latest research. I have returned with full conviction that the level of our offering at *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya* is in no way inferior to that of the world’s most prestigious teacher training colleges.”[7] If Egyptian pedagogues believed their institutions to be valuable, we are then left with two major questions: What exactly, other than the broad focus on psychology mentioned in the previous chapter, was offered in terms of

[5] Rabitat Khariji Ma‘had al-Tarbiya, *Mu’tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 50.
[6] The year *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya* was established.
[7] Amin Sami Hassuna, “Ma‘had al-Tarbiya,” *Al-Muqtataf*, no. 2 (1937): 158–60.

pedagogical ideas and theories? Why were pedagogues inclined to teach these ideas and think of them as valuable?

To answer these questions, this chapter focuses on a wide range of previously unexplored Egyptian teacher training manuals which were used at Egypt's main teacher training institutions. I draw on about fifty manuals published between 1903 and 1955 to show the ways in which psychologist-educators advanced a very particular brand of psychology that was unique to their context. Training manuals occupy a special position between theory and application and provide a rich pedagogical commentary which can reveal the degree of Egyptian pedagogues' participation in knowledge production. Because they are authored by teachers for teachers, such manuals allow us to explore and centre teachers' voices. In other words, we are given insights into the perspectives of the senior pedagogues who authored them as well as the young trainees who received them and can come to a more thorough understanding of Egyptian pedagogical thought and training practices. The chapter also draws on the traces left by these teachers in the press and in specialized pedagogy magazines.

By centring the writing of Egyptian pedagogues, this chapter argues that teacher training colleges were intellectual centres par excellence. At these institutions, psychologist-educators developed a distinct philosophy of education which was based on what will be referred to below as 'Middle Ground Psychology'—an approach which sought to tread a fine line between Freudian psychoanalysis, on the one hand, and developmental psychology, on the other, all while being extremely critical of behaviourism. Within the vast field of progressive education, Egyptians were able to carry out intelligence tests, psychological experiments, and engage with an academic tradition as equals by developing their own ideas freely, meticulously and rigorously. The chapter also argues that one of the main reasons why psychologist-educators were drawn to progressive education is precisely

because it was an intellectually stimulating and interesting school of thought, one which gave them free range to experiment, awarded them engaging debates and allowed them to produce knowledge and 'flex' their intellectual muscles especially given progressivism's reflexive encouragement of independent thought and critical thinking. In other words, progressive education was interesting for what it had to offer psychologist-educators *intellectually*.

Which Psychology?

Years after 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi was hired by *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*—and, as he suggests, after much insistence from his students, –he finally decided to compile his lectures and publish them as a book titled *'Usus 'Ilm al-Nafs''* (The Principles of Psychology). In the introductory chapter of this book, published in 1950, al-Qusi suggests that he was not influenced by a particular school of psychology but by a combination of schools of thought including the theories of Charles Spearman, Gestalttheorie, William McDougall and psychoanalysis.[8]

Al-Qusi's opening remarks are interesting for a number of reasons. On the one hand, they suggest that he was extremely well versed in the heated academic debates that were ongoing at the time of his writing. But they also indirectly point to the very pragmatic problem that teachers face when exploring psychological ideas: how should one practically deal with the conflicting methods that result from different schools of psychology? How does one grapple with different ideas about who a child is and how they learn best when different schools of psychology tell us such radically different things? Indeed, while there was a general agreement amongst Egyptian educators that the 'science' of psychology

[8] See the introduction of 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, *'Usus 'Ilm al-Nafs* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1950).

should be the foundation of their practice, the 'kind' of psychology they were inspired by remains to be understood.

In her poignant analysis of progressive education in interwar Britain, historian Laura Tisdall suggests that the tensions within the inter-war progressive education movement can best be understood if linked to intellectual differences between what she refers to as "utopian progressives" and "non-utopian progressives." The former group "tended to be heterogenous in their methods and curriculums", maintained that "children's development (..) [should] not [be] controlled by adults" and most importantly, drew from psychoanalysis.[9] For these educators, this meant that children's behaviours did not stem from a child's faulty nature but that they originated in their subconscious which was tied to the ways in which a child was raised by their parents/guardians. In other words, this grouped heavily relied on Freudian insights which believed the now universally accepted principle that "there are unconscious causes of behaviour."[10] Utopian progressives therefore allowed students to "explore repressed emotions and work out their neuroses."[11] As such, they advocated for complete freedom in education, despite their heterogenous methods. Practically speaking, this was translated into a distinct "psychoanalytical vision for education [which] centered on organization and management with School Councils—where pupils met to have a say in how the school was run—and other forms of self-government (…)" to ensure that "children and adults relate to each other on equal terms."[12] Thus, utopian progressives proposed a complete shift in the power dynamic of the school: Giving children full control of their educational destiny was key to setting them free from the shackles of oppression they had faced as infants.

[9] Laura Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 2–3.
[10] André Kukla and Joel Walmsley, *Mind: A Historical and Philosophical Introduction to the Major Theories* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2006), 31.
[11] Laura Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 2–3.
[12] Ibid.

Because of utopian progressives' psychoanalytic understandings of the self, their main concern was not to inflict further pain on the child but to provide an environment in which they could free themselves.

By contrast, the non-utopian progressives, whose ideas gained traction in Britain after the World War II, argued that the child "needed to develop healthily, not only physically and mentally but also emotionally and socially, in order to become a fit citizen of the welfare state."[13] This is why according to this model, "adults played a key role in guiding the child's development, because children's capabilities were so limited in comparison to those of their parents and teachers. A child-centered curriculum therefore, not self-government, was at the centre of this 'educational revolution.'[14]" In other words, "adult development was seen as a healthy, completed process, rather than as unhealthy knot of repressed and sublimated desires that must be unpicked. The child was repositioned as a problem that needed to be managed by adult society, rather than as a being that had anything to teach fully mature individuals."[15]

Tisdall's division provides an interesting lens through which to understand Egypt's pedagogical landscape in the early 20th century. More specifically, the demarcation of educational practices based on one's adherence to a particular tradition in psychology validates this project's methodological decision to highlight psychological thought as part of a larger investigation of progressive education. To be fair, Tisdall would probably warn that it was specifically non-utopian progressives who were interested in psychology (and more specifically developmental psychology) since utopian progressives (such as A.S. Neill) famously "had 'no interest in how children learn.''[16] In Egypt, by contrast, *all*

[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Tisdall, *A Progressive Education*?, 4.
[16] See Laura Tisdall, "The Psychologist, the Psychoanalyst and the 'extraordinary Child' in Postwar British Science Fiction," *Medical Humanities* 42 (2016): 9; Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?,* 2.

teachers under training were encouraged to read up and understand the basics of psychology irrespective of their leanings.

The Middle Ground

In the May 1944 edition of *Al-Jaras, Ma'had al-Tarbiya*'s student magazine, the following joke was published:

Dinner Menu		
Entrée	**Main**	**Dessert**
Experimental Activities	Turkey By Rote	Montessori Cream
	Rousseau Pigeon	
Pedagogy Soup	Classical Potatoes	
	McDougall Stew	
	Swedish Pasta	
	Gestalt Vine Leaves	

Table 3 "Qa'ima Ta'am al-'Asha' " A Joke published in al-Jaras magazine in 1944. [17]

This humorous account about the academic content offered to students of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* suggests that they were aware of—and engaged with—a multitude of pedagogical theories. It also demonstrates their ability to simultaneously engage with these often-divergent ideas. The term I have chosen to describe this intellectual playing field which simultaneously sought to engage different theories is 'Middle Ground Psychology'. The term is loosely borrowed from the authors of the various teacher training manuals

[17] "Qa'ima Ta'am al-'Asha'," *Al-Jaras*, no. 1 (1944): 49.

highlighted in Appendix 1. More specifically, I draw inspiration from the ways in which these authors and teacher trainers positioned themselves vis-à-vis the dominant theories of the day offering to always embrace a 'middle ground' and to solicit a theoretical journey which sought to reconcile, reject, create and carve out a confident conciliatory strategy to balance out ideas emerging from conflicting theories of psychology. Examples include Amin Mursi Qandil who refers to the "middle way" on multiple occasions in his manual *'Usul 'Ilm al-Nafs*. On the first page of his text, he reassures his audience that his book will not include outdated theories of psychology but that it will instead present a novel "middle path".[18] A similar position is articulated in Muhammad Khalaf-Allah's 1939 *Al-Tifl min al-Mahd 'ila al-Rushd* (The Child from the Crib to Adulthood) among many others.

Middle Ground Psychology was more than just a mishmash of theories. It was an intellectual and extremely dynamic field of multiple contestations that played themselves out along various axes of tension between psychoanalysis and developmental psychology, different understandings of freedom, play versus structured play, and ideas of morality versus happiness, as explored below.

Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology

Middle Ground Psychology sought to carefully accommodate Freudian psychoanalysis and developmental psychology, while being extremely critical of behaviourism. Therefore, we cannot speak of a tension between both schools but rather of an attempt to work with their main tenets.

[18] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 1.

In terms of psychoanalysis, Egyptian psychologist-educators tended to be interested in basic Freudian notions of drive theory, the subconscious and dream interpretation. With regards to developmental psychology, there was an admiration for the 'stages of development' theories which were believed to reveal insights about children's 'natural' learning abilities.

In addition, Egyptian psychologist-educators were interested in very specific themes and subfields within the academic discipline of psychology that were in vogue at the time such as intelligence and intelligence testing, instinct theory and social psychology. This is why many of them were in direct conversation with colleagues at British Universities who worked on such issues including psychologist Charles Spearman, with whom al-Qusi was personally acquainted and who had come to Egypt as a visiting scholar, and Cyril Burt (who was al-Qusi's supervisor in London) given their respective work on measuring intelligence.[19] Psychologist William McDougall and his instinct theory was also heavily featured in Egyptian writings of the period.[20]

Unlike the British context described by Tisdall, in which psychoanalysis and its brand of utopian progressivism dominated the educational scene of the 1920s/30s but was later replaced by child-centred progressives who championed principles of developmental psychology, Egyptian psychologist-educators worked with and through both schools simultaneously. In the process, they produced a very distinct approach to education which was predicated on an interest in academic psychology as a whole.

[19] A detailed list of Burt's international students including al-Qusi can be found in L.S. Hearnshaw, *Cyril Burt Psychologist* (Ithaca, [New York]: Cornell University Press, 1979), 135.

[20] Both William McDougall and Sigmund Freud were eulogized in the Egyptian pedagogy press by al-Qusi at the time of their passing in 1939. See 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Qusi, "Freud," Al-Thaqafa 1, no. 41 (October 10, 1939): 16–19; 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Qusi, "'Ala Dhikra Wafat McDougall," Al-Thaqafa 1, no. 9 (February 28, 1939): 40–42. Spearman was also eulogized in *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* as well as Percy Nunn. See Ahmad Musa, *Al-Fihris al-'Am min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 196.

Turn of the century Egyptian "how to" teacher training manuals tended to only incorporate the 'practically applicable' insights from the field of developmental psychology such as the famous 'stages of development' theories. Stages of development ideas assumed that children's minds go through stages and therefore, that one could in theory articulate common principles of instruction to suit each one of these stages so that their 'spontaneous' development may be aided. They were loosely based on the writings of a set of thinkers including Herbert Spencer and his successors Stanley Hall and William James who despite being resolutely critical of Spencer's evolutionary ideas, nevertheless supported his main claims about the mind's natural stages of development.[21] These ideas were also later picked up by John Dewey and Jean Piaget.[22]

Egyptian 'how to' teaching manuals therefore encouraged teachers to "begin with the simple, and move to the complex, start with the concrete and move to the abstract, and begin with the known and move to the unknown."[23]

For example, out of all the educational foundations listed by Muhammad 'Ali Mustafa and Mansur Sulayman in their manual *Al-Tadris 'Usuluhu wa Tara'iquhu* (Teaching: Its Foundations and Methods), the three principles 'from known to unknown, from simple to complex, and from the concrete to the abstract' are the only ones to which the author dedicates significantly large paragraphs lest "there be confusion over their true meaning."[24] 'Stages of development' ideas had staying power and remained popular in training manuals throughout the interwar period. Qandil's manual from 1928, for example, includes a chapter titled "the rules of teaching" which encourages teachers to adopt these

[21] Kieran Egan, *Getting It Wrong,* 2002,27-28.
[22] Kieran Egan, "Students' Development in Theory and Practice: The Doubtful Role of Research," *Harvard Educational Review* 75, no. 1 (2005): 28–29.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Muhammad 'Ali Mustafa and Mansur Sulayman, *al-Tadris 'Usuluhu wa Tara'iquhu*, 4-8

ideas in their practice.[25] But there are countless other examples in various teaching manuals from the 1920s and 1930s, such as ‘Ali ‘Umar’s “*Hadayatu-l-Mudaris li-l-Nizam al-Madrasi wa Turuq al-Tadris* (The Guidance of the Teacher to the Schooling System and Teaching Methods), Ahmad Khayruldin’s 1933 *’Usul al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta‘lim* (The Foundations of Rearing and Education), Muhammad Khattab Hasan and ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibrahim’s 1934 *al-Hadith fi Turuq al-Tadris* (Modern Teaching Methods) Muhammad ‘Ali Mustafa et al.’s 1938 *Mabadi’ al-Tarbiya* (The Principles of Education) and *Turuq al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (The New Methods of Education) by Muhammad Hussein al-Makhzanji published in 1933.[26]

With the publication of Qandil’s text *’Usul ‘Ilm al-Nafs* in 1925, a new type of manual emerged which quickly became the blueprint for the psychology manuals that followed: it certainly continued to include topics that are of most interest to developmental psychologists such as the ‘stages of development’ ideas, but it was also the first to make the leap to psychoanalysis by incorporating different sections on the foundations of psychoanalysis, the principles of psychoanalytic thought and the reasons for which teachers should be aware of these matters for the amelioration of their own teaching experiences.[27] In Part II of *’Usul ‘Ilm al-Nafs*, Qandil explores a range of themes that would come to occupy a central role in the thinking and writing of psychologist-educators such as intelligence testing, memory, thought, imagination, and feelings/emotions. Qandil’s psychology manuals, and the many similar writings that came after them, represented a new brand of training manual, one which exclusively focused the academic

[25] Qandil, *’Usul al-Tarbiya*, 82-91.
[26] Stanley Jackson et al., *Mabadi’ al-Tarbiya* (Cairo: Wizarat al-Ma‘arif al-‘Umumiyya Matba‘at Dar al-Kutub, 1937); ‘Umar, *Hadayat al-Mudaris li-l-Nizam al-Madrasi wa Turuq al-Tadris*; Ahmad 'Abduh Khayruldin, *’Usul al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta‘lim*, 4th ed. (Cairo: al-Matba‘a al-Rahmaniyya, 1933); Muhammad Khattab Hasan and ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Ibrahim, *Al-Hadith fi Turuq al-Tadris li Mudarisi al-Ta‘lim al-’Ilzami*, (Alexandria: Matba‘at Salah al-Din, 1934); Muhammad Husayn Al-Makhzanji, *Turuq al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (Cairo: Khudayr, 1933).
[27] Amin Mursi Qandil, *’Usul ‘Ilm al-Nafs*, 5, 23–29,192.

discipline of psychology and therefore thoroughly engaged with both psychoanalysis and developmental psychology.

What is particularly interesting in this case is that psychology manuals and the more traditional 'how to manuals' were often authored by the same people. Moreover, even basic 'how to' manuals began to incorporate psychoanalytical ideas as the 20th century progressed.[28] From the list of textbooks in Appendix 1, at least 25 of the manuals were influenced by psychoanalysis and featured sections, paragraphs and chapters about drive theory, the subconscious and dream interpretation. It should be noted here that trainers mostly used teacher training manuals in applied pedagogy classes (which explains why they were set up as 'how-to' manuals), and that psychology textbooks were used in psychology courses.

If developmental psychology *as well as* psychoanalysis simultaneously preoccupied psychologist-educators, how would one apply this combined approach practically?

The answer to this question is—for lack of a better word— 'simple': Teachers were expected to be mindful of forms of neurosis among students, to look out for learning disabilities and to take into account the traumatic experiences of their early childhoods. At the same time, they were taught to understand the general principles of developmental psychology and the so-called 'different stages of development' from early childhood into adulthood. Thus, Egyptian psychologist-educators instrumentalized both schools to confront the everyday challenges of their profession.

[28] Manuals first published in the in the first two decades of the 20th century (and which remained in print for decades later) continued to be influenced by the 'how to' format and by older 19th century ideas about stages of development. During the interwar period however, their content began to reflect a wider 'Middle ground' approach which was in conversation with some psychoanalytical ideas.

Generally speaking, psychoanalysis was viewed as something one resorts to in order to grapple with 'abnormality' while developmental psychology was the blueprint for 'normal' children. Or, in the words of 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi:

> Teachers who understand the nature of the subconscious are more capable of directing children and are generally more understanding and affectionate with them (*akthar 'atfan 'alayhum*) than others. They tend to understand the hidden powers that affect children's involuntary behaviours, and that they may actually be involuntarily influenced by their subconscious like children who tease their friends, or who disobey the rules or flee from school. Because such teachers grasp the severity of these forces, they no longer look at a child who lies or steals as a criminal but as a victim of internal forces and of an environment of mistreatment by authority.[29]

Psychoanalysis was also resorted to when it came to questions of sexuality and 'sexual deviance'. For example, Ya'kub Famm's mentions psychoanalysis only towards the end of his book *Al-Tarbiya wa-l-Akhlaq*,(Education and Morals) within the context of a wider discussion of sexuality.[30]

The duality of Egyptian psychologist-educators towards psychoanalysis is succinctly summed up by Muhamamd Khalaf-allah whose work *Al-Tifl min al-Mahd ' ila al-Rushd* (The Child from the Crib to Adulthood) contains the typical 'middle ground' advice which teachers were expected to follow:

> Psychoanalysis seeks to read and understand the self and reveal its hidden essence, its first memories through free association, therapy and dream interpretation in order to free children and adults from the shackles of their complexes and psychological ailments. This practice is widespread in Austria and Germany and to some extent in England, but American psychologists are very sceptical of it noting its reliance on the power of suggestion. They maintain that in psychoanalysis children are confronted with the psychoanalyst's preconceived ideas which naturally end up supporting their original hypothesis. Psychoanalysts also rarely use statistics which have become one of the most important tools for scientific research and they rarely make notes of their encounters with children making it difficult to ascertain whether the child has been subjected to suggestions or whether his answers were free. In our opinion, these critiques do not undermine psychoanalysis or deprive it of its scientific value. On the contrary, they merely

[29] 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, *'Usus 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 315.
[30] Ya'kub Famm, *Al-Tarbiya wa-l-Akhlaq* (Cairo: al-Majalla al-Jadida, 1930), 134.

> remind us to be careful when we resort to it and to maintain caution when evaluating its results.[31]

Through these manuals we can understand 'Middle Ground Psychology' as an approach which constructed a particular image of the Egyptian child. All children were inherently different from adults. Those who were 'healthy' and 'normal' were on a gradual path of development, which if facilitated properly through developmental psychology, could help them become 'better versions of themselves'. If, however, they displayed any signs of 'abnormal behaviour', they would have to be treated with care and love, a domain in which a solid knowledge of psychoanalysis was preferable.

Far from having two distinct camps which battled over schools of psychology, most psychologist-educators saw themselves as promotors of a multitude of approaches depending on the situation. It is therefore very difficult to attribute one thinker to a particular school. For example, Summayya Fahmi, who was a student of Jean Piaget (one of the biggest supporters of developmentalist thought), was actually the translator into Arabic of Susan Isaacs' *Nursery Years*, published in 1946.[32] Isaacs was a famous progressive educator of the interwar period who was influenced by psychoanalysis.[33] More importantly, she had spent a huge part of her academic career critiquing Piaget.[34] Similarly, Isma'il al-Qabbani cannot be easily classified as one may be inclined. Most historians who have discussed the role of al-Qabbani tend to describe him as a Deweyan pragmatist who championed "the psychological school" of education.[35] Because, as discussed previously, such accounts focus on perceived individual connections between Dewey and Qabbani, rather than look at the teaching profession as a whole, they assume

[31] Muhammad Khalafallah, *Al-Tifl min al-Mahd 'ila al-Rushd* (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Rahmaniyya, 1939), 8–9.
[32] Fouad Abou-Hatab., "Egypt," 126.
[33] See for example Shaul Bar-Haim, "The Liberal Playground: Susan Isaacs, Psychoanalysis and Progressive Education in the Interwar Era,"; and Laura Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 52, 57-58.
[34] Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 55.
[35] See for example Hasaan Muhammad Hasaan, "Ittijahat al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr Min 1923 'ila 1952".

that all other pedagogues followed this trend. Indeed, the literature maintains that Egyptian pedagogues "venerated Dewey, studied his works, and attended schools where his influence was strong," and that "their writings often shared his tone," according to Salmoni.[36] Similarly, Mahmoud Kombar refers to al-Qabbani as the "Egyptian John Dewey" and posits that he was "neither an innovative philosopher" nor that he produced "a totally new or fundamental idea."[37] Comparably, El-Nagar and Krugly-Smolsk maintain that it was a "well known fact" that "al-Qabbani was among the Egyptian educationists who actively adopted Dewey's ideas."[38] In short, while the historiography does not make a distinction between developmental psychology and psychoanalysis per se, it creates a strong correlation between al-Qabbani and Dewey, which, by association, suggests that he was firmly in the developmentalist camp even if he was never John Dewey's student.[39] At the same time, the sources show al-Qabbani to have encouraged his student Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz to translate the work of Percy Nunn, especially his book *Education, its Data and First Principles* in which Nunn presents a poignant critique of Dewey and accuses him of behaviourism.[40] 'Abd al-Aziz writes: "On the 10th of November 1943, I was summoned by Ismai'il al-Qabbani, the Dean of education in Egypt, who asked me to translate this book."[41] Interestingly, when Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz, who by 1951 was assistant professor of pedagogy at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya,* wrote his own teaching manual, he cautioned his students not to follow the new methods blindly for "they treat the concept of development in a superficial manner in which a child is expected to extract truths and develop them on his own without being given any context nor being provided with the necessary guidance.

[36] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism", 99, 103, 139.
[37] Mahmoud Kombar, "Isma'il Al-Qabbani (1898-1963)," 356.
[38] El-Nagar and Krugly-Smolska, "Modernization of Education in Egypt: The Liberal Movement Towards Dewey's Ideas," 65.
[39] Hasaan Muhammad Hasaan, "Ittijahat al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr Min 1923 'ila 1952."
[40] Percy Nunn, *Al-Tarbiya Madatiha wa Mabadi'uha al-Awwaliyya*, trans. Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz and Muhammad 'Atiyya al-Ibrashi (Cairo: Ministry of Public Instruction, 1961), 202.
[41] Ibid., 5

Nothing is born out of nothing."[42] 'Abd al-Aziz's manual was therefore critical of the concepts of developmental psychology in ways that once again championed a sort of middle ground philosophy that would not follow them too closely.

Finally, the boundaries between psychoanalysis and developmental psychology are further blurred if we consider the example of Ramsis Yunan, founding member of the surrealist Art et Liberté group, and an activist, artist and writer. Although Yunan is primarily famous for his art and his anti-fascist, anti-colonial and internationalist activism, we must not forget that he was also an art teacher in the 1930s who had acquired substantial experience teaching in various schools in the provinces.[43] Given Yunan's progressive radicalism and his anti-establishment stances, one may have expected his teaching methods to align more closely with those of the utopian progressives. This is particularly noteworthy given Egyptian surrealists' connections to Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis.[44] Surprisingly, Yunan's pedagogical writing suggests a slightly different take on teaching methods. In an article titled "Al-Zakhrafa wa Nafsiyyat al-Tifl " (Artistic Embellishments and the Psychology of the Child) in the January 1936 edition of *Majallat al-Ittihad al-Dawli li-l-Rasm wa-l-Tarbiya al-Fanniya*, (the Egyptian branch of the International Federation for Art Education, Drawing and Art Applied to Industries), Yunan seems to work with a loose notion of stages of development in which he clearly identifies certain school years (and by extension age groups) as being more suited for the teaching of advanced technical and artistic skills such as *zakhrafa* (or the art of embellishing). Surprisingly, Yunan speaks from a universal perspective thereby pushing aside the psychoanalytic notion that each child is in fact different given his/her different

[42] Salih 'Abd al-Aziz, *Al-Tarbiya wa Turuq al-Tadris* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1951), 153–54.
[43] Patrick Kane, "Art Education and the Emergence of Radical Art Movements in Egypt," 3.
[44] See for example Laura Galián, "Decolonising Sexuality in Egypt: Al-Tatawwur's Struggle for Liberation," *Postcolonial Studies* 23, no. 2 (2020): 170–81.

background.[45] It's not that Yunan is a developmentalist per se, but he does display a rather limited idea of children's technical abilities in art.

If these contradictions have the power to reveal anything, it is the dynamic and multifaceted nature of 'Middle Ground Psychology' as a field in which the rigid lines were not neatly followed and in which thinkers often played with different concepts to create a serious and well-studied field of knowledge that was suitable to the needs of Egyptian students as they saw fit. In curating a distinct playing field which included particular concepts from each school of psychology, Egyptian psychologist-educators were producers of a unique and local academic tradition which responded to their locality and to the changing dynamics within the international field of psychology. This is not to suggest however, that Egyptian psychologist-educators co-existed peacefully in a utopian intellectual setting in the absence of academic rivalry and in an atmosphere of complete intellectual acquiescence to the doctrines of progressivism. Indeed, Egyptian psychologist-educators were highly critical of certain schools of pedagogy often demonstrating the pros and cons of each practice and displaying the weaknesses of various theories. Muhammad Khalafallah, who was a student of Susan Isaacs, famously dedicates an entire chapter of his work to critiquing Piaget.[46] It is in this keenness, in their meticulous footnoting, and their commitment to a sound and factual overview of the discipline, that we detect a seriousness which is worthy of recognition in its own right.

[45] Ramsis Yunan, "Al-Zakhrafa wa Nafsiyyat al-Tifl," *Majallat al-Ittihad al-Dawli li-l-Rasm wa-l-Tarbiya al-Fanniyya* 3, no. 2 (1936): 17–19.
[46] Khalafallah, *Al-Tifl Min al-Mahd 'ila al-Rushd*, 250.

Intelligence Tests sans Behaviourism

Whether a thinker was more inclined to follow developmentalist approaches or psychoanalytic ones, what they all shared was a common disdain for behaviourism and an admiration for intelligence testing and experimental psychology more generally. While these positions may seem contradictory, I will use the next few lines to elaborate how they collectively coexisted in the intellectual debates of psychologist-educators. The following digression on the history of intelligence testing is significant in that it highlights the ways in which psychologist-educators grappled with the latest cutting-edge research in the realm of child psychology and education.

If, in psychoanalysis, beliefs and desires are not necessarily conscious, in behavioural psychology, they can be explained "without any reference to the mentalistic concepts of common sense."[47] Behavioural psychologists thereby attempted to explain behaviour "without any reference to what the organism believes or desires."[48] The major proponents of behavioural psychology including Ian Pavlov, John B. Watson , E. L. Thorndike and B.F. Skinner were frequently alluded to by Egyptian psychologist-educators. But they were often invoked to be critiqued as Egyptian psychologist-educators were extremely critical of behaviourism.[49] In *Khulasat 'Ilm al-Nafs* (The Synthesis of Psychology) a textbook published for secondary school students in 1945, Ahmad Fu'ad al-Ahwani admits that "the new trend in psychology today is to focus on human behaviour (…) and there is no doubt that there are benefits to this approach in terms of its ability to produce accurate scientific research and to bring psychology closer to the natural

[47] Kukla and Walmsley, *Mind: A Historical and Philosophical Introduction to the Major Theories*, 80.
[48] Ibid.
[49] See for example Famm, *Al-Tarbiya wa-l-Akhlaq*, 27, 108, 109., Ahmad Zaki Salih, '*Ilm al-Nafs al-Tarbawi*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1953), 4–16. Salih expands the meaning of behaviourism to mean both external behaviours as well as inner mentalistic processes such as inner thoughts, beliefs and desires.

sciences."[50] But for Ahwani, psychology cannot be understood through a behaviourist lens only. "Imagine a robot who can move, eat, sleep, smile, talk and take care of you, answer you when you speak to it, and say goodbye if it leaves you, do you really believe you would consider it human?"[51]

Even though Egyptian psychologists' fascination with the *scientificisation* of psychology did not quite lead them down the path of extreme behaviourism as it had in countries such as the United States, it did contribute to their enchantment with the prospects of experimental psychology and more specifically with the practice of intelligence testing. Irrespective of where they stood on the pedagogical spectrum, many Egyptian pedagogues, including those who were more utopian leaning, encouraged intelligence tests believing them to have the power to reveal hidden information about the mental abilities of children. Echoing utopian progressives such as Susan Isaacs whose work emphasised that children should be divided in the classroom according to ability and not necessarily age, intelligence tests seemed to offer the perfect tool to measure children's cognitive and intellectual faculties.

The first set of intelligence tests were carried out by an Egyptian physician, Dr. Hassan 'Umar, who was employed by the Egyptian Ministry of Public Instruction in the late 1920s. 'Umar had completed his residency at St. Louis Hospital in the United States, becoming Assistant Physician at Mendota Hospital followed by a post at the Wisconsin Laboratory for Mental Research. 'Umar published a book in 1928 titled *Miqyas al-Dhaka'* (Intelligence Testing) which translated the famous Stanford-Binet Intelligence test into colloquial Egyptian Arabic as an attempt to make intelligence tests available to the

[50] Ahmad Fu'ad Al-Ahwani, *Khulasat 'Ilm al-Nafs* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1945), 10.
[51] Ibid.

Egyptian public.[52] In the introduction to the first edition of his book, he maintained that he had already carried out these tests on some students prior to the book's publication but it is unclear whether this was part of a larger and more systematic effort or merely a case of random sampling.[53] In 1928, when the Ministry of Public Instruction invited Swiss pedagogue Edouard Claparède from the Roussau Institute to investigate the state of education in the country, it authorized him to carry out a number of intelligence tests on Egyptian public school students—based on his own request. Claparède believed that this would ensure that the mission's recommendations would be founded on an accurate understanding of the "mental capacities of Egyptian children."[54] 'Umar was one among several pedagogues to be mandated by the Ministry to aid Claparède's fact finding mission alongside Mansur Fahmi, Isma'il al-Qabbani, Emily 'Abd al-Masih, Saniyya 'Azmi, Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani, 'Abd al-Hamid Hasan, Sulayman Bek (Luxor).[55] According to the accounts published by 'Umar in the introduction of the second edition of his book, his Arabic translations of the Stanford-Binet test were used by Claparède. A slightly different narrative of this episode was recorded by 'Attiya Mahmud Hana in his introduction to the Arabic translation of Arthur Rex Knight's Intelligence and Intelligence Tests which was published in 1949. Hana suggests that a combination of tests were carried out including the Binet-Terman Test, the Porteous Maze Test, and the Ballard Test developed by British pedagogue Philip Boswood Ballard.[56] In Ismai'il al-Qabbani's account of the Claparède mission, which was featured in his 1938 *Qiyas al-Dhaka' fi-l-Madaris al-'Ibtida'iyya*, (Intelligence Testing in Primary Schools) we find a confirmation

[52] The Simon-Binet test was developed by Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon in 1905 in France and is considered the first scientific IQ test. The test was later revised and standardized by Lewis Terman for American students and it came to be known as the Stanford-Binet test.
[53] Hasan 'Umar, *Miqyas Al-Dhaka*', 2nd ed. (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1929), 3.
[54] Édouard Claparède, "Taqrir 'Am",1.
[55] Ibid., 3
[56] Attiya Mahmud Hana, *Al-Dhaka' wa Maqayisahu*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1949), 2.

that a series of tests were undertaken. However, Al-Qabbani focuses all of his attention on what he regards to be the most important of them all, the Ballard Test, which consisted of 100 oral questions that students were expected to answer in writing. Claparède was able to carry out the tests on 3000 Egyptian students during his short visit to Egypt in 1928 and 1929. He then compared the Egyptian results to those he had obtained from tests conducted on British and Belgian children, concluding that, compared to their Belgian and British peers, Egyptian children between the ages of fifteen and eighteen were inferior in intelligence.[57] But al-Qabbani exhibited scepticism towards Claparède's method and his findings: "We had no proof that the Ballard test was adequate to test the intelligence of Egyptian students because questions that are suitable for British or Belgian children may not be suited to Egyptians given the difference in their physical and social environments."[58] When *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* was established in 1929, its Experimental Pedagogy department headed by al-Qabbani launched a research project to determine whether the Ballard questions were suitable to the Egyptian context, remove those they deemed unsuitable, add more suitable ones, and create a new test that can be used by teachers. The project and the resulting testing period lasted from 1930-1934 and a total of 5000 female and male students were tested (ages ten to fourteen). Al-Qabbani believed that the exclusion of elementary and technical schools from the sample would yield more accurate results since the curriculum and overall standard of schooling at each of these schools differed greatly thereby affecting the learning environment, quality and consequently their IQ.[59] By excluding these students, the abnormal "drop in intelligence" noted by Claparède in students between the ages of fifteen and eighteen disappears.

[57] Claparède, "Taqrir 'Am", 18.
[58] Isma'il Al-Qabbani, *Qiyas Al-Dhaka' fi-l-Madaris al-'Ibtida'iyya*, 67–69. Al-Qabbani subsequently published guidelines for teachers wishing to carry out intelligence tests at the primary level. See Isma'il Al-Qabbani, *Ikhtibar Al-Dhaka' al-'Ibtida'i Kurasat al-Ta'limat*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1939).
[59] Isma'il Al-Qabbani, *Qiyas Al-Dhaka' fi-l-Madaris al-'Ibtida'iyya*, 67–69.

Historian Iman Farag has critiqued al-Qabbani's approach to this test on several grounds. "Homogénéité mentale, homogénéité sociale?", Farag asks, raising an important critique against the elimination of elementary and technical schools since these, unlike the primary ones, were free of charge and thereby accessible to more disadvantaged segments of the student population.[60] But for al-Qabbani this exclusion was necessary to ensure the homogeneity of environmental factors which affect children's learning. Moreover, he highlights the ways in which his sample selected a wide range of socially and economically diverse primary schools to offer a more accurate picture. Perhaps most importantly, al-Qabbani incorporates the test results of his student Mina Hanna 'Awad which were carried out on elementary school students into his own findings, thereby presenting a more nuanced assessment of Egyptian student intelligence.[61] Finally, unlike what Farag assumes about the exclusion of female students from the test, al-Qabbani's mentions the participation of female students and that of their schools in the testing sample.[62] Far from passively adopting intelligence tests as received, pedagogues in Egypt were able to tailor their tests to suit the needs of the context in which they were operating. They debated their efficacy and spent years trying to perfect them. The fact that they sought to work with intelligence tests in the first place is also quite telling. Intelligence tests were in vogue on practically all sides of the pedagogical spectrum. They were venerated by developmental psychologists, but they were also quite commonplace among those adopting a more utopian and thereby psychoanalytic approach to pedagogy precisely because they were seen as a way to free children from the shackles imposed on them by the arbitrary notion of the cohort.

[60] Farag, "Isma'îl al-Qabbânî et la mesure de l'intelligence."
[61] Al-Qabbani, *Qiyas Al-Dhaka'*,88.
[62] Ibid.,74.

Freedom, Controlled Freedom and Play

The tension between psychoanalysis and developmental psychology foregrounds a deeper split around the very question of freedom. Progressive educators of the early 20th century prescribed learning environments that guaranteed varying degrees of autonomy and free expression for children. There were those who favoured a rather controlled environment for children through tailored learning programmes, and those who wrote more abstractly about freedom and the need to leave children be. Those more in tune with psychoanalytic ideas—especially in 1920s England—tended to favour learning environments that allowed the child to participate in the decision-making processes of the school, and in the selection of the curriculum based on their own interest. By contrast, as Laura Tisdall has noted, many developmental psychologists prescribed exercises, activities, and learning methods which actually did not leave the child with a lot of room for manoeuvring. For example, "the Montessori approach [which required children to perform a series of very repetitive exercises in the name of 'sense-training'] presented itself as offering an ideologically progressive freedom, but one that did not degenerate into socially unacceptable disorder."[63]

As has been demonstrated above, Egyptian educators' views on pedagogy oscillated between both traditions but given that they were operating under the restrictions of a national public schooling system, most of them tended to lean towards notions of freedom which were more confined than the kinds of freedom articulated by utopian progressives in Great Britain. While they would sometimes praise schooling models which were predicated on self-government like as A. S Neill's Summerhill, such examples were

[63] Laura Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?* 2020), 27.

often overridden by paragraphs on the evils of excessive freedom and the need for moderation.

For example, *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (The Journal of New Education) often featured articles about the free school movement and student self-government at schools such as Summer Hill and Beacon Hill in Britain.[64] Even Qandil wrote extensively about the free school movement, praising its many attributes. Yet, he cautioned his readers that too much freedom may not be appropriate as it may result in chaos.[65] Similarly, many of Qandil's colleagues encouraged curated curricula, activities and teaching methods which, while allowing children some form of freedom, nonetheless restricted either their movement, their time or their space. As discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, cynical views of progressivism might regard these pedagogical approaches as a covert attempt to exert control over the student population disguised as a call to freedom and self-expression, an argument that Michel Foucault could have easily made.[66]

However, given new readings of these seemingly opposed traditions, particularly through both tradition's emphasis on experimentalism, contemporary philosophers have uncovered more similarities between Foucaultian and progressive thought than previously thought possible. It is in their call for experimentalism that both traditions intersect and that a more nuanced understanding of progressive education can emerge. Seen under this new light, progressive education—even in its restricted child-centred format— is essentially a call to experiment in education—and represents an important juncture between Foucault and Dewey.

[64] Ahmad Musa, *Al-Fihris al-'Am min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 203–5.
[65] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris al-Juz' al-Thani*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1931), 194-196.
[66] C.G. Prado, "Educating the Self: Foucault and Dewey", 180.

The most prominent manifestation of the freedom vs. controlled freedom debate arose in progressive conversations around play. Egyptian psychologist-educators theorizing about pedagogy in the post-1922 context tended to support the notion that children should be left to play, that play was actually an important part of their development and that play should be incorporated into the teaching process in every classroom. But this notion predated the interwar period as shown in Omnia Shakry's "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt". According to Shakry, the Egyptian press emphasized the importance of kindergartens and other forms of structured play for the sound development of children as early as 1903 with a special emphasis on the work of 19th century European educators including Froebel and Pestalozzi.[67] The main difference between turn-of-the-century iterations of structured play and those that were advanced in the interwar period lies in the entity responsible for play. While the turn-of-the-century press laid the majority of the responsibility on women and most particularly mothers, educators in the interwar period emphasized the role of the school and that of teachers in the introduction of playful activities.

Egyptian psychologist-educators of the interwar period were drawn to the promises that play seemed to make in ameliorating children's lives and their learning abilities. They key difference, however, is that they believed schools were the perfect space to re-create such learning environments, rather than placing the burden on the mother/or the household. Irrespective of their preferred school of psychology, Egyptian educators agreed that play was a vital component of the learning process. It was something that the most ardent supporter of psychoanalysis and the biggest enthusiast for developmental psychology could agree on.

[67] Omnia S. El Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt," in *Remaking Women : Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 139–40.

Pedagogy journals such as *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (The Journal of New Education) often published articles encouraging the use of play in the classroom while educators across the spectrum hailed the wonders of play for children.[68] Moreover, the Ministry of Public Instruction published a number of play manuals for teachers that were aimed to be used as part of the school curriculum such as *Kitab al-Al'ab al-Madrasiyya al-Muntazima* (the Handbook of Organized School Activities/Games" by Miss Terry (1923) which was translated by the Ministry of Public Instruction and *Kitab al-Al'ab al-Rifiyya al-Musiqiyya* (Musical Rural Games) by Munira Sabri (1928). While all educators supported play in general, the *kind* of play they advocated varied greatly across the pedagogical spectrum.

For psychologist-educators whose manuals incorporated influences from psychoanalysis, all spontaneous and undirected activities that were pleasurable, comfortable, and in which there were no constraints or any form of responsibility, were considered "play".[69] Relying on Freudian insights, they often regarded play as a natural activity to which there were no particular aims: "Children begin to play at home or among family members. Play is a natural instinct that children engage in without any particular aim" proclaims 'Ali Muhammad Shaltut in his manual "*Muhadarat fi-l-Tarbiya wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*" (Lectures in Education and Psychology).[70]

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi's 'Usus 'Ilm al-Nafs makes similar points when it proclaims that "play is nature's method of education."[71]

[68] For a comprehensive list of all articles pertaining to "play" which were published in Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha see Musa, *Al-Fihris al-'Am Min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 191.
[69] Muhammad 'Atiyya Al-Ibrashi, Hamid 'Abd al-Qadir, and Muhammad Mazhar Sa'id, *Fi 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Rahmaniyya, 1936), 151.
[70] 'Ali Muhammad Shaltut, *Muhadarat fi-l-Tarbiya wa 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 2nd ed. (Matba'at Dar Nashr al-Thaqafa, 1951), 145.
[71] 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, *'Usus 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 209.

In other words, any form of play was considered legitimate and good whether it harbored indirect developmental and learning benefits or not. It was a space in which *freedom* could be exercised without restraint.

Educators who leaned more towards developmentalist approaches, by contrast, were interested in instrumentalizing play and tailoring it to the classroom so that direct educational benefits could be reaped. Throughout the 20th century, countless methods were developed in order to capitalize on play. These included the Dalton Plan, the Montessori Method, the Project Method, the Decroly Method, and the Winnetka plan which were created and supervised by American educator Carlton Washburne. Egyptian pedagogy textbooks and manuals often featured lengthy analysis of these methods with close examinations of their benefits and shortcomings.[72] These methods also featured heavily in the specialized pedagogy press including *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* and *Majallat al-Tarbiya* (The Journal of Education). In the name of sensory training, these activity-based programmes allowed students to play while utilizing their active state to deliver educational goals. By virtue of being planned, organized and run by adults in a controlled environment, these 'playful' methods and activities often restricted children's freedoms as they limited the ways in which they could freely express themselves thereby departing from the more utopian and psychoanalytic understanding of play. However, Egyptian Middle Ground Psychology maintained the efficacy of these methods precisely because they represented a 'middle ground' between complete freedom and the other extreme: static rote learning. As al-Qusi points out, "every form of education which gives a child some freedom shares in common with play this important characteristic (…) We note that

[72] See for example, Abd al-Hamid Fahmi Matar, *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr* (Alexandria: Matb'at Madrasat Muhammad 'Ali al-Sina'iyya, 1939); Muhammad 'Atiyya al-Ibrashi, *Al-Ittijahat al-Haditha fi-l-Tarbiya* (Cairo: Dar Ihiya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1943); Muhammad 'Atiyya Al-Ibrashi, *Al-Tarbiya al-Inkiliziyya* (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Misriyya, 1936); Muhammad Husayn al-Makhzanji, *Turuq al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*.

the new methods also known as the project method, the Dalton method, the family method all share a form of freedom and spontaneity with play."[73]

Art

Apart from an interest in play, Egyptian progressivism was also supportive of children's art and art education. More specifically, I am referring to the Child Art movement and the freehand drawing educational programmes which emerged in various places around the world in the early 20th century in an attempt to free children from the shackles of 'traditional' art.[74] In the Egyptian context, the pioneering work of artists and educators such as Habib Jurji, Yusuf 'Afifi and Ahmad Shafiq Zahir who advocated for such methods as of the 1920s must be mentioned. While the history of Egyptian art education has been discussed at length by historians such Raja Adal, Patrick Kane, Iskandar Rushdi and Nadia Radwan, this history has rarely been told in conjunction with the history of pedagogical thought. In other words, there have been few attempts to tie the sudden interest in these more progressive forms of art education in the 1920s and 1930s with the progressive methods that were being advocated across all other subjects within the Egyptian curriculum. For example, in *Beauty in the Age of Empire*, Raja Adal insightfully shows how

> in many ways, Egyptian educators were participating in the same movement that transformed drawing education into art education in Great Britain, France, Japan, and elsewhere. The global turn toward freehand drawing education, modernism's interest in naive drawings, and the Arts and Crafts movement with its concern with handicrafts and creativity were some of its key influences.[75]

[73] 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, *'Usus 'Ilm al-Nafs*, 210.
[74] S.B. Malvern, "Inventing 'Child Art': Franz Cizek and Modernism," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 35, no. 3 (1995): 262.
[75] Raja Adal, *Beauty in the Age of Empire*,173.

However, there is almost no attempt to situate this trend within Egyptian, nor international progressivism. By contrast, in the following I aim to build on the work of Adal, Kane and others by highlighting the links between these two realms.

The Child Art and Free Hand drawing movements were predicated on the notion that children have innate artistic abilities that should be nurtured and expressed away from technical restrictions. Closely interlinked to this concept was a strong sense that art allowed children to express themselves freely perhaps in ways that they could not otherwise, a cathartic experience, if you will. Child Art also had the potential to unveil children's psychology as artist and pedagogue Mahmud Basyuni eloquently expresses in his Master's Thesis on "Child Art and Education" which was submitted to Ohio State University in 1947.[76] Art and drawing were considered innate instincts much like play. "Drawing is like play" declares Ijlal Hafiz in an article published in the journal *Al-Adab wa-l-Fan* (Literature and Art) in 1943: "It is one of the first instincts that develops in children, and just as progressive education uses play and instrumentalizes children's enjoyment of play to teach them knowledge bit by bit, so too is drawing a vehicle to expand children's horizons and to help them develop."[77]

One of the main proponents of these trends was Habib Jurji (sometimes spelled Gorgui), whom we encountered in the previous chapter, a mathematician turned art teacher who was a prominent member of the teaching staff at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and a graduate of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*.[78] In the early 1920s Jurji obtained a scholarship to travel to Great Britain and study art education at the Woolwich School of Art.[79] It is then that he most likely came into contact with Herbert Read, whose ideas about children's innate artistic

[76] Mahmoud Al-Basyuni, "Child Art and Education" (Masters Thesis, The Ohio State University, 1947), 4.
[77] Ijlal Hafiz, "Fusul Al-Rasm wa-l-Talwin fi Baramij al-Dirasa," *Al-Adab wa-l-Fann,* no. 4 (1944): 55–59.
[78] Nadia Radwan, *Les Modernes d'Egypte:Une Renaissance Transnationale Des Beaux-Arts Et Des Arts Appliques* (Pieterlen: Peter Lang AG, 2017), 127.
[79] Ibid.

abilities became fashionable in the 1930s and 1940s with the publication of his *Education through Art* in 1942.[80] Yet, Jurji was not alone, as countless other educators were also in favour of breaking away from the conventional teaching methods in art. As Raja Adal points out, teacher training manuals such as the one published by Muhammad 'Ali Mustafa for *Dar al-'Ulum* students in 1937 featured "[scribbles] instead of the straight lines and geometric drawings that were standard in previous manuals" as it encouraged young children to express themselves freely—at least in their early years. Similarly, artist educator Ahmad Shafiq Zahir "approached children's drawings in terms of childhood psychology and argued that exaggerations and misconstructions were not mistakes but forms of expression that ought to be cherished and preserved."[81]

The Child Art movement was linked to progressive education in that it too relied heavily on questions of child psychology and freedom and advocated for these practices within art lessons. Jurji formulated a pedagogic creed in art which was based on ideas of the collective subconscious influenced by Carl Jung.[82] Much like Egyptian progressivism, the Child Art movement was adamant on following a 'middle ground' in terms of how much freedom was actually given to children. Some like Jurji were in favour of more freedom: In his book *Al-Tarbiya al-Fanniyya*, Jurji proclaims that "children's expressions are freer than ours because they are not bound by convention and law making their expressions more sincere/true and much clearer than our own. This is because they are not shackled by appearances and the aesthetics of things, unlike us, who succumb to appearances."[83] But despite such radical positions, Jurji still called for child expressions within regular art classes which were regulated and dictated by the Ministry of Public Instruction.

[80] Hussein Al-Hajj, "Free Art Expression Between Theory of Spontaneity and the Establishment of The Haraneya Center," *Cairo Working Group-Another Roadmap School for Art*, 2018, 12.
[81] Raja Adal, *Beauty in the Age of Empire*,172.
[82] Radwan, Les Modernes d'Egypte, 2017, 129.
[83] Habib Jurji, *Al-Tarbiya al-Faniyya* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1934), 43.

Others, like Muhammad Khattab et al., presented a more reserved approach to art education by advocating a rigid structure for teaching art all while acknowledging the "new methods" of art education which allowed for more freedom and creativity.[84]

Historian Raja Adal has looked at Jurji and the Child Art Movement in Egypt as a pure expression of nationalism arguing for example that "by teaching art to Egyptian children, Jurj was seeking to connect modern Egypt with ancient Egypt in an effort to forge a single, united Egyptian national essence."[85] While I do not contest this assessment, I propose another lens through which to examine their legacy and understand their motivations: their connection to the Egyptian movement of progressive education. After all, Jurji and Yusuf 'Afifi were members of *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (The New Education Fellowship), one of Egypt's leading teachers' associations advocating for progressive methods in the country. As educators, Jurji, 'Afifi, Zahir, and many others were part of a larger transnational network of progressive pedagogues and thinkers who were able to develop a radical philosophy of art education at the various teacher training colleges in which they were employed. This was in part due to their international exposure, particularly in Spain and Latin America, but it also had a lot to do with their own education. According to historian Patrick Kane, the group of artists leading this new pedagogical art movement "emphasized the application of the arts to the needs of their students, whether in Cairo or in rural town centres" and "formed a philosophy and pedagogical theory that challenged the academy's reliance on European formalism."[86] They also "encouraged a philosophy of social response and active participation [and] …

[84] Muhammad Khattab Hasan and 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Ibrahim, *Al-Hadith fi Turuq al-Tadris*, 223.
[85] Raja Adal, *Beauty in the Age of Empire*,175.
[86] Patrick Kane, "Egyptian Art Institutions and Art Education from 1908 to 1951," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 44, no. 3 (2010): 43-68.

promoted a radical departure from the university- and academy-centered focus for the arts that had served the function of elite state formation in the 1920s."[87]

For Kane, "this emphatic shift represented the transformation to a new type of intellectual." A shift that was prompted by a group of teachers who had graduated from—and were now teaching at—allegedly anti-radical, anti-intellectual and highly technical centres of higher learning. Jurji, Zahir and 'Afifi thereby dedicated their careers to transforming art education in public schools. Their subsequent role as inspectors of art education would guarantee that their ideas would permeate the curriculum. But their forgotten role within the progressive movement simultaneously guaranteed art a place at the 'progressive table.' That is, not only did they introduce progressive Child Art approaches into Egyptian art curricula, they also made sure that the progressive movement adopted art as one of its important cornerstones.

It is therefore unsurprising that surrealist artist and radical activist, Ramsis Yunan, was drawn to this group of art teachers. As discussed in the previous chapter, Jurji took Yunan, a young drop-out from the School of Fine Arts, under his wing and bestowed him with an honorary degree from *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*. As Kane explains, "whereas Yunan fell out from the School of Fine Arts, the Teachers' College supported Yunan and allowed him to develop a more inclusive philosophy than at the academy."[88] Thus, if "teaching is an art" as American psychologist William James once contended, then educator-artists such as Jurji, 'Afifi, Yunan and Zahir were artists in the true sense of the word.

[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

Storytelling

Beginning in the 1920s, psychologist-educators became interested in storytelling as an educational tool in addition to art and play. Storytelling was considered crucial for a child's development and their wellbeing. In 1929, an engineer by the name of Hamid al-Qusbi who served as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works published a children's story book titled *Al-Tarbiya bi-l-Qisas li Mutala'at al-Madrasa wa-l-Manzil* (Education through Stories for Home and School Reading). The author acknowledges the peculiarities of his professional background but maintains he felt his writing skills could be useful for the larger community. Even though the book was intended to be used in domestic as well as schooling contexts, a year after the book's publication, it was picked up by the Ministry of Public Instruction and assigned as a textbook for the third primary level. Much like play, this story book was now finding a new home within the institution of the school. In fact, some pedagogues were resolutely against storytelling within domestic contexts precisely because of the ignorant and sensationalist fables and myths that mothers (in particular 'ignorant' mothers), could subject their children to.[89] One author with such convictions was pedagogue 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Majid, who had jointly co-authored the first edition of *Al-Tarbiya wa Turuq al-Tadris* (Education and Teaching Methods Part I) with Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz and had subsequently travelled to various Arab countries to train teachers. 'Abd al-Majid produced his own story book titled *Al-Qissa fi-l-Tarbiya* (Storytelling in Education) which contains a theoretical section as well as a collection of over thirty children's stories and was primarily intended for primary level teachers so that they may be able to introduce storytelling in their classrooms. As 'Abd al-Majid notes "Arab children were deprived of suitable literature and of good stories that would refine their tastes, expand their imaginations and nurture their morals

[89] 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Majid, *Al-Qissa fi-l-Tarbiya*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1956), 9–11.

(*akhlaq*)."[90] According to 'Abd al-Majid the Ministry of Public Instruction's interest in storytelling was fairly recent, having only introduced storytelling as part of the Arabic language curriculum in order for teachers to expand students' language skills.[91] 'Abd al-Majid was adamant on producing a connection between a child's wellbeing and storytelling, suggesting that stories ranked first among the arts in terms children's preferences as all children "are drawn by stories, enjoy them, and are attracted by the ideas, the imagination and the plots that stories harbour."[92] It is unclear whether other pedagogues shared 'Abd al-Majid's prejudices against mothers (and their storytelling skills), but one thing remains certain: The perceived power of storytelling on children's imagination facilitated its adoption as part of the official public school curriculum and ensured support by all psychologist-educators irrespective of their pedagogical leanings on the psychoanalysis-developmental psychology spectrum.

From Morals to Happiness

One of the more interesting intellectual debates emerging from teacher training colleges in early 20th century Egypt, was the debate around the concept of *al-akhlaq* (ethics and morals) as the ultimate purpose of education. Early manuals published in 1903 and 1914 but even some that were published in the second half of the 20th century—especially the practical 'how to' manuals—would invoke *al-akhlaq* as the aim towards which teachers should strive. In the 19th century, *al-akhlaq* or morals/ethics became the subject of pedagogy manuals across the Ottoman Empire and in Egypt. It was not just the purpose of education; it was also its subject. In his analysis of 19th century idea of *al-*

[90] 'Abd al-Majid, 3.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.

akhlaq in the late Ottoman period, Historian Kamran Karimullah suggests that moral education and disciplinary techniques of education were inherently interlinked. "As we have seen" Karimullah writes,

> the nature of the subject that is assumed by al-akhlaq is passively constituted by the text-based teaching technique. This form of the moral subject who will behave morally because of his reading and comprehension of the text. (…) It is in this sense that we can speak of a disciplinary morality, viz. one that seeks by means of disciplinary techniques to constitute the moral subject, rather than a morality in which the subject constitutes himself as a person of virtue by practicing ascetic techniques so that he can transform his soul's disposition through transformation of his body's habits.[93]

In other words, it is through the disciplinarity that comes with aspects of 19th century modern schooling such as simultaneous instruction and textual reading that morality was thought to be achieved. Indeed, Karimullah's analysis is convincing especially by looking at teaching manuals which were produced at the beginning of the 20th century in Egypt. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Jawish's *Ghunyat al-Mu'addibin* which was published in 1903 is one of them. In the chapter on morals and ethics titled "A chapter on the ways to inculcate virtues/morals and to avoid vices (*al-Akhlaq al-Mahmuda wa-l-Madhmuma*), Jawish's first suggestion on the list is to "encourage the reading of ethics/morality textbooks and to apply them."[94] Shortly after, he suggests that if one encounters difficulty in the process of disciplining a [male] child, then he must be frightened and beaten." The maintenance of morals and ethics was thereby tied to a system of reward and punishment within the context of a disciplinary schooling system as envisioned by Jawish. As Suzanna Ferguson notes, Jawish's understanding of morality was in fact gendered. Jawish warns that keeping good company—away from those who promote vices, including women—should be encouraged. Ferguson rightly recognizes the ways in which al-Jawish's text addresses a

[93] Kamran I. Karimullah, "Rival Moral Traditions in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2013): 66.
[94] Abd al-Aziz Jawish, Ghunyat al-Mu'addibin, 1903, 36.

male student audience only thereby departing from mid-19th century manuals which used to address both males and females.[95]

It is important to note however, that Jawish's position towards morality and ethics in education was not the only position out there. With the publication of Shaykh Hasan Tawfiq Afandi's work *Hadayatu-l-Atfal* (The Guidance of Children) which was subsequently selected as a textbook in December 1890, a contending position towards ethics and morality was articulated in which psychology played an important role for the understanding of the human mind and by extension, the ways in which one was expected to arrive at morality within education. For Tawfiq, "discipline is the instillment of habit within the young so that they may carry out what is required of them in life before they are able to do them on their own."[96] Unlike Jawish he does not call for severe disciplinary measures, rather, he maintains that children should be reminded, warned, threatened and if all fails—punished. What makes Tawfiq's take on *al-akhlaq* relatively different from Jawish is his contention that psychology can help teachers understand why human beings behave in certain ways that are undesirable.

> Since we understand from what I have previously stated with regards to psychology [psychoanalysis], that the self (*al-nafs*) is impacted by external and internal forces (…) including forces that are still hidden (…) and that human reactions cannot be easily controlled, then we would conclude that education (*tarbiya*) cannot help humans reach perfection. However, it can create the necessary conditions that would help him/her on a path towards perfection/improvement later on: by cultivating his mind, controlling his impulses and desires and inculcating good manners, and the best (*akhlaq*) morals/ethics.[97]

Unlike Jawish who views discipline as a gateway to morality, Tawfiq is adamant on proposing a *middle way* which takes into account human nature. More importantly, unlike Jawish, Tawfiq understands the limitations of education and leaves the door open for the

[95] Susanna Ferguson, "The Mother State: Discipline, Moral Cultivation, and the Transmission of Knowledge in Early Twentieth Century Egypt," 2020. Paper delivered at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting.
[96] Hasan Tawfiq, *Hadayatu-l-Atfal*, 7th ed. (Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1927), 91.
[97] Ibid., 82.

subject to carve out his own morality in the future *after* having been followed and disciplined by a teacher.

While other pedagogues from the 1920s onwards continued to view ethics and morality as the main aim of education, the positions they embraced and the ways in which they defined *al-akhlaq* were novel.

In Amin Mursi Qandil's 1928 *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris*, we find a particular understanding of *al-akhlaq* and how one is meant to reach them. "What—out of all the possible aims out there should be pursued as the main aim of education?" Qandil writes,

> No one doubts that the highest aim of *tarbiya* should be *al-akhlaq* in the broadest sense of the word. For each form of education which does not aim to elevate morals is not worthy of being called *tarbiya*. (…) al-*akhlaq* are the culmination of what people have agreed upon in terms of good characteristics to safeguard the wellbeing of society. We should not view *al-akhlaq* as a personal matter that only concerns the individual, but we must look at *al-akhlaq* from the perspective of society. Moral/ethical education is a social education par excellence.[98]

Qandil offers an understanding of *al-akhlaq* which prioritizes the wellbeing of modern society using the language of "rights and obligations." He suggests that each "society requires its members not be a burden on the society and not to infringe on their neighbour's freedoms because one's freedom ends where their neighbour's freedom begins." Qandil's vision for *al-akhlaq* is one in which morality is the fabric of society.[99]

As psychology came to play an increasingly important role in the thinking and knowledge production of educators, the understanding of what constituted a "moral education" shifted once again. We see this in Part II of Qandil's *'Usul al-Tarbiya* in which he introduces a slightly different variation on *al-akhlaq* inspired by the progressive principles of education which were fashioned after ideas "character building". In a chapter he titles 'Education and Morals', Qandil suggests that education can be broken down into a

[98] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris*, 27–29.
[99] Ibid.

process of teaching (*tadris)* and training (*tadrib*). Qandil locates moral education under *tadrib* but professes that morality is achieved in the process of strengthening a student's will and in the promotion of a strong character and personality, not just in the instruction of good conduct, so as to allow him to participate in the life of society.[100] He also suggests that a correct education must inspire students to improve their behavior but "in a manner which encourages them to depend on themselves in their own research, thinking and learning." What Qandil brings to the table is a new understanding of *al-akhlaq*, one in which a virtuous or moral student is one whose personality is strong, can depend on himself and who possesses the necessary critical thinking and research skills that would equip him to participate in society. This is a far cry from the notions articulated by Jawish whose understanding of morality/ethics is tied to a strong system of discipline. It is also a departure in terms of audience. While Qandil maintains the masculine form for students, he often addresses children and students in the plural suggesting that he essentially means boys and girls. The fact that both of his texts were popular in the 1920s, after the Egyptian constitution had made primary education obligatory for boys and girls, makes this finding extremely plausible.

But Qandil goes even further than that as he is willing to concede that moral/ethics lessons in schools may not actually be as fruitful in terms of their ability to produce moral students.[101] "There is no doubt that a good education can elevate morals on many levels (…) but it will not always push a student to do good (…) knowledge alone does not stop him from doing harm (…) The truth is that we have placed too much emphasis on 'knowledge' as the ultimate aim of education, when it is actually 'life' itself which should

[100] Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris al-Juz' al-Thani*, 163.
[101] A similar point is made by Muhammad 'Ali Mustafa and Mansur Sulayman in their manual *Al-Tadris 'Usuluhu wa Tara'iquhu*.

be our aim."[102] In tying moral education to a kind training in life, Qandil is one of the first to articulate one of progressive education's most foundational principles: that school is actually 'life itself' and that teaching 'life' is the ultimate goal of schooling thereby echoing the words of John Dewey and many others.[103] Interestingly, for Qandil, the point is to train students in ethics and morals until these become part of their "subconscious (*amran lashu'uriyyan*)."[104] Qandil's invocation of the subconscious here is significant because it demonstrates the ways in which the conceptions he lays down were simultaneously couched in psychoanalytic thought.

With Ahmad 'Abduh Khayruldin's manual '*Usul al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim* (The Foundations of Education), we find yet another variation on the theme: Khayruldin views *al-akhlaq* as the ultimate goal for education, much like Qandil, Tawfiq and Jawish, but instead of placing an emphasis on the development of strong characters like Qandil, he sketches a rigorous training programme based on three principles: the disciplining of natural instincts, finding the "good spirit within children, and training good habits." In so doing, Khayruldin's version of moral education is one in which basic principles of the new psychology are actually used to support a system of disciplinarity, much like the one proposed by Jawish. Unlike Jawish, it is predicated on more modern conceptions of the self as informed by psychology and not on a simple system of reward and severe (corporal) punishment.[105]

As for Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz's manual *al-Tarbiya wa Turuq al-Tadris* (Education and Teaching Methods) which was published in 1951, it concedes that morals and ethics are

[102] Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris al-Juz' al-Thani*, 165
[103] John Dewey famously expressed the idea that education was life itself in works such as My Pedagogic Creed (1897) and Democracy and Education (1916).
[104] Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris al-Juz' al-Thani*, 165.
[105] Ahmad 'Abduh Khayruldin, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim*, 33–35.

the most important aims of any education.[106] At the same time, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz presents an extremely nuanced understanding of *al-akhlaq*. For example, he suggests that morals and ethics change with time and vary according to the society. He also acknowledges the existence of different intergenerational moral paradigms.[107] Finally, ‘Abd al-Aziz is open to the idea that while the school should play a leading role in moral education, there are multiple ways in which this can be carried out including through the introduction of play in the classroom.[108] As such, ‘Abd al-Aziz joins the ranks of his fellow progressive psychologist-educators in giving the term *al-akhlaq* new meaning and using it in functional ways to support a more progressive agenda in Egyptian classrooms.

If at the turn of the 20th century questions of morality and ethics were at the forefront of the debate within the genre of pedagogical writing, by the 1920s and 1930s, there were countless manuals and pedagogy textbooks that had dropped *al-akhlaq* altogether, resorting instead to other goals for education. For example, in *Tarbiyat al-Tifl wa Mabadi’ ‘Ilm al-Nafs* (Child Education and the Principles of Psychology) Emily ‘Abd al-Mesih treats moral education as part of a larger trio consisting of physical education and mental education. So far, this division is in line with previous works. However, unlike Qandil, Jawish, Tawfiq and Khayruldin, no preferential treatment is given to moral education. Instead, all three components must come hand in hand while none are considered the ultimate goal of education. With ‘Abd al-Mesih’s textbook—which incidentally was one of the few co-authored by women—we also begin to see an increased interest in psychoanalysis, in children’s innate instincts and in the idea of education as a means to instil more social and communal inclinations in children.[109] Similarly, in the

[106] Salih ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, *Al-Tarbiya wa Turuq al-Tadris*, 202.
[107] Ibid., 237.
[108] Ibid., 278.
[109] Emily Abd al-Mesih et al., *Tarbiyat al-Tifl wa Mabadi’ ‘Ilm al-Nafs* (Cairo: Wizarat al-Ma‘arif al-‘Umumiyya, 1938).

introduction to *Rawdat al-Atfal li-l-Madaris 'Awwaliyya*, (Kindergarten/Pre-School) Insaf Sirri—another female voice—suggests that "the purpose of education is not to fill a child's brain with dry information as most fathers and mothers believe, but to take care of the rearing (*tarbiya*) of the young in a manner that corresponds to their nature, their needs and their inclinations."[110]

Pedagogy manuals appearing in the 1940s and early 50s also omitted references to *al-akhlaq*, this includes the work of 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, Ahmad Zaki Salih, and Muhammad Khalafallah.[111] All such manuals/textbooks shifted their attention from *al-akhlaq* to ideas of children's needs, to individuality and to freedom. Even Ya'kub Famm's work *Al-Tarbiya wa-l-Akhlaq* (Education and Morals) which should—as one might expect from the title—discuss *al-akhlaq* in relation to education, ends up using the term *al-akhlaq* in a new way akin to the word character more than morality/ethics. "The purpose of *al-tarbiya al-khulqiya* (moral education) is then to build characters that are able to reach the perfect social state. Everything that enables a human to carry out this, provided it is man's doing and according to his free will is part of *al-akhlaq*"[112]

The Arabic translation of Percy Nunn's *Education: its Data and First Principles*, which was first published in 1945, shows how the *al-akhlaq* genre was no longer important to the pedagogical lexicon for some writers. For Nunn, freedom and individuality become the ultimate purpose of a proper education.[113]

It is important to note however, that many of the manuals which were published earlier in the 20th century continued to be used by teacher training institutions. This is evidenced by

[110] Insaf Sirri, *Rawdat al-Atfal li-l-Madaris al-Awwaliyya*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Matba'at al-Ma'arif, 1930).
[111] See also the first and second part of *Mabadi' al-Tarbiya* published in 1937 and 1938 respectively by the Ministry of Public Instruction. Despite having different sets of authors, both parts of the manual omit any direct references to al-Akhlaq opting instead to focus on questions of child development.Muhammad 'Ali Mustafa et al., *Mabadi' al-Tarbiya al-Juz' al-Thani*.
[112] Ya'kub Famm, *Al-Tarbiya wa-l-Akhlaq* 23–25.
[113] Percy Nunn, *Al-Tarbiya Madatiha wa Mabadi'uha al-Awwaliyya*, 16.

the multiplicity of their printed editions which went well into the mid 1970s. Additionally, as we have seen with ‘Abd al-‘Aziz’s 1951 manual, *al-akhlaq* continued to play an important role in the writings of some psychologist-educators to advance principles of progressive education. As such, the process of pedagogical knowledge-production (which was predicated on ‘Middle Ground Psychology) oscillated playfully in and between the *al-akhlaq* genre but in ways that gave the genre new meanings to serve the purpose of progressive education.

Intellectual Rigor

The analysis of previously overlooked teacher training manuals from the early 20th century in conjunction with sources from the pedagogical press, provides us with interesting insights to re-evaluate the existing but limited literature on progressive education and to uncover a more multi-layered picture of its manifestation in Egypt from the perspective of its initiators. The sheer volume of books, articles and research that was produced by psychologist-educators roughly between 1922 and 1956 is a testament to the rich intellectual contributions that such centres encouraged. Psychologist-educators’ interest in child psychology and pedagogy actually exceeded the few debates featured in this chapter. From their interest in the origin of feelings, thoughts, and instincts to their appreciation of the neurobiology, philosophy and scientific experimentation, psychologist-educators produced countless pedagogy manuals, specialised books, academic articles and research papers outlining their findings, hypothesis and practical application of their work. Take for example one of *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya*’s own publications, *Al-Lugha wa-l-Fikr* (Language and Thought) a remarkable collection of lectures compiled and published in 1948. The book contains four important lectures that were delivered by *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya*’s finest ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi, Muhammad Sa‘id Qadri, Stanley Jackson and

Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal on questions of language, cognition and the particularities of learning colloquial and Modern Standard Arabic. It also contains the results of an experiment conducted among eighteen school children in 1942 on language skills.[114] Through this exploration of teaching manuals, pedagogy textbooks and journal articles, we can begin to visualize the field of progressivism as a dynamic and multi-layered arena in which different actors negotiated, debated, and—through trial and error—co-created practices in progressivism. In adopting the framework of 'Middle Ground Psychology', Egyptian educators hoped to chart a new course of action for education, one which in their practices allowed for the development of free and critical learners in line with their newly found aspirations in Egypt's nascent democracy. Most importantly, however, the analysis of such materials demonstrates the intellectual contributions of these institutions as they became *the* thread that wove Egyptian educational thought and practice together. Far from being technocratic centres that failed to engage in the more 'interesting' intellectual debates of their time, *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* provided the space for teachers, psychologist-educators and the wider public to contribute to the pedagogical, philosophical and scientific debates of the period. Teacher training institutions were valuable spaces of higher learning, and the psychologist-educators employed by them were important intellectual gatekeepers who were valued by their peers.

Conclusions

On 4 September 1963, only a few months following Luis 'Awad's critical piece, Isma'il al-Qabbani passed away at the age of 65 after a long career in education having even briefly served as Minister of Education following the Free Officer Coup in 1952. It is

[114] 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi et al., *Al-Lugha wa-l-Fikr* (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1948), 98–138.

unclear whether al-Qabbani had the chance to read the article published by ‘Awad or to respond to the critiques levelled at the institutions he helped build. In a way, the real response came following news of his passing: For five consecutive days after his death, the obituary section of *al-Ahram* contained countless eulogies and condolence messages by teachers, headmasters, civil society organisations, university departments and associations—about forty entries in total: “We are deeply saddened by the loss of al-Qabbani”, read one of them “the association is in deep sorrow about the loss of a man who promoted revolutionary educational ideas and elevated the teaching profession in this country.”[115] “We mourn the loss of the flame that lit the way for teachers. Your whole life, Isma‘il , you opened yourself up to others, and gave us your knowledge and your philosophy”, read another. The multitude and diversity of institutions that came forward following al-Qabbani’s passing, and the sincerity of the eulogies they published stand in stark contrast to ‘Awad’s critique. In some sense, they are a small testament to *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya*’s value, its influence, its relevance and its intellectual engagement with revolutionary pedagogical thought in post-1922 Egypt.

As enthusiastic as senior pedagogues may have been about their institutions and the ‘Middle Ground Psychology’ these advocated, we are yet to understand how practicing teachers felt about these pedagogical ideas and whether they came to implement them. In the coming chapters, I explore how progressive ideas travelled from the ivory towers of teacher training institutions to real life classrooms.

[115] See the obituary pages in *al-Ahram* newspaper from 5 September 1963 to 9 September 1963.

Part II

Tadris (Teaching)

The following two chapters take us from the realm of *theory* to that of practical *application.* In previous chapters we followed Egypt's senior pedagogues and psychologist-educators at prestigious institutions such as *Ma'had al-Tarbiya.* To begin to understand how progressive education moved from the theoretical ivory towers of the training colleges into the schools, the following chapters turn their focus away from the higher echelons of the teaching profession and focus instead on practicing teachers at public schools. Seeing as teachers were trained in the new progressive methods, this is an investigation into whether they were able to successfully implement these theories in their teaching practice. In *In the Footsteps of 'Inayat al-Zayat,* poet and scholar of the Middle East, Iman Mersal remarks: "There is a curiosity that befalls us when the author is unknown, when they are cut from a tree [without any known family], when we lack any indication about their birth or their death, about their generation, their friends, peers or literary parents."[1] Much like Mersal whose quest in the book is to trace the life of a previously unknown author named 'Inayat al-Zayat, the following two chapters try to weave the experiences of practicing teachers—sometimes named but often anonymous—and re-imagine what their school days were like, what problems they faced and to what extent they were able to implement the progressive principles they had been trained in. Practicing teachers did not necessarily leave behind illustrative renditions of their experiences, and indeed there is no archive that distinctly locates their vision, experiences and the difficulties they faced within their profession. Apart from the few teachers and headmasters who contributed to the pedagogy press sharing lessons learned and experiences gained, a more creative approach is needed to unearth their voices. To this end, school magazines, ministerial reports, textbooks and end of year examinations are used to re-construct the material, bureaucratic, institutional and cultural world that practicing teachers had to contend with. This combination of rather *indirect* source material allows us to re-imagine their professional lives more vividly and center their experiences within the institution of the school.

[1] Iman Mersal, *Fi Athar 'Inayat al-Zayat,* (Cairo: Al-Kutub Khan li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi', 2019), 31.

Chapter 3
Reality check: Structural Impediments to Progressive Education

I was not long enough in Cairo to come to any definite conclusions on Egyptian education as it may be judged from Cairo standards. In most places the teaching seemed to be bookish and dull. Teachers sometimes unnecessarily followed the letter of the law as it is laid down by the Ministry. I saw very little evidence of imagination or criticism. I did, however, meet some 'rebels', nearly all trained in England, who were struggling bravely and successfully against a dead weight of regulation and inertia. The fact that these more imaginative and enterprising young people are being noticed by the Ministry seemed to me to be a very hopeful sign. The country needs more of them.[2]

-H.R. Hamley, Professor of Pedagogy at the Institute of Education in London, 1940

In 1940, HR Hamley, professor of Pedagogy at the Institute of Education in London, ended a letter he produced on his brief visit to Egypt and which was addressed to the Secretary General of the British Council in Cairo with the above words. At the time, Hamley was on a ten-month mission abroad to the countries of the Near and Middle East, presumably to assess the state of education. During his stay in Cairo from 17-26 November 1940, he visited a number of educational institutions including *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, the Training College for Female Teachers, and *al-Azhar*. While it may strike one as odd to begin this chapter with Hamley's unflattering assessment, the decision to do so is deliberate: His assessment contains the standard accusations made against the Egyptian education system: that it was 'bookish', 'dull' and that teachers 'sometimes unnecessarily followed the letter of the law as it is laid down by the Ministry.' Instead of relying on ad hoc observations from a non-Arabic speaking international 'expert', this chapter will instead seek to follow practicing teachers as they entered the classrooms. It traces their invisible professional experiences—not only through their limited contributions to the

[2] The National Archives (TNA): BW 29/6

pedagogical press—but via a reconstruction of these experiences using ministerial reports, actual examinations, teacher instructions, curricula and textbooks and education budgets. In other words, through these indirect sources, a picture of what it most probably felt like to teach in Egyptian classrooms during the first half of the 20th century will be re-created and the very real limitations to the application of progressivism will be explored. In so doing, I make two interrelated arguments: I posit that it was difficult for practicing teachers to apply progressivism in their own classrooms. However, this was not, as implied by Hamley, due to their inertia or 'unnecessary' obedience to the laws of the Ministry, but because of major structural and institutional impediments that could sometimes be traced back to the British occupation's educational policy prior to 1922. In other words, impediments such as budgetary constraints, poor facilities, as well as the Ministry of Public Instruction's policies of control presented real challenges to practicing teachers. Attempts to deviate from the course set by this system could potentially affect a teacher's advancement opportunities. These impediments are the subject of this chapter.

Budgetary Restrictions

The most obvious obstacle that Egyptian teachers had to contend with was the Ministry of Public Instruction's annual budget and the limited resources accessible to them and to their schools. The correlation between progressive education and the budget allocated for education cannot be understated. For one, progressive education—of both the developmentalist and the psychoanalytic kinds—dictates that teachers take a special interest in children, their needs, aspirations and, in the case of developmental psychology, their 'stages of development.' As such, classrooms must be small enough for teachers to be able to follow children individually and attend to their needs as well as tailor learning experiences fit to their personalities. Progressive education also necessitates the existence

of adequate facilities within the school which would allow teachers to easily undertake interesting activities and tailor their lessons to the questions and interests of their students. But even 'freer' notions of progressivism of the psychoanalytic kind necessitate important resources such as playgrounds, art and crafts materials, and well-trained teachers who would be able to improvise learning experiences on demand. A limited education budget would be a hindrance to progressive education in all of its forms.

Table 4 shows the evolution of educational funding from the 1883 until 1948. As expected, the 1925 educational reforms which were carried out in the wake of Egypt's nominal independence from Great Britain were reflected in the budget. In the academic year 1925/1926, the percentage allocated to education from the state's budget more than doubled, from 3.2 % to 6.6%. These figures continued to increase steadily throughout the 1920s and 1930s, reaching 13.2% in 1940 and 13.4% in 1948.

Academic Year	**Government Budget (EGP)**	**Ministry of Education Budget**	**Percentage**
1882-1883	797831	75687	0.84
1890-1891	11,251483	81252	0.72
1900-1901	10,839583	107227	0.98
1910-1911	16,948082	507942	2.90
1920-1921	62,051182	1,097341	1.7
1921-1922	37,747112	1,209653	3.2
1922-1923	28,247171	1,256542	4.4
1923-1924	31,466480	1,646951	4.9
1924-1925	29,976185	1,719689	5.7
1925-1926	34,204977	2,282661	6.6
1926-1927	38,973340	2,678218	6.8
1927-1928	35,389036	2,935287	8.0

1928-1929	37,229559	2,998441	8.0
1929-1930	41,128413	3,442258	8.3
1930-1931	41,222580	3,599898	8.7
1931-1932	36,991858	3,513761	9.7
1932-1933	35,948856	3,383763	9.4
1933-1934	30,548711	3,487723	11.3
1934-1935	31,600252	3,559454	11.2
1935-1936	33,649897	3,928943	11.6
1936-1937	34,192038	4,340467	12.9
1937-1938	36,332208	4,725543	13.0
1938-1939	40,292241	5,238915	13.0
1939-1940	41,174155	5,31270	12.9
1940-1941	42,558884	5,619181	13.2
1941-1942	46,062380	5,425000	11.7
1942-1943	56,553450	5,732910	10.1
1943-1944	71,938261	7,198100	10.0
1944-1945	83,097005	8,415000	10.2
1945-1946	95,303874	11,449720	12.0
1946-1947	102,492123	12,711737	12.4
1947-1948	94,547624	12,701904	13.4

Table 4 Government and Education Budgets from Abu Khuldun Sati' al-Husari, Hawliyyat al-Thaqafa al-'Arabiyya, 1949, 348.

Despite the visible increase in the budget allocated to education, shifts in education policy, especially the removal of primary school fees in 1944, complicated matters further. As will be discussed below, the debates concerning the right to education and the primary education fees were instrumental in charting educational policies in the 1940s and 1950s.

To fully comprehend what was at stake, it is necessary to understand the nature of Egypt's education system in the post-1922 era.

When in 1923 the country's first constitution was promulgated, basic education was made compulsory and free for boys and girls. Accordingly, all Egyptian children were meant to attend school at the basic level. In reality, matters were much more complicated. As discussed by numerous historians including Misako Ikeda, Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali and Bassant Fathy, Egypt suffered from a multi-tier education system which was first cemented by the British occupation. As Ikeda explains:

> Even after the transfer of the administration of public education to the Egyptian government [in 1922], the elementary level of public education was divided into two systems: elite education in primary schools (al-Madaris al-'Ibtida'iyya), which included kindergarten, (…) elementary schools (al-Madrasa al-Awwaliyya), and compulsory schools (al-Madrasa al-'Ilzamiyya).[3]

Elementary and compulsory schools were free but children who attended them could not move up the educational ladder to access the secondary schools—and from there the university. Only children attending primary schools, which did charge fees—until 1944—could attend secondary schools and later obtain a university degree. Both compulsory and elementary schools were originally conceived as spaces to teach basic reading and writing skills and to combat illiteracy and the majority were located in towns and villages. By contrast, primary schools offered an elite and rigorous academic programme which was challenging, thereby allowing students to compete at the secondary level, and were located in major cities and larger towns.[4] The differences between the primary and elementary school curriculum further contributed to the difficulty of transitioning from one track to the other. There were also very few scholarship schemes available to elementary and

[3] Misako Ikeda, "Toward the Democratization of Public Education: The Debate in Late Parliamentary Egypt, 1943–52," in *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*, ed. Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy Johnson, and Barak Salmoni (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 221.
[4] For a more thorough breakdown on Egypt's multi-tier primary level system see Bassant Fathi, *Ta'adudiyyat al-Ta'lim al-'Ibtida'i fi Misr 1922-1993* (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-Misriyyay al-'Amma li-l-Kitab, 2009).

compulsory students thereby making a transition even more cumbersome. The disadvantaged position plaguing both compulsory and elementary schools was such that the literature makes little distinction between them. However, one important difference lay in the duration of the school day: While elementary schools offered full school days, compulsory schools were on a half day basis.[5]

Given these conditions, primary schools had a much better reputation because they were initially designed as elite-track schools. As illustrated in Table 5, in the academic year 1944/1945 there were 895,089 public elementary and compulsory schools as opposed to 59, 939 kindergarten and primary schools. In other words, there were fifteen times more elementary and compulsory schools than primary ones, but they expectedly suffered from a lack of resources, underpaid teachers and a rudimentary curriculum. In 1941, a teacher by the name of Muhammad 'Isa Musa submitted a report to the Higher Council of Education titled: '*Uyub al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami wa Wasa'il Islahuh* (The Flaws of Compulsory Education and the Tools for its Reform).

NUMBER OF AND ENROLLMENT IN PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND FOREIGN SCHOOLS IN EGYPT, 1913–14 AND 1944–45*

SCHOOLS	1913–14				1944–45			
	Number of Schools	Enrollment			Number of Schools	Enrollment		
		Boys	Girls	Total		Boys	Girls	Total
Elementary and compulsory								
Public ..	3,669	205,944	26,514	232,458	3,985	476,835	418,254	895,089
Private	3,577	87,250	4,666	91,916	737	79,525	31,800	111,325
Foreign ...		..		.	†	2,777	1,252	4,029
Total	7,246	293,194	31,180	324,374	4,722	559,137	451,306	1,010,443
Kindergarten and primary								
Public .	94	11,810	2,168	13,978	216	48,319	11,620	59,939
Private	615	52,358	13,735	66,093	400	56,978	31,353	88,331
Foreign	302	21,615	19,896	41,511	†	33,627‡	12,678	46,305
Total	1,011	85,783	35,799	121,582	616	138,924‡	55,651	194,575

Table 5: Table D: Matthews and Akrawi, Education in the Arab Countries of the Near East, 1949,34

[5] Ikeda, "Toward the Democratization of Public Education:The Debate in Late Parliamentary Egypt," 221.

As a board member of the Union of 'Ilzami Teachers' Syndicates and a member of the syndicate of the governorate of Behira, Musa was able to articulate the major problems faced by his colleagues at these underfunded institutions. His report noted that: "the aims and goals of compulsory education were never set clearly since their establishment seventeen years ago."[6] The report also highlighted various problems including faulty curricula, underfunded teachers and little funding for school meals.

Even senior pedagogues were aware of the dire conditions at compulsory and elementary schools. For example, in 1940, Isma'il al-Qabbani submitted a critical report about compulsory schools in collaboration with the controller of elementary schools and the headmaster of the Teacher Training Institutions for compulsory schools in Beni Suwayf following dozens of field visits to elementary and compulsory schools in Port Said, Damietta, and Mansura.[7] Most likely as a result of both al-Qabbani's and Musa's reports, the Ministry of Public Instruction established a special committee to study the state of compulsory education and recommend pathways for reform in 1941. Among other things, the committee concluded that compulsory schools had to be brought up to the same standard as primary schools.[8] A few years later, in 1945 al-Qabbani continued to critique the state of compulsory and elementary education as opposed to primary schools in a memo he submitted to the Ministry of Public Instruction in which he stated that: "Compulsory schools had completely failed to fulfil the goals they were initially established for " unlike primary schools, which, despite some of their shortcomings, were

[6] Muhammad 'Isa Musa, " 'Uyub al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami wa Wasa'il Islahuh," Report (Cairo, 1941), 23, Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.
[7] Isma'il al-Qabbani, "Taqrir 'an Halat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami," in *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1958), 26–67.
[8] Lajnat 'Islah al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami, "Taqrir Lajnat 'Islah al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami," in *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1951), 261–69.

"the most prestigious type of schools and the closest to fulfilling the goals of public education in Egypt."[9]

Plagued by a growing disparity between the two systems, the situation was exacerbated when the primary school fees were lifted in 1944. This is because parents were now attracted to the primary schools which enjoyed a far better reputation. As a result, the Ministry of Public Instruction was now faced with overcrowding in their primary school classrooms. In 1945, the Ministry of Public Instruction published a report on its activities from October 1944 to October 1945, following the removal of primary school fees. One of the main problems listed in the report was the "massive overcrowding of schools with students which has made the work of headmasters and teachers next to impossible and resulted in little educational benefit for the students and bad examination results."[10] Isma'il al-Qabbani's memo which was published that same year pointed to some of the structural issues resulting from overcrowding, complaining that in some instances, the number of students in primary school classrooms had exceeded forty and sometimes fifty students. Some schools now housed 1000 students in total.[11] Al-Qabbani was among the few to also report a scabies outbreak in a primary school in the city of Damietta due to overcrowding.[12]

By 1945, even primary schools which were considered high quality were now plagued with problems of underfunding and overcrowding despite the overall increase in the country's education budget.

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[9] Isma'il al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1958), 125.
[10] Maktab al-Sahafa, "Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya fi 'Am min Uktubar Sanat 1944 'Ila Uktubar Sanat 1945" (Cairo: Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, 1945), 3.
[11] In a report submitted at the Conference on the Application of the Methods of New Education in Egyptian classrooms which took place in 1945, the authors noted that the number of students in kindergarten classrooms had reached 35 children, 52 children in primary school classrooms and 50 students in secondary school classrooms. See Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945*, 162.
[12] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim*, 120.

For supporters of progressive education, overcrowding automatically meant lower educational quality. For example, in 1945, when *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya* organized the previously mentioned conference on 'The Methods of New Education', reports were submitted which set the ideal parameters for the optimal number of students per classroom. More specifically, the conference proposed the following:

School Level	**Maximum Number of Students per classroom**	**Maximum Number of Students per school**
Kindergarten	20	300
Primary Schools	25	400
Secondary Schools	30	600

Table 6: Number of Students per classroom as recommended in a report submitted to the 1945 conference on the Methods of New Education [13]

In his memo, al-Qabbani calculated that the number of children between the ages of six and twelve who were eligible for public schooling in 1937 was 2.5 million. He also noted that a single child's education cost the state 24 Egyptian Pounds per annum. Based on these figures, an annual budget of approximately 60 million Egyptian pounds would have had to be made available in order for every single child (within this age range) to be enrolled in public schools in the late 1930s. Comparatively, the entire state budget in 1937 was around 36 million Egyptian pounds (see Table 4) and 82 million Egyptian pounds in 1944/1945 while the education budget was merely 84000 Egyptian pounds that same year.

Given such conditions, it is difficult to imagine, especially in a post 1944 world, how practicing teachers would have managed to experiment with progressive methods. In fact, in a session on the material conditions necessary for the application of progressive methods, which was part of the 1945 conference mentioned above, the subcommittee in

[13] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 163.

charge of organizing the session critiqued the working conditions that teachers were being subjected to. The committee consisted of a combination of psychologist-educators and practicing teachers including Amin Mursi Qandil, Riad Muhammad ‘Askar, and Salih ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Shihata alongside Salama Jad, a teacher from the Shubra Secondary School, and ‘Ilwi Shaltut, a teacher at the Faruq I Secondary school. In the report they prepared, the verdict on working conditions was crystal clear: “In Egypt, the teacher is exhausted in every kind of school.”[14]

The report also provided a breakdown of the average teacher’s schedule in hours as illustrated in Table 7:

Task	**Kindergarten**	**Primary School**	**Secondary School**
Teaching	28	24	20
Subbing	4	4	4
Preparation	12	12	15
Correcting Student Mistakes	6	15	15
Overseeing Extra Curricular Activities	5	3	3
School Meetings	2	2	2
Supervision (Recess and other activities)	9	6	4
Grading Exams	-	3	3
Other Tasks as Class Teacher	3	1	1
	69	70	67

Table 7: Breakdown of a Teacher's Working Hours, Conference on Methods of New Education, 1945

[14] Rabitat Khariji Ma‘had al-Tarbiya, *Mu’tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 166.

With a seventy-hour work week in the primary schools, the report concluded that teachers were under tremendous pressure unlike their civil servant counterparts in any other sector. This in turn, hindered them from becoming active members of the community and "deprived them of their right to enjoy life." [15] As for elementary and compulsory schools, the situation was not much different. In the report submitted by al-Qabbani in 1940 on the state of compulsory education in the country, he lamented that teachers in such schools typically had to teach 48 lessons per week not including the time needed for preparation, marking etc.[16]

As early as the 1930s, there were some reports in the pedagogy press about the difficult working conditions that teachers were being subjected to. For example, *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* featured an article in 1935 titled "Save the teachers from Additional Lessons" which focused on the problem of teacher absences and the resulting workload that is incurred by their colleagues in such situations.[17] The article focused on how American schools hired substitute teachers so that full time teachers did not bear the burden of their absent colleagues and urged the Ministry of Public Instruction to consider the American case in order to solve this issue.

In addition, the fact that the report submitted at the 1945 conference also noted shortages in school supplies and materials speaks volumes about the inability of teachers to successfully implement such progressive practices—irrespective of whether they were employed in primary, compulsory or secondary schools. That is to say, while genuine efforts were carried out, especially in the latter half of the 1940s, to increase the Ministry of Public Instruction's overall budget—and indeed produced an impressive and

[15] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 167.
[16] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim,* 1958, 38.
[17] "Inqizu al-Mu'allimin min al-Durus al-'Idafiyya," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* 9, no. 1 (October 1935): 15–17.

unprecedented breakthrough when compared to the pre-1922 period under British occupation—such efforts paled in comparison to the budgetary demands that a genuine system of progressive education would have imposed on the country's resources.

Buildings

To honour progressive calls to limit the number of students per primary school to 400, the Egyptian Ministry of Public Instruction would have needed (at least) 6250 schools for the academic year 1945/1946 to accommodate all eligible children between the ages of six and twelve. This figure is a modest estimate since it assumes that the number of Egyptian children was the same in 1945 as calculated by al-Qabbani in 1937, i.e., 2.5 million. Thus, the Ministry would have had to construct over a thousand new schools to secure a spot for each child within this age range, given that the number of already existing schools (elementary plus primary) at the time was 4201.[18] This explains why there were genuine attempts to at least address the building deficit—even if the resources needed far exceeded what the Ministry could offer. Such attempts were carried out by the Ministry of Public Instruction following the recommendations of Egypt's top progressive pedagogues.

When in 1944, the primary school fees were lifted, causing overcrowding and—in certain instances—the spread of infectious disease within classrooms, the need for an accelerated school building construction programme became pressing. The issue was raised at the 1945 conference on 'The Methods of New Education' where the Ministry's leasing policy was heavily critiqued since these buildings were not equipped to accommodate progressive methods.[19] At the conference, the attendees recommended that the Ministry abandon this school leasing policy and instead embark on a massive nation-

[18] I calculated this number by adding the total number of public primary schools to the total number of public elementary schools for the year 1944/1945 using the data from Table 5).
[19] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945*, 182–84.

wide school construction project.[20] Similar positions were echoed by influential pedagogues like as Ima'il al-Qabbani—especially between 1944 and 1949—while he served as Undersecretary of Education in the wake of the primary school fee removal. When al-Qabbani became Minister of Education following the 1952 Free Officer Coup, he had estimated that in order to provide all Egyptian children between the ages of six to twelve free schooling, one would have to construct over 4000 new schools, a number far higher than the 1000 schools calculated above which assumes that already existing (rented) school buildings were adequate. It is easy to understand why three months after his Ministerial appointment in 1952, al-Qabbani established the School Premises State Foundation (SPSF) through Law No. 343 of 1952, an independent governmental institution with its own budget to which the country's school construction policy was entrusted.[21] The SPSF was meant to be an independent body with its own budget precisely because it needed to pool the necessary financial resources from outside the Ministry of Public Instruction.

In the course of a week in 1953, the SPSF began the construction of 212 schools and the foundation pledged to construct between 300 and 400 schools per year for ten years.[22] By 1957, when *Majallat al-'Imara*—Egypt's leading architecture magazine—published a special issue dedicated to the SPSF and its accomplishments, its general manager was declaring that the institution was constructing 400 school buildings per year.[23] The magazine broke down the number of schools per district and governorate as illustrated in the following table.

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Ahmad Ma'mun Al-Husayni, "Mu'assasat Abniyat al-Ta'lim," *Majallat Al-'lmara*, no. 2 (1957): Introduction.
[22] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim,* 1958, 213. Al-Qabbani states that the SPSF was meant to construct 300 buildings per year but in later years, sources suggest that the number was in fact 400. See for example, 'Awad Tawfiq, *Wuzara' al-Ta'lim fi Misr wa Abraz Injazatihim 1837-1979* (Cairo: Al-Markaz al-Qawmi li-l-Buhuth al-Tarbawiya, 1980), 137.
[23] Al-Husayni, "Mu'assasat Abniyat al-Ta'lim."

Education District	Schools completed by 30 June 1956	Schools under construction	Total
Cairo	83	29	112
Alexandria	28	11	39
Damanhur	25	15	40
Tanta	27	10	37
Kafr al-Shaykh	17	7	24
Shibin al-Kum	24	5	29
Banha	26	7	33
Mansura	31	11	42
Damietta	8	5	13
Zagazig	37	6	43
Canal cities	30	8	38
Giza	33	12	45
Bani Suif	20	3	23
Fayyum	26	11	37
Al-Minya	30	8	38
Asiyut	24	12	36
Suhaj	17	8	25
Qina	19	13	32
Aswan	11	4	15
Total	516	185	701

Table 8: SPSF school building construction 1953-1956. Source: Ahmad Ma'mun Al-Husayni, "Mu'assasat Abniyat al-Ta'lim," Majallat Al-'Imara, no. 2 (1957): Introduction.)

During al-Qabbani's tenure, the Ministry also constructed thirty kindergartens. Attempts to increase the number of schools were also visible during Taha Husayn's tenure as Minister of Public Instruction between 1950 and 1952, i.e., right before the 1952 Free Officer Coup. However, a larger investment was directed towards secondary schooling.

For example, through Ministerial Decree 10316 of 1951, fourteen new secondary school buildings were constructed.[24] The Ministry also added classrooms to already existing secondary schools.[25] At the same time, under Husayn, the Ministry rented, and took control over houses, apartments and plots of land to convert these into schools in an attempt to fill the emerging gap between the number of students of schooling age and the existing number of buildings.[26] But it is precisely this leasing policy that other progressives such as al-Qabbani and the attendees of the 1945 conference deemed problematic.

But imaginaries of a progressive school building oftentimes exceeded the question of numbers. On multiple occasions, teachers, especially those most influenced by utopian ideas of progressivism and those most closely interlinked with the surrealist and/or Child Art movement, advanced distinct ideas about the ideal school building. In the second issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* which was published in 1948, Yusuf al-'Afifi, who at the time was serving as head of the Art Department at *Ma'had al-Tabiya*, published an article on school buildings in which he claimed that Egyptian school buildings fell under two categories: On the one hand, there were those "which mimicked military barracks in their colour, layout and furniture."[27] 'Afifi maintained that the architects behind them were influenced by the political and pedagogical philosophy of the occupier and therefore emphasized the unlimited power of the state, blind obedience from students and strict adherence to non-negotiable rules and regulations.[28] For 'Afifi this explains why such buildings featured the following architectural elements: a school yard (for morning assembly), classrooms

[24] Ahmad Zaki Salih and 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, *Lamahat min Tarikh Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim Mumathalan fi A'mal Wuzara'uha* (Cairo: Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim, 1959), 159.
[25] Tawfiq, *Wuzara' al-Ta'lim fi Misr wa Abraz Injazatihim 1837-1979*, 118.
[26] Salih and Al-Qusi, *Lamahat min Tarikh Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim Mumathalan fi A'mal Wuzara'uha*, 164.
[27] Yusuf 'Afifi, "Al-Mabani al-Madrasiyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 2 (1948): 48.
[28] Ibid.

stacked one next to the other, laboratories (in the secondary schools), a gym (for group sports or sports classes), a cafeteria, kitchen and laundry room, toilets, a prayer room, a teachers' lounge and a headmaster's office, a fence and tight doors. He maintains that such designs were outdated. 'Afifi believed that these schools produced two kinds of students, militarized tyrants who did not believe in freedom of thought and expression and obedient yes-men who were used by the occupier to stack the bureaucracy. On the other hand, there were villas and homes that were leased from their owners and turned into schools. For 'Afifi—and echoing many of his progressive colleagues—the latter were worse than the former because they were not adequately equipped as learning environments. By contrast, 'Afifi's ideal school building had to encourage complete freedom for children. He therefore recommended that school buildings include the following elements: A large hall for students and teachers to interact when they first arrive in the morning, a theatre and cinema, a library, laboratories, museums and art rooms, study rooms, spaces for individual and group games, student room, gardens and fields for agriculture and animals. The embodiment of such a structure could be found in the village school for teachers at Qanatir Khayriyya (see next chapter) as it was a modest structure within a vast array of fields in the countryside. 'Afifi therefore maintained that no exuberant financial resources would have to be spent on such schools, because they were made of simple materials and a simple composition. The important thing was the philosophy underlying the layout of the school and the essence of the learning environment.

In the same issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, Habib Jurji also detailed his imagined ideal school. Similarly to 'Afifi, he believed that schools should foster progressive ideals.[29] Most important for Jurji was that school buildings be connected to the environment in

[29] Habib Jurji, "Ra'yi fi Insha' al-Mabani al-Madrasiyya al-Jadida," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 2 (1948): 51–52.

which they were constructed. There was therefore no standard architectural model to follow; schools had to be inspired by their local environments and the construction of new schools represented a golden opportunity to innovate architecturally while preserving and staying true to the original essence of the villages and towns where they were being constructed.

Like ʻAfifi, Jurji believed that schools should always include libraries and museums because they would be useful in every context.

It is interesting to juxtapose Jurji's idea of the ideal school with that of his son-in-law, Ramsis Wisa Wasif, one of Egypt's leading architects as well as the founder of the Haraniyya Art Center in the 1950s. In the 1940s, Wasif was commissioned to design a number of public and private schools including the Ismaʻiliyya Secondary School.

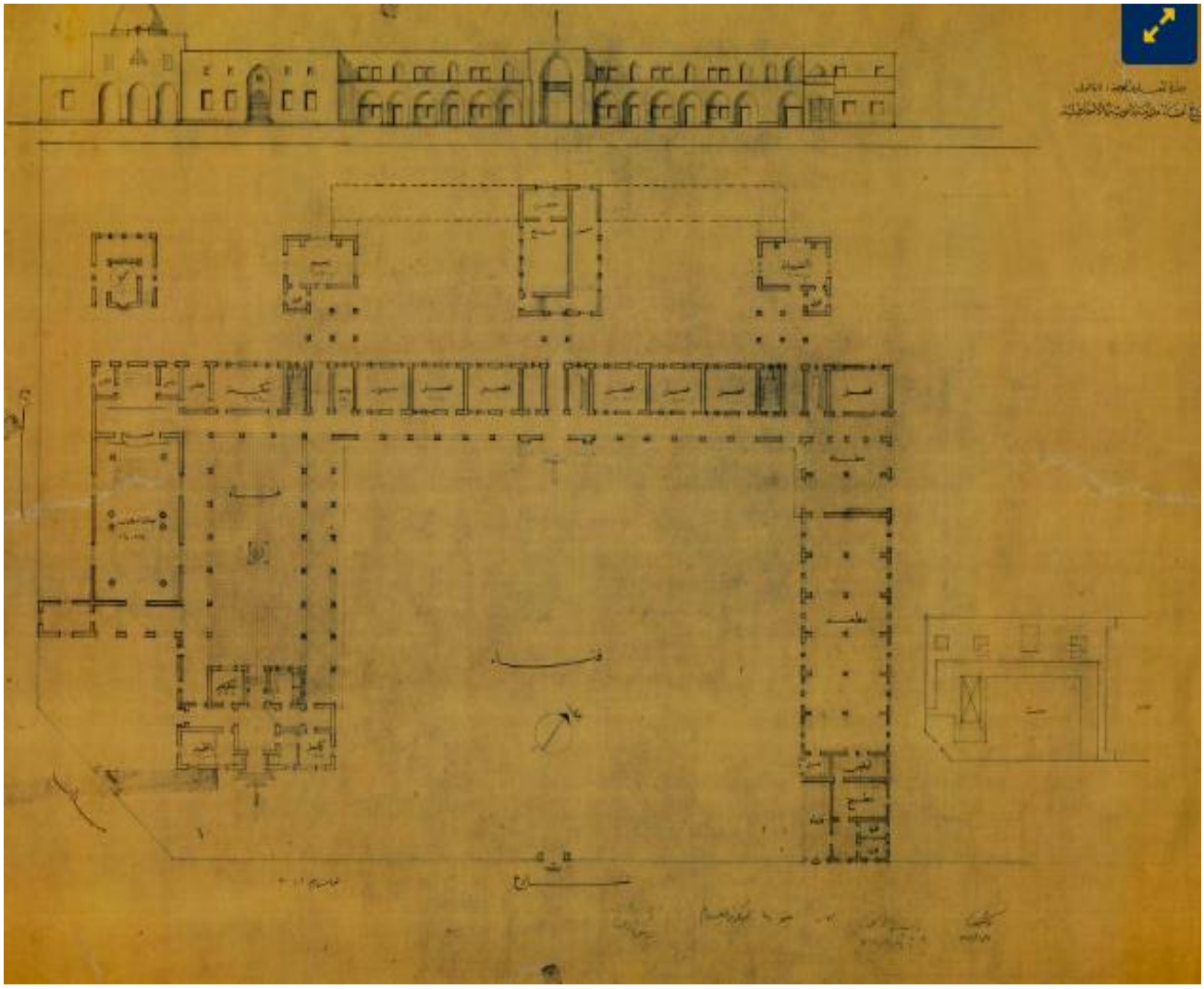


Figure 2: Isma'il ia Secondary school; 1949, Ramsis Wisa Wasif papers; Rare Books and Special Collections Library; The American University in Cairo

At first glance, one can recognize that the designs include elements of a traditional school—as per 'Afifi's definition—such as a school yard, traditional classrooms, a gym, a cafeteria, a prayer room, a teachers' lounge and a headmaster's office. However, the design diverges from this traditional model by also including an art room, a library and an assembly room with theatre. While the design may not have included agricultural fields, deconstructed study rooms or a museum, it was an attempt to blend old and new forms of

architecture as it relied on a few traditional dome structures.[30] Neither Wasif's, Jurji's, nor 'Afifi's imaginations of what the ideal school should look like were picked up by the Ministry and implemented on a massive scale. Instead, when the SPFS did embark on its project of mass production, it resorted to rudimentary plans which had neither space for deconstructed classrooms and museums nor the beloved open fields that were required for nature study and agricultural experimentations. One of the ways that the SPSF schools stayed true to progressivism was in their simplicity. While the SPSF models were probably not what many progressives had in mind when calling for simple designs, one has to contend that in the very least they cost the government little in the way of resources. All in all, the SPFS came up with eleven different designs which honored the principle of simplicity but failed otherwise to adhere to any progressive standards. Almost all included classrooms stacked one next to the other, a school yard, a teachers' lounge, a headmaster's office and bathrooms.

[30] Though his design for the Evangelical Primary School for Girls in Fajjalah included a museum.

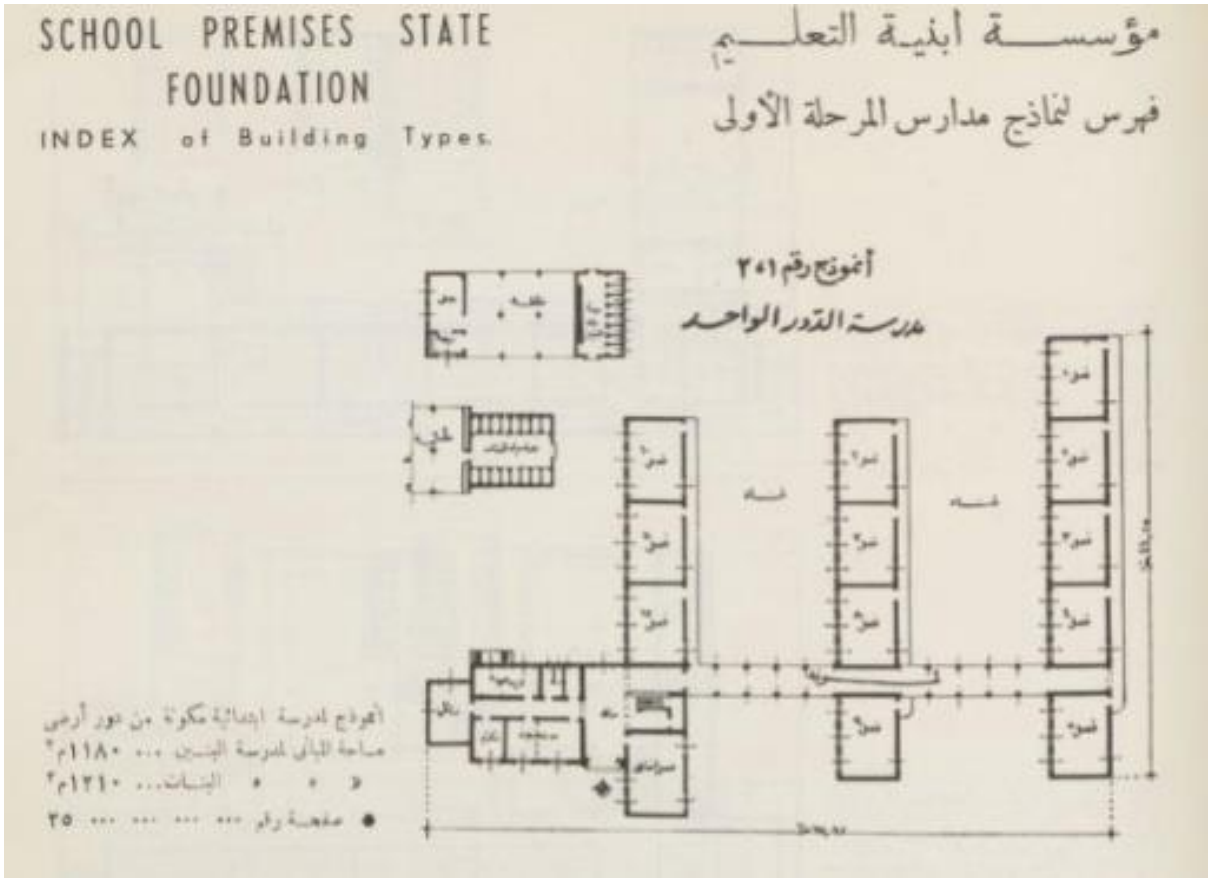


Figure 3: From Majallat al- 'Imara's special issue on the SPSF, p. 5. Models 1 and 2.

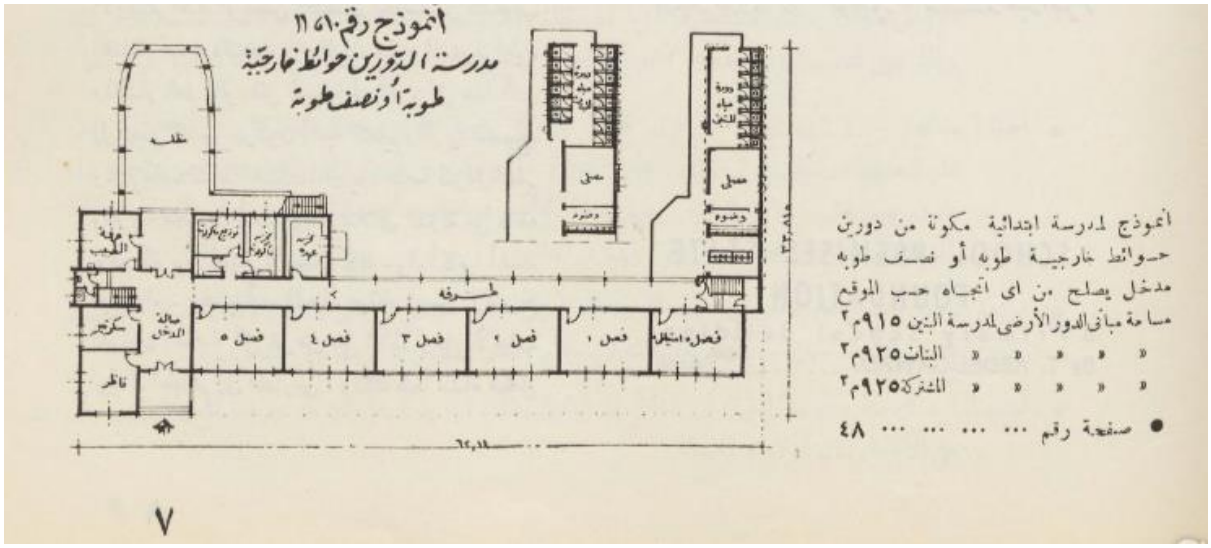


Figure 4: From Majallat al- 'Imara's special issue on the SPSF, p. 7. Models 10 and 11.

However, apart from solving the question of overcrowding, it is difficult to imagine how these buildings could have fostered progressive teaching principles. In other words, the buildings that progressive dreams were made of were never implemented on a larger

scale. In the 1940s, the average Egyptian teacher would have had problems implementing progressive principles primarily due to overcrowding in classrooms, while in the 1950s, the kinds of buildings that came to dominate the educational establishment in order to solve the issue of overcrowding—though openly approved by Egypt's top-ranking progressives—would have hardly been satisfactory to the dreamers, artists, anarchists and de-constructionists among them.

Centralization

In 'Abd al-Hamid Fahmi Matar's 1939 *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr* (Education and the Unemployed in Egypt), a seminal first-hand account by a schoolteacher depicting the problems of Egypt's education system, the author critiques what he believes to be one of the most pressing challenges of the system: '*al-markaziyya'* (centralisation). For Matar, who at the time of writing this account was employed at *Madrasat Hilwan al-Thanawiyya al-Amiriyya* (The Hilwan Secondary School), one of the main defects within the Egyptian system of education was the centrality of the Ministry of Public Instruction's role and its interference in almost all matters from the mundane to the essential.[31] Matar suggests that the matter had actually been raised in M. O. Mann's report on the state of education in the late 1920s but that no steps had been taken in order to remedy the situation since then. He attributed the origin of the problem to the time of the British occupation but pressed that times had changed, and that the Ministry should have opted for a different approach. For Matar, centralization entailed ministerial control over curricula and plans, all forms of educational content and the distribution of educational materials, the publication, printing and distribution of school textbooks, the formulation, distribution and correction of national examinations, the allocation of school budgets, interference in

[31] Matar, *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr*, 35–43.

disciplinary measures in schools, the hiring and firing of teachers, headmasters and school inspectors, the inspection of schools, the financing of school activities, and the issuing of all laws and decrees pertaining to schooling and education at large. In short, the Ministry was responsible for all technical, administrative and financial aspects of the education system. Or in the words of Matar: "The Ministry's absolute power has turned every headmaster and every teacher into a helpless puppet; a lifeless doll cannot breathe life into others!"[32] To prove his point, Matar lists a number of damning examples in which the Ministry of Public Instruction's excessive centralization and inefficiency resulted in grave consequences. For example, on the 13th of April 1938, a new textbook for secondary school students (fourth year) titled *Tarikh Misr al-Siyasi* (The Political History of Egypt) was distributed by the Ministry at the school in which Matar was employed. The timing could not have been worse: End of year examinations were scheduled to take place a short month after the book was distributed and teachers were outraged to discover that they were expected to cover the content of the new textbook in a span of a few weeks in preparation for these tests.[33] This incident was one among several occurring during the academic year (1937/1938) which—since its beginning in October 1937—was plagued by massive school supply shortages and textbook distribution delays. Increased teacher autonomy in matters of textbooks, examinations or curricula would have easily avoided such inconveniences.

Matar was not alone in articulating disillusionment with the Ministry's control over all matters pertaining to education. In fact, such views were shared by the vast majority of speakers at the 1945 conference on the 'Methods of New Education'. The conference featured at least six papers discussing various aspects of the Ministry's complete hold over the educational landscape from its control over the examinations, to the curriculum and

[32] Ibid., 35.
[33] Matar, *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr*, 37.

textbooks to the inspection process. Even Ministry inspectors such as Al-Dimirdash Muhammad, who served as inspector of examinations presented a paper on the dangers of continued ministerial oversight over every aspect of the education system and the need for the Ministry to share the burden of its vast responsibilities with regional offices, administrators, headmasters and teachers.[34] Muhammad believed that it was impossible—given the number and magnitude of the tasks at hand—that a central administration could in fact carry out such responsibilities efficiently. His article also recounted the Ministry's efforts in the late 1930s to decentralise through the establishment of regional administrative units across the country that could take over ordinary operations, leaving the Ministry to focus on general policies, educational plans and curricula.[35] Both Muhammad and other contributors at the conference admit that these efforts were not as successful as their architects hoped they would be.

Pedagogues such as Amir Buqtur, the Dean of Education at the American University, also expressed similar sentiments about the Ministry's tight grip and oversight. At the 1945 conference, Buqtur's intervention focused on the ways in which the system's centralization and bureaucracy ultimately led to a lack of trust between teachers/headmasters on the one hand, and Ministry officials, on the other. The concentration of power in the hands of the administration, Buqtur explained, created an atmosphere of blind obedience, bureaucratic inertia and hopeless routine.[36] Such conditions were not conducive to creativity nor could they foster freedom and experimentation in the classroom.

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[34] Al-Dimirdash Muhammad, "Al-Lamarkaziyya fi Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1948).
[35] See Ministerial Decree No. 5028 of 1939 on the establishment of seven educational regions in Cairo and the East Delta, the Middle Delta, Western Delta, Middle Egypt, and Upper Egypt. The decree was initially hailed as an important milestone for the Ministry's decentralization efforts despite its shortcomings.
[36] Amir Buqtur, "Al-Ittijahat al-Haditha fi-l-Tarbiya wa-l-'Awamil allati Ta'uq Ittiba'iha fi Madarisna," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1948), 77.

Critiques of the Ministry's 'suffocating' central role also appeared in the pedagogy press. A few years after the conference, Buqtur's colleague at AUC, Ya'kub Famm, published an article *'Afat al-Ta'lim al-Markaziyya* (The Scourge of Education: Centralisation) in the second issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* in which he decried the level of involvement that the Ministry exercised. Famm's article suggested that this level of control would have been completely understandable at the onset of modern schooling in Egypt in the 19th century, when there were but a handful of schools to oversee.[37] However, now that the system had developed on a large scale, it was no longer possible for a single individual or a small group to run the operation. Admitting that the system's origins were dictatorial, Famm suggests that under current conditions, schools were like factory-produced commodities, each one identical to the other, where thousands of teachers were at the mercy of a single person. This was not the first time Famm had pronounced on this topic. As early as 1929, he had published a similar article in al-*Majalla al-Jadida* (The New Magazine) on Egypt's centralized political system, in which he focused on education. Here, Famm suggested that Egypt was following the 'Latin' system whereby a centralized authority in the capital controlled the entirety of the country, much like Paris or Rome—so much so that a student in Alexandria or in Port Said studied the exact same content and took the exact same exams which were devised by a single person sitting in the Ministry of Public Instruction.[38]

In much of the literature on the Ministry's excessive centralization, criticism was levelled at three key features of control which—according to most critics—epitomized ministerial interference on the most fundamental pedagogical level: examinations, inspections, and curricula.

[37] Ya'kub Famm, "'Afat al-Ta'lim al-Markaziyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 2 (October 1948.): 14–17.
[38] Ya'kub Famm, "Al-Markaziyya fi Misr Dararuha fi Nizam al-Hukuma wa Nizam al-Ta'lim," *Al-Majalla al-Jadida* 1, no. 1 (November 1929): 70–74.

Examinations

One of the first activities carried out by *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* upon its establishment in Egypt in 1938 was to host a series of lectures for its members on the topic of examinations. The series featured prominent speakers from the progressive community including ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi, Amir Buqtur, and Isma‘il al-Qabbani as well as inspector of examinations Al-Dimirdash Muhammad. The lecture series culminated in a publication appropriately titled *Mushkilat al-’Imtihanat fi Misr* (The Problem of Examinations in Egypt), which was published in 1939 and in which the speakers’ contributions were compiled with an additional set of recommendations for reform.[39] The general consensus articulated in these lectures was that examinations were important. “In any case”, Buqtur concludes, “exams, like marriage, are a necessary evil.”[40] This is because, Buqtur explains, they had the power to test a student’s level of comprehension, as well as assess the skills of their teachers and help them to improve their teaching techniques. Exams had the ability to mentally engage students, push them to revise, and motivate them to be alert and active. They also had the power to reveal learning difficulties and problems of comprehension.[41] If exams are important and useful, what exactly was ‘the problem’ with them? Or, in the words of al-Qusi: “If exams exist all over the world, (…) why are they the object of so much hatred in Egypt?”[42] The answers furnished by practically all of the speakers hinted at two fundamental problems: First, Egyptian exams encouraged rote memorization. Second, the speakers believed that in no other country did the education system place so much weight on examinations: Exams dictated the transition from one school grade to the next,

[39] Amir Buqtur, “Muhadarat al-Duktur Amir Buqtur,” in *Mushkilat al-’Imtihanat fi Misr* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta’lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1939), 1–11.
[40] Buqtur, 11. Amin Mursi Qandil also uses the phrase a ‘necessary evil’ in relation to exams. See Qandil, *’Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris al-Juz’ al-Thani*, 131.
[41] Ibid.
[42] ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi, “Muhadarat al-Duktur ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi,” in *Mushkilat al-’Imtihanat fi Misr* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta’lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1939), 15.

they were a means to assess the performance of the teacher and they were centrally administered. Consequently, they were the mecca of the education system.

Buqtur's contribution grappled with the first issue. It suggested the introduction of so-called 'objective exams' (those that rely on true or false questions or multiple choice etc.) to counter the tendency towards rote memorization. Buqtur believed that 'objective exams' allowed teachers to easily identify whether a student had understood the material at hand and therefore made it easier for them to spot recurring mistakes in the long run. He also believed that such exams furnished clear and straightforward answers and were therefore easier to grade. It was easy to apply them across all subjects, especially the social sciences and they were favoured by students.

Al-Qabbani's contribution by contrast, was far more preoccupied with the fact that exams were formulated in a way to encourage rote memorization rather than critical thinking and meaningful analysis. To support this claim, al-Qabbani went as far as to cite four pages of past exam questions from various school grades to demonstrate that these were designed to encourage a blind regurgitation of textbook content.[43]

Similarly, for al-Qusi, the biggest tragedy was that schools were deviating from their original mission to enlighten minds and teach independence and critical thinking—by becoming "sites of phonograph production" where students were to mindlessly recite information.[44] Exams had effectively turned schools into workshops for the memorization of information that was relevant for the exam.

The contributors were also interested in the centrality of exams to the Egyptian education system. According to al-Qusi, tests were not just means to an end, they were *the end.* For him, exams controlled the actions and feelings of teachers, headmasters, students

[43] Isma'il Al-Qabbani, "Muhadarat al-Duktur Isma'il al-Qabbani," in *Mushkilat al-'Imtihanat fi Misr* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1939), 24–55.
[44] Al-Qusi, Muhadarat al-Duktur 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, 17.

and parents, much like a dictator. Or, to use al-Qabbani's terminology, *a ghost*, whose presence loomed over the entire education system. Al-Qusi supported his views via a short survey he conducted among students at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* which featured questions about the utility of exams, and whether they had been traumatic to them as students. Al-Qusi also spoke with four teachers to ascertain the findings of his survey. In all of these cases, he found that exams were dominating the teaching profession and hindering the development of independent thought and action. Tracing the centrality of exams back to the late 19th century, when the Egyptian state used entrance examinations for government jobs, al-Qusi decried the fanfare that continued to be created around the examination cycle—from the secrecy surrounding the grading process to the media attention they garner once the results are announced. These elements only increased the exam's importance in eyes of all the stakeholders. "When teachers deviate from this script, they are automatically met with resistance", al-Qusi suggested, "even textbook content was designed to serve the exam rather than any higher pedagogical purpose."[45] In short, exams had robbed Egyptian students of a genuine and meaningful learning experience because they had become the only learning experience.

The speakers at the 1938 lecture series were not the only ones to complain about the Egyptian examination system. Exams were also the bête noire at the 1945 conference on the 'Methods of New Education'. There too, the attendees complained about the centrality of exams: "During each lesson students ask how the content is related to the exam. Teachers write their lessons according to the exam, they ask questions in class with the exam in mind, and they waste time and energy trying to predict the questions that will

[45] Al-Qusi, "Muhadarat al-Duktur 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi", 17.

eventually appear on the exam."[46] Contributors with a more practical background such as 'Abdullah Mahir, an inspector of the East Delta Region, decried the fact that teachers' performances were measured based on the results of their students' exams, turning exams into an end rather than a means.[47] A secondary schoolteacher by the name of Ibrahim Mansur Abu Gharra admitted that even when teachers presented their own opinions, they were quick to warn their students not to include such opinions in the exam but to conform to the opinions listed in the textbooks in order to "secure their exam results."[48] Organisers of the session on 'whether teachers enjoyed the necessary freedoms to implement progressive practices' concluded: "Education plans, curricula, textbooks and exams are constraints which turn education into a set of identical molds (…) and restrict a teacher's power to act, innovate and create. This is because the Ministry of Public Instruction dictates the subjects, the number of lessons per subject, and the teaching methods through inspections and examinations."[49]

The pedagogy press was also a firm critic of the system of examinations. *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* published twenty articles on the topic between 1927 and 1947.[50] When *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* would comment on the subject, it sided with the critical voices.[51] But progressive pedagogues and psychologist-educators also took to the non-pedagogical press to express their discontent about the Egyptian examination system and the excessive

[46] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945*, 44. Amir Buqtur's contribution to the conference also mentions the problem of exams as an obstacle to the implementation of progressive practices in the classroom as they rely on rote memorization and discourage critical thinking.
[47] 'Abdullah Mahir, "Mawqif al-Mu'allim min Tatbiq al-Asalib al-Haditha," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1948), 84.
[48] Ibrahim Mansur Abu Gharra, "Mada Hurriyat al-Mu'allim wa-l-Madrasa fi Tatbiq Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1948), 127.
[49] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945*, 96.
[50] Musa, *Al-Fihris al-'Am min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 26–27. Articles on the subject spanned a wide range of themes including comparisons to examination systems in other countries, critiques of the current system in Egypt, international innovations in the field of testing, and suggestions on how to improve the system.
[51] See Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal, "Al-Imtihan," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 3, no. 4 (July 1951): 43–47.

emphasis placed on exams for the advancement of students and the evaluation of teachers.[52] In so doing, they contributed to the growing consensus in the media about the futility of exams and their potentially dangerous effect on the quality of education available to public school students.

Practicing teachers were also heavily engaged in this debate. In Matar's *al-Ta 'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun* one gets a sense of the level of discontent that teachers like himself were feeling vis-à-vis the Egyptian examination system. Matar decries the holy status that exams had come to acquire in this 'antiquated system' and the fact that they dictated a teacher's every movement. Matar was particularly distressed that every examination, even those which were carried out in order for students to move from a non-pivotal school grade to the next, were administered by the Ministry of Public Instruction through a secret coding system to keep students anonymous from their own teachers and prevent favouritism.

> We used to be able to grade the exams in the comfort of our homes, just as a judge would take his cases back to his house to study them, or an architect would take his drawings home to work on them (…). Even if one may hear of cases of fraud or corruption, no one in their right mind would object to this. Today, teachers, who spend the entire academic year getting to know and understand their students, are being prevented from having a say about whether or not they should pass the academic year. Worse, if they express their opinion, they are met with suspicion and their professional integrity is questioned. How—when trust in the teacher has been broken in this manner—can one expect members of the profession to promote moral behaviour among students?[53]

Moreover, because they were so central to a child's success along the educational ladder, Matar—and other critics of the system—believed that exams encouraged student

[52] See 'Abd al-Majid 'Abd al-'Aziz, "'Ala Hamish al-'Imtihanat," *Al-Thaqafa* 13, no. 655 (July 1951): 27–29; 'A S., "Al-'Imtihanat fi Misr," *Al-Hilal*, no. Ministry of Public Instruction Centennial Issue (April 1937): 705–8; Karim Thabit, "Al-'Imtihanat al-Madrasiyya wa Qimatuha," *Al-Hilal* 39, no. 9 (July 1931): 1302–5; Amin Mursi Qandil, "Wazifat al-'Imtihanat fi-l-Madaris al-Haditha," *Al-Majalla al-Jadida* 8, no. 12 (December 1939): 41–62; Isma'il Al-Qabbani, "Mushkilat al-'Imtihanat fi Misr," *Al-Thaqafa* 1, no. 3 (January 17, 1939): 31–33; Isma'il Al-Qabbani, "Mushkilat al-'Imtihanat fi Misr," *Al-Thaqafa* 1, no. 5 (January 31 1939): 36–40; Munira Hilmi, "Fi-l-'Imtihanat," *Al-Thaqafa* 14, no. 705 (June 1952): 22–24.
[53] Matar, *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr*, 47.

cheating.[54] Headmasters were also against the examination system in its current form. In *Mushkilat al-Tarbiya fi Misr* (The Problem of Education in Egypt), 'Ali Hassan al-Haki', the headmaster of the Al-Qasid Primary School in Tanta, dedicates an entire chapter to the problem of exams.[55] Echoing the position articulated by many of his colleagues, al-Haki' was for the abolition of all centrally administered exams that were not required for the completion of a general certificate such as the primary school or secondary school certificates. Ministry administered exams which were merely meant to ascertain whether a student could pass from one grade to the next were unnecessary and only fuelled the mistrust between the Ministry and its teachers.

A closer look at some examples of Egyptian tests from the period suggests that these accusations were in fact largely accurate. Muhammad Amin Lutfi's *Murshid al-'Imtihanat al-'Amma* (Guideline of General Examinations) provides ten different model tests for each of the nine examinable subjects of the secondary school certificate including Arabic, maths, English, French and biology. These were meant to guide students in their preparation for the exams. Noticeable in all of the ten English language tests featured in Lutfi's guidebook is the absence of questions that require meaningful analysis. Even the essay questions featured at the beginning of each test direct the students towards a particular viewpoint or are so broad as to hardly elicit a genuine engagement. For example, Exam II features two essay questions, one on the "value of open-air schools" and the other on "the role of theatre in education." In Exam III students are asked to write an essay about "conferences and their purpose" or "good manners". While these could theoretically invite students to express their opinions, the choice of topic and the built-in value judgement makes this rather unlikely. While the essay topics vary from one exam to the next, the

[54] Ibid., 207.
[55] 'Ali Hasan al-Haki', *Mushkilat al-Tarbiya fi Misr* (Cairo: Khudayr, 1931), 84–92.

section that follows, titled *Literature and Idiom* is much more uniform: In all ten exams, this section quizzes students on the same two plays, John Buchan's 1915 the *Thirty-Nine Steps* and John Drinkwater's 1918 *Abraham Lincoln*. In this sense, one can visibly identify the adherence of the exams to the content stipulated by the Ministry's mandatory curriculum and vice versa.[56] As opposed to the relative flexibility found in the essay question section, *Literature and Idiom* places a very heavy emphasis on the recitation of (memorised) content and bits of information. One question requires the students to summarise two of the main character's positions on the civil war, another asks them to illustrate the context behind some ad hoc sentences from each of the plays while the third asks them to write sentences using words from the play to demonstrate their linguistic comprehension. Absent are questions that tackle the political, cultural and economic context within which these plays emerged, nor are there questions about the literary themes, or about character development. There are also no questions that require students to critically engage with the plays or dissect them. If one considers that such basic questions were devised for students at the secondary level, i.e., approximately between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, it becomes evident that these exams were below average in terms of their ability to develop analytical and critical thinking skills. Similar observations can be made about the Arabic language exams and the French language exams.[57]

Given all the above, it is not surprising that at their general assembly meeting on the evening of February 13, 1939, *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* adopted a set of recommendations in order to remedy the woes of examinations and address some of their

[56] Muhammad Amin Lutfi, *Murshid al-'Imtihanat li Shihadat al-Dirasa al-Thanawiyya Wifq Ahdath Manhaj Aqarratahu Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Ma'arif, 1931), 30.
[57] Many of the same critiques were put forward by Isma'il al-Qabbani in his own analysis of exam questions. See Isma'il Al-Qabbani, "Muhadarat al-Duktur Isma'il al-Qabbani," in *Mushkilat al-'Imtihanat fi Misr*, 24–55.

underlying causes.[58] The first recommendation was that students should be allowed to move from one grade to the next based on the decision of a committee of teachers and not through a centrally administered exam. The second was that the general certificate exams for primary schools should be cancelled and be replaced by a primary school certificate which would account for a student's strengths and weaknesses based on his/her teacher's recommendations and observations. Furthermore, it was recommended that secondary schools administer an entrance exam that would test student's intelligence, critical and analytical skills rather than their ability to retain information. Relatedly, the committee recommended the administration of secondary school certificate exams at the end of the fourth year, but it stressed that these should require students to apply the information they learned to new contexts and cases rather than test them on their knowledge retention skills. Unfortunately, few of the twelve recommendations were implemented in reality.

One notable exception is the first recommendation. At the 1945 conference, a teacher by the name of Qasim Fathy 'Abd al-Mu'ti from the Al-Santa primary school presented a paper on the new assessment policies introduced at the primary school level which replaced end of year examinations.[59] The new assessments were carried out by the teachers, not the Ministry, over three trimesters whereby students would receive an average mark on their year-long test results over the course of the entire academic year.[60] Even though the system was far from perfect, 'Abd al-Mu'ti was nevertheless enthusiastic

[58] Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha, "Qararat Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha fi Mawdu' al-'Imtihanat," in *Mushkilat al-'Imtihanat fi Misr* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1939), 72–74.
[59] It is unclear when the new policy came into effect and how long it was sustained. Presenting in 1945, 'Abd al-Mu'ti's notes that the yearly primary exams were abolished "a few years ago", while Matar, writing in 1939, complained of these exams. It is therefore safe to assume that these yearly primary school exams were abolished sometime between 1940 and 1943.
[60] Qasim 'Abd al-Mu'ti, "Mada Najah Nizam al-Fatarat," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1948), 151–54.

about the progress it represented.[61] The Ministry also introduced a change to the examination system for the primary school certificate. In line with the Ministry's decentralisation efforts at the end of the 1930s, the seven newly established educational regions were, as of 1939, in charge of administering the primary school certificate exams.[62] However, a mere six years later, participants at the conference on 'The Methods of New Education' suggested that these changes were—to use the Arabic expression—"ink on paper", that is, largely cosmetic. The seven educational regions' role was merely administrative and not substantive as they followed the instructions provided by the Ministry.[63]

It is therefore safe to assume that despite some positive developments, exams continued to plague the education system well into the 1950s.[64] With the *ghost* of exams looming large over the education system, one can scarcely imagine how practicing teachers could have possibly deviated from the script set out for them by the Ministry. Such restrictions were exacerbated by the fact that the Ministry imposed a rigid inspection system to monitor, observe and assess teachers and their performance.

"The eyes of the Ministry": Inspections as Exams for Teachers[65]

Participants at the 1945 conference were extremely vocal about the Ministry's inspection practices, which many believed were rigid and restrictive. Inspectors or

[61] 'Abd al-Mu'ti notes that because under the new system the school measured a teacher's performance through the median grades of their students, many teachers adopted lenient marking practices to improve their own reputations.
[62] See Articles 1 & 2 of Decree No. 39 of 1939 on the Transfer of Primary School Certificate Exams to the Educational Regions.
[63] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha,* 45.
[64] See the recommendations of the Ministry of Education's Technical Assistance Office regarding examination questions which were published in *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* in 1956. Maktab al-Mustashar al-Fanni Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim, "Muqtarahat bi Sha'n ma Yutba' 'ind Wad' As'ilat al-'Imtihanat," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 8, no. 3 (March 1956): 92–96. The recommendations suggest that questions were still phrased in a manner to invite rote memorization in the 1950s.
[65] I borrow the expression 'the eyes of the Ministry' from Muhammad Sami 'Ashur, "Nizam al-Taftish al-Hali wa Atharihi fi Sayr al-Ta'lim," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1948), 139–45.

Controllers were Ministry officials responsible for monitoring teachers' performance and ensuring adherence to the guidelines, curricula and textbooks. They also occasionally administered in-class examinations to test students. There were two different kinds of inspectors: those specialized in a particular school level (e.g., inspectors for the primary schools) and those specialized in a particular subject (e.g., biology).[66] Though the general consensus was that inspection was necessary, the ways in which these practices were implemented were critiqued. "At its core, inspection should be about guidance and support—especially for young teachers," declared the technical committee in charge of assessing the degree to which Egyptian teachers enjoyed freedom to implement progressive practices at the 1945 conference.[67]

In reality, inspectors provided much more than mere guidance as they employed a set of methods to assert their control over the teaching profession. Practicing teachers such as 'Abd al-Tawwab 'Abd al-Halim Qumh, a teacher at the Basiyun primary school for boys and a participant at the conference, suggested that the inspectors exercised their power not just through the actual act of inspecting a classroom but also through the lengthy and tedious 'directives' they left in the visitors' book at the school and which they also handed out to every teacher.[68] These directives were meant to be followed word for word without much explanation even if they were sometimes ill suited to the conditions of the school, or the particular needs of the children. In addition to these directives, inspectors wrote lengthy evaluation reports about the teachers they assessed which were detrimental to their professional advancement. Teachers like 'Abd al-Mu'ti asserted that they were

[66] Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam Al-Kirdani, "Al-Taftish Kama Huwa wa Kama Yajibu 'an Yakun," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: , 1948), 136–37.
[67] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945*, 102.
[68] 'Abd al-Tawwab 'Abd al-Halim Qumh, "Al-Taftish wa Atharihi fi Tatbiq Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha," in *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha 1945* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1948), 147.

subjected to "secret annual evaluation reports" though he is not clear whether these were also administered by the inspectors or by the schools.[69]

Beyond their methods, inspectors were loathed for their attitudes, their lack of credentials and their treatment of teachers. These shortcomings were highlighted by senior pedagogues such as Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani in his presentation at the conference, in which he presented five major flaws:

First, inspectors regularly boasted about their powers in front of teachers and intimidated them, resulting in mistrust and even hatred between both parties. When, in 1934, inspector Muhammad Sami 'Ashur wrote a favorable report about a particular teacher despite his student's less than average performance, —a report which clearly explained that student absences were the cause of said poor performance—he was scolded by his superiors for "shielding the teacher from punishment."[70]

Second, they had the tendency to focus all of their attention on trivial details such as whether the students were silent in class, whether they finished their tasks at the same time and whether their notebooks were clean instead of looking at "the general picture and exploring the students' levels of comprehension and their critical thinking skills."[71]

Conference participants were quick to share some incriminating and rather ridiculous anecdotes in their presentation to demonstrate this point. By reading their accounts we learn about certain inspectors who detested seeing a particular brand of pens used in student notebooks, or others who were enraged when a student's drawing of the Amazon river was not wholly accurate.[72]

[69] 'Abd al-Mu'ti, "Mada Najah Nizam al-Fatarat," 154.
[70] 'Ashur, "Nizam al-Taftish al-Hali wa Atharihi fi Sayr al-Ta'lim," 141.
[71] Al-Kirdani, "Al-Taftish Kama Huwa wa Kama Yajibu 'an Yakun," 134.
[72] 'Ashur, "Nizam al-Taftish al-Hali wa Atharihi fi Sayr al-Ta'lim," 142.

Third, Inspectors were far more interested in quantity over quality. That is, they would try to visit as many schools, walk into as many lessons, and revise as many student notebooks as possible all while trying to visit each school at least twice a year. In his presentation at the conference, former inspector Muhammad Sami ‘Ashur noted that the Ministry had increased the number of inspectors since the 1925 education reforms to the extent that there were now inspectors for songs, music, play dough, agriculture, drama, sports, laboratories and nutrition.[73] As a result, on any given day, nine or ten of them could be visiting a single town, and four or five could be inspecting a single school thereby disrupting schools and teachers. This increase in the number of inspectors after 1925 is substantiated by the Ministry’s own reports. For example, in a report submitted by the Monitoring Unit for Secondary Education at the Ministry in 1936, an explicit request is made to increase the number of inspectors for the secondary level to decrease their workload and most importantly to cover the vast terrain of subjects and schools.[74] This is why al-Kirdani believed inspectors had little time to listen to teachers, observe students in action, understand their perspectives or give meaningful feedback. Instead of prioritizing teachers with difficulties and trusting the rest to be left ‘unattended’ for extended periods of time, inspectors were adamant on maximizing their visits irrespective of whether they were actually needed.

Fourth, inspectors tended to focus their attention on the mistakes made by students and teachers some—according to al-Kirdani—went as far as to correct the teacher in front of their students thereby humiliating them in public.

[73] Ibid., 140.
[74] Wizarat al-Ma‘arif al-‘Umumiyya Muraqabat al-Ta‘lim al-Thanawi, “Taqrir ‘an Halat al-Muraqaba fi-l-Sana al-Dirasiyya 1935-1936,” Report (Cairo, 1936), 52-55, Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.

Finally, the majority of inspectors had little understanding for their actual role, let alone the principles of progressive education.[75] In fact, there was a consensus among the speakers at the conference that a clear definition was needed for the role of inspector and they needed to be carefully selected.[76] Al-Kirdani proposed that inspectors hold round table discussions, small-scale research seminars and public lectures with teachers in order to collectively assess the problems, give teachers the space to express their grievances and share success stories to bridge the gap between the often-contradictory directives teachers received from different inspectors. Ideally, inspector specializations would be dropped altogether since progressivism dictated a holistic approach to education with interlinked subjects and a birds'-eye view of educational development.[77] For 'Ashur, it was necessary to give teachers reassurances vis-à-vis their own job security, especially after they had been active members of the profession, and not to continuously subject them to "the exam of inspection" so that they might regain their confidence.[78]

Disapproval of the inspection system went beyond the works of Matar and the contributions to the 1945 conference, since, as expected, the topic was covered in the pedagogy press.[79] In short, the inspection system was suffocating teachers and making it difficult for them to implement progressive practices, since they were expected to strictly adhere to the inspectors' whims and wishes.

[75] The same observation is made by Muhammad 'Ashur, who notes that there was no unified inspection policy to begin with and by 'Abd al-Hamid Fahmi Matar See 'Ashur, "Nizam al-Taftish al-Hali wa Atharihi fi Sayr al-Ta'lim," 141; Matar, *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr*, 50–54.
[76] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 102.
[77] Al-Kirdani, "Al-Taftish Kama Huwa wa Kama Yajibu 'an Yakun," 137.
[78] 'Ashur, "Nizam al-Taftish al-Hali wa Atharihi fi Sayr al-Ta'lim," 144.
[79] *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* published three articles on the topic between 1927 and 1947. For a full list of articles see Musa, *Al-Fihris al-'Am Min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 95. One of these was an article by Muhammad 'Attiya al-Ibrashi on inspection practices in Britain. See Muhammad 'Atiyya Al-Ibrashi, "Al-Taftish al-Madrasi wa-l-Mufatishun fi Injiltira," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* 7, no. 1 (October 1, 1933): 13–18.

Curriculum: Pre-Determined Programme

In Arabic, there are multiple terms for the English word curriculum, two of them at least, *al-Manhaj al-Muqarrar,* which roughly translates to "the determined programme or system" and *Al-Muqarrar al-Dirasi,* which means "the determined course of study" include the word 'determined.' This is symbolically quite revealing since it also happens to provide a good description of the nature of curriculum development during the first half of the twentieth century in Egypt. That the curriculum represents yet another arm of control for the Ministry of Public Instruction should come as no surprise given the state of examinations and inspections discussed above. This section will focus on the general complaints put forward by teachers regarding the curriculum. It will not, however, provide any in depth textbook analysis given the breadth of already existing literature on the topic.[80]

As many historians have already noted, Egyptian textbooks of the pre-1952 era—especially History, Arabic and Social studies textbooks—were authored by multiple contributors and bore a number of simultaneously competing political and social narratives.[81] While generally emphasizing a nationalist metanarrative, these nonetheless harbored contending views thereby mirroring the multi-party plurality which characterized the political context of the day. Yet, even if textbook authors had more room to maneuver, and if textbooks reflected a number of competing historical and political narratives, the curricula which set the parameters for textbook authorship and everything pertaining to

[80] Atef Botros al-Attar, "Reconfiguring the Past: History, Memory, and Ideology in Egyptian History Textbooks between 1932 and 2009"; Studies that focus on the post-1952 period include Yoram Meital, "School Textbooks and Assembling the Puzzle of the Past in Revolutionary Egypt," ; Hoda Hegazy, "Values and Attitudes Expressed in Egyptian Primary School Readers"; and Laurie Brand, *Official Stories*.
[81] Farida Makar and Ehaab D. Abdou, "Egyptian Textbooks in Times of Change, 1952-1980," *Arab Studies Journal* 29, no. 1 (2021): 8–36; Salmoni, "Historical Consciousness for Modern Citizenship : Egyptian Schooling and the Lessons of History during the Constitutional Monarchy"; Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism"; Meital, "School Textbooks and Assembling the Puzzle of the Past in Revolutionary Egypt."

lesson planning, timetables and subject distribution, were perceived—by many teachers—to be restrictive and constraining.

By curriculum, I refer to the programmes and plans of study laid down by the Ministry as well as the teaching instructions, recommendations and guidelines about what to teach, how, and how often. A case in point is the Ministry publication titled "Practical Guidelines for Elementary Schoolteachers" which circulated as early as 1920 and up until 1930.[82] The book includes instructions on cleanliness, guidelines for classroom furniture, the exact measurements of the blackboard and the desks, directives on how to organize the class register, and instructions for each subject.

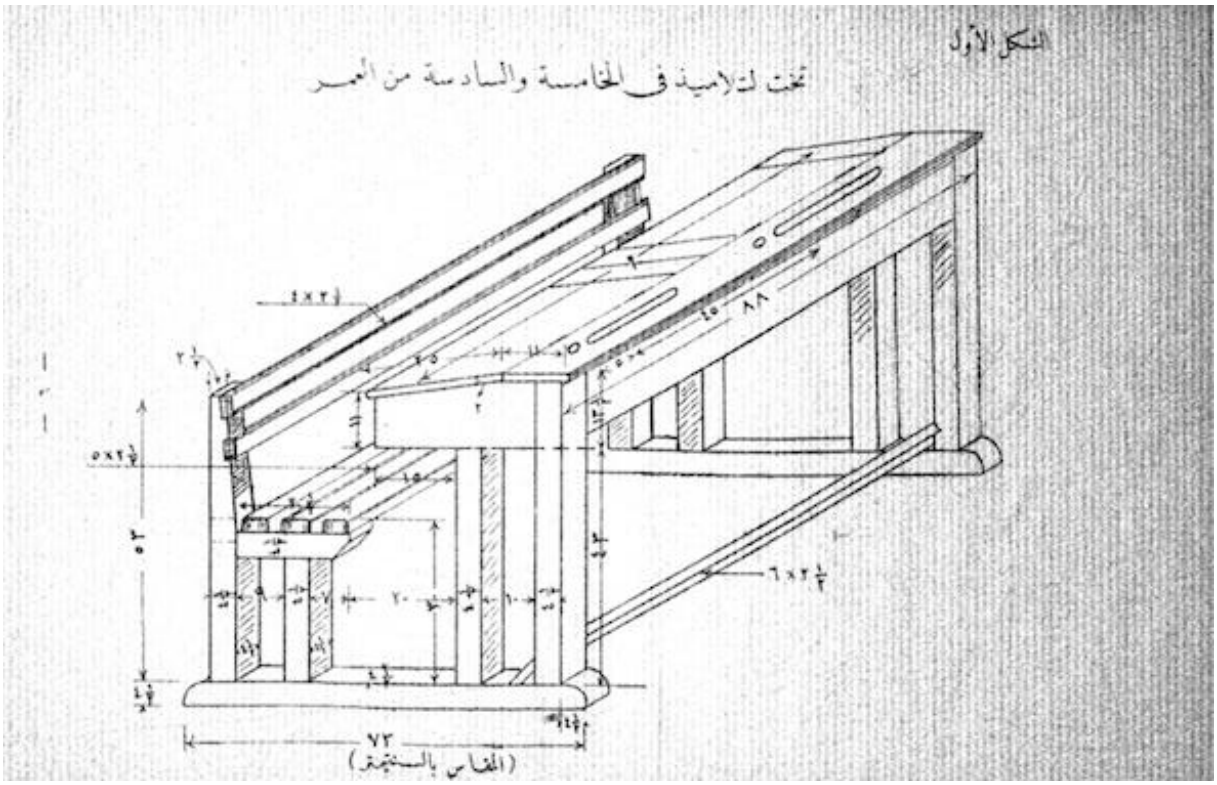


Figure 5: Illustration of a model desk for public schools. Source: Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, Al-'Irshadat al-'Amaliyya Li Mu'allimi al-Madaris al-'Awwaliyya, 1920,6.

[82] The two versions of the manuscript are located at the National Library, (*Dar al-Kutub)*, in Cairo. Given their dates of publication we can safely assume that the book was in circulation at least between 1920 and 1930. See Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, *Al-'Irshadat al-'Amaliyya li Mu'allimi al-Madaris al-'Awwaliyya wa Mu'allimatiha wa-l-Qa'imin wa-l-Qa'imat 'ala al-Ta'lim bi Madaris al-Mu'allimin wa-l-Mu'allimat al-'Awwaliyya wa Talabatha wa Talibatiha* (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1920); Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, *al-'Irshadat al-'Amaliyya li Mu'allimi al-Madaris al-'Awwaliyya wa Mu'allimatiha wa-l-Qa'imin wa-l-Qa'imat 'ala al-Ta'lim bi Madaris al-Mu'allimin wal-l-Mu'allimat al 'Awwaliyya wa Talabatha wa Talibatiha* (Cairo: Al-Matba'a al-Amiriyya, 1930).

"One has to train students to obey all the rules", the booklet advises teachers.[83] It also notes that only in exceptional circumstances should more than one student be allowed to stand up in class and ask a question and that "teachers should train their students to sit down as soon as they have asked their questions." Such instructions were accompanied by details about the standards of personal hygiene teachers should abide by and guidelines about the colours of female teachers' shirts. The strictest instructions were in the subject guidelines. For example, the instructions for the Arabic language reading class include the following: "Students should read out clearly, slowly and in a normal tone. They should not shout" and "Books should be held in the left hand 30 cm away from the eyes and students should sit up straight at the back of their seats. They should never be allowed to fold the pages of their books."[84] For calligraphy lessons, teachers are told to correct student mistakes using "a red pen."[85]

With this set of austere guidelines, one could logically conclude that teachers had little room to deviate from the script. However, as shown by scholars such as Gregory Starett and Benjamin Fortna, educational outcomes are not always congruent with the intentions of their planners. This applies to students, of course, but also to teachers. Unintended consequences and the role of agency, mischief, subversion and resistance are all part and parcel of the educational experience.[86] As such, the fact that such restrictions were in place, should not necessarily mean that teachers were bothered by them, that they took them to heart, or followed them at all.

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[83] Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, *Al-'Irshadat al-'Amaliyya li Mu'allimi al-Madaris al-'Awwaliyya*, 1920, 13.
[84] Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, *Al-'Irshadat al-'Amaliyya li Mu'allimi al-Madaris al-'Awwaliyya*, 1930, 19.
[85] Ibid., 21.
[86] Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*; Benjamin C Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*.

However, throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s teachers continuously complained about the rigidity of the curriculum, the intrusions of the teaching programmes, and the strict restrictions that were placed on their teaching practices thereby suggesting that this was indeed a real grievance. These grievances can be found in the contributions to two important conferences: The Conference on Teaching the Sciences and that on Teaching of the Social Sciences. Both conferences, (taking part in 1942 and 1944, respectively) were organized by *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*.

Only a few years after the seminar on examinations, *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* took it upon itself to investigate the issue of curriculum development and to explore the degree to which curricula and programmes were conducive to the application of progressive practices in the Egyptian classroom. Interestingly, H.R Hamley, with whose comments we began, was a guest speaker at the conference on Teaching the Sciences, with a presentation addressing "The Psychological Foundations of Science Teaching." We know that at least one of them, the conference on Teaching the Sciences, was well attended, as the conference publication indicates there were over 600 attendees. If anything, it suggests that teachers were quite interested in understanding how they could improve their teaching practices. We can only assume that the second conference on Teaching the Social Sciences was equally successful, especially given the star-studded line up of speakers which included famed public intellectual Taha Husayn and renowned historian Shafiq Ghurbal.

Teachers' critiques of the curriculum usually fell under two broad categories: First, they critiqued the ways in which the curriculum privileged quantity over quality. That is, the programmes crammed an enormous number of lessons and information into one academic year. Second, stemming from the progressive principle of an integrated curriculum tailored to the needs of children and their environment, teachers called for the

unification of content thematically rather than chronologically—or according to academic subjects—and for the inclusion of content that was relatable. They also demanded that curricula be structured in a way that would take students' developmental stages into account.

At the 1944 conference on Teaching the Social Sciences, Rashid Mustafa al-Barawi from Fu'ad I University compared the curriculum to a ridiculously mismatched suit with different fabrics sewn one on top of the other: In the curriculum for the fourth year, the student was expected to learn about the French Revolution, Prussia, the Independence of the United States of America, the Fall of the Ottoman Empire and a summary of each country which participated in World War I.[87] The author warned that too much content was crammed into the academic year and too little attention was placed on students' abilities to process it. This, according to al-Barawi, was not the textbook authors' fault but that of the Ministry's demanding curriculum. Shakir Hanna, a teacher at the Damanhur Secondary school and a participant at the conference was of the same view. In his presentation about his tried and tested progressive history teaching techniques, Hanna specifically warned the audience that the Ministry's crammed curriculum was an obstacle to the application of progressive practices. "We should not sacrifice these progressive methods in order to hold on to our over-charged curriculum. It is not the quantity *(kamm)* but the quality *(kayf)* that is important to us today."[88] This is why Hanna and others were in favour of decreasing the topics covered in the curriculum.

Progressive pedagogue Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz was also of the view that the curriculum was overburdened. In true progressive fashion—of a certain developmentalist

[87] Rashid al-Barawi, "Mulahazat 'ala Manahij al-Tarikh," in *Mu'tamar Tadris al-Mawad al-Ijtima'iyya* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1945), 83.
[88] Shakir Hanna, "Tariqa fi Tadris al-Tarikh bi-l-Madaris al-Thanawiyya," in *Mu'tamar Tadris al-Mawad al-Ijtima'iyya* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1945), 95.

kind, one may add—he decried the fact that the curriculum did not take the student's 'stages of development' into account. But more crucially, the maintained that the curriculum's division into historic time periods was old fashioned, confusing for students and ineffective. Instead, 'Abd al-'Aziz believed that the curriculum should be organized around themes rather than time periods, a proposal that was echoed by many other participants at the conference.[89] This position was also endorsed by Muhammad Khayri Harbi, whose conference contribution revolved around the use of the Dalton Method in experimental classrooms.[90] As might be expected, Harbi opposed the fragmentation of the curriculum into different subjects, proposing instead that everything be connected. He went as far as to call for the removal of the Ministry's textbooks altogether and to endorse their replacement by proper school libraries that would house an official list of mandatory and recommended textbooks to serve the thematic curriculum in question.[91]

In the pedagogy press, teachers often critiqued the curriculum for failing to adhere to the progressive principles of relatability and applicability. Commenting on the state of the current science curriculum for the primary school, Muhammad Sabir Salim, an instructor at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* noted: "The information and skills that the science curriculum offers must really be applicable in the daily lives of children."[92] Similarly, al-Dimirdash Sarhan's piece for *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* in 1951 about science education in secondary school provided almost exactly the same recommendation, the need for " the subjects of the curriculum to enhance our relationship to our own environments."[93] Critics

[89] Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz, "Al-Tariqa al-Tatawuriyya fi Tadris al-Tarikh," in *Mu'tamar Tadris al-'Ulum* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1942), 87–89.
[90] At the time, Harbi was a teacher at the Secondary Model School.
[91] Muhammad Khayri Harbi, "Istikhdam Tariqat Dalton fi Tadris al-Jughrafiya," in *Mu'tamar Tadris al-Mawad al-Ijtima'iyya* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1945), 141–42.
[92] Muhammad Sabir Salim, "Al-'Ulum fi-l-Madrasa al-'Ibtida'iyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 7, no. 1 (November 1954): 57–61.
[93] Al-Dimirdash Sarhan, "Al-'Ulum al-'Amma fi-l-Madrasa al-Thanawiyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 3, no. 2 (January 1951): 56.

of the algebra and the religion curriculum articulated very similar views in that they advocated for the re-imagining of these curricula with the principles of progressive education in mind. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Sayyid Ibrahim, an instructor at *Madrasat al-Mu‘allimin al-‘Uliya*, who wrote about the algebra curriculum in the April 1950 issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* suggested that with algebra “it was important to understand the concept behind the operation” and that “the different subjects and themes had to be connected to each other.”[94] As for Muhammad Qadri Lutfi, he suggested that teaching religion for young children did not require a curriculum or textbooks because “religion was too noble to be treated like any other subject.”[95] Because religion was inherently in tune with children’s innate natures, all one needed to do was to emulate good and moral conduct rather than fixate on the details of the

text.

Given such positions, it is unsurprising that the 1945 conference provided a critical appraisal of the state of curricula.

> The Ministry imposes the subjects, the number of lessons per week, and through inspection and examinations, it controls teaching methods in minute detail (…) Plans and curricula imposed by the Ministry do not leave much room for change because they are crammed to the extent that delivering them to the letter extracts all energy from teachers.[96]

This is why the committee in charge of assessing the state of progressivism in Egyptian classrooms concluded: “Plans should be a suggestion (…) curricula should be outlines (…) [and] the textbook authors should be allowed to produce textbooks with minimal guidance [while] teachers can select additional texts outside of the curriculum.[97]

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[94] ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Sayyid Ibrahim, “Tadris al-Jabr bi-l-Madaris al-Thanawiyya,” *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 2, no. 3 (April 1950): 51–57.
[95] Muhammad Qadri Lutfi, “Al-Tarbiya al-Diniyya fi-l-Marhala al-’Ula,” *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 4 (March 1952): 59–66.
[96] Rabitat Khariji Ma‘had al-Tarbiya, *Mu’tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 96.
[97] Ibid., 97–98.

Teachers' perceptions of the curriculum remained negative precisely because curricula did not come in a vacuum. They were part of a rigid system of control through a far-reaching process of inspection and examination. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, compared to other aspects of the education system, curricula and plans were actually subjected to a few progressive changes. But, what good could such changes in the language or practices of the curriculum really bring about when teachers were being assessed on their ability to help their students memorize information for a national exam? As al-Qusi astutely put it: "The teacher is restricted by the curriculum, on one hand, and by the exam, on the other. The Ministry of Public Instructions floods him with directives that dictate how to use preparation notebooks, the number of questions to solve and the number of pages to read on any given week. The eyes of the inspectors, the headmasters, the parents and the students surveil him."[98]

Other assessments of the system were even less flattering. Al-Haki', for example, had the following to say about the education system:

> The Egyptian school is essentially like a military barrack. The level of 'militarism' is what is most valued by the Ministry of Public Instruction. This is the reality, despite the glamourous statements made in bureaucratic notices, despite all the articles in the press and in magazines and the many cutting-edge lectures on scientific pedagogical methods delivered at Ma'had al-Tarbiya and Madrasat al-Mu'allimin. Young graduates from these institutions will only have to wait until they begin their teaching careers for their drive and their desire for innovation to disappear and for them to ultimately succumb to the overarching atmosphere of inertia. In a matter of one or two years, a teacher's noble attempts will have failed against the rigidity of school system and its militarism.[99]

With its centralization, exams, inspections, limited budget and rigid curriculum, the Ministry of Public Instruction controlled and surveilled teachers and created a system in which it was difficult to freely explore and experiment. Even when the Ministry adopted 'progressive' guidelines, the continued existence of centralized exams as well as

[98] Al-Qusi, "Muhadarat al-Duktur 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi," 17.
[99] Al-Haki', *Mushkilat al-Tarbiya fi Misr*, 54.

inspections tainted the supposed freedoms that any reforms could have possibly brought about.

In this sense, it was difficult for practicing teachers to break away from this system. We must therefore conclude that on the whole, they had a difficult time implementing progressive practices in their own classrooms, not due to laziness, or a lack of interest but because of the immense difficulties imposed on them by the larger education system.

Has it ever worked?

One final note on matters of implementation: It is important to consider whether Egyptian teachers and Ministry officials were alone in their failure to facilitate a progressive conquest of the country's education system. Indeed, the literature on progressive education during the first half of the twentieth century suggests that there never was a total progressive takeover of the system anywhere around the world. Progressive educators across the five continents were perpetually disappointed in the failed outcomes of their endeavours, or by the magnitude of the task at hand.[100] Whether this was due to the internal contradictions of the movement (such as those between utopian progressives and non-utopian child-centred educators), or because of an unsympathetic socio-political climate, progressive education never really materialized. Laura Tisdall notes that:

> The child-centred definition of freedom was often muddled, claiming to give children more choices while actually restricting what they were allowed to explore, practice or learn. If freedom was defined as the freedom to develop one's natural abilities, and if those abilities were defined by adults, it could be theoretically extended without offering any choices at all to the child who was being educated,

[100] Dennis Shirley, *The Politics of Progressive Education: The Odenwaldschule in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992); Carli, "The New School Movement in Argentina"; David F. Labaree, "Progressivism, Schools and Schools of Education: An American Romance," *Paedagogica Historica* 41, no. 1–2 (2005): 275–88, Law, "Humanity's Workshops: Progressive Education in Russia and the Soviet Union, 1856–1927"; Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*.

> as the Montessori system, which required children to perform a series of very repetitive exercises in the name of 'sense-training, demonstrated.[101]

It may be that such contradictions made these ideals difficult to implement in reality and therefore difficult to sell. Even though historian of progressive education Lawrence Cremin suggests that by the 1950s, progressivism's most fundamental tenets "had become the common wisdom of American education", Kieran Egan shows that for self-proclaimed progressives, such statements were irritating because from their perspective schools were still subjected to the same 'dull' approaches that they have been fighting against for over a century."[102] For Egan, both the claims that progressivism had become central to educational thinking and that it had never been implemented in reality, are true. This is because some of child centred progressivism's tenets rested on flawed philosophical foundations and relied on 19th century psychological thought which Egan believes to have been inherently 'wrong' despite widespread acceptance among educators. "We need to face the fact that accepting general principles like simple to complex and concrete to abstract—and basing educational programmes on them—is just not adequate. Those features hide and falsify important features of the process."[103] Egan explains that these principles do not account for the complexity of children's thoughts, or the uniqueness of the human mind, for that matter. "It is assumed that children's thinking is simple, concrete and engaged with their local experience. But children have imaginations and emotions, and these too connect with the world."[104] *Getting it Wrong from the Beginning* thus breaks down what Egan believes to be some of the inherent fallacies within the early 20th century

[101] Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 27.
[102] Lawrence A. Cremin, *Public Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 19. Cited in Egan, "Students' Development in Theory and Practice: The Doubtful Role of Research," 31. Egan's position is articulated in Egan, *Getting It Wrong from the Beginning*, 5.
[103] Egan, *Getting It Wrong from the Beginning*, 62.
[104] Ibid., 64.

developmentalist-driven progressivism—and he is far from being the only scholar to propose different ways of making sense of children's learning or their development.[105]

> The flaw in progressivism is the belief that we can disclose the nature of the child. Whatever is the substratum of human nature is less accessible and less useful to the educator than understanding the cultural-cognitive tools that shape and mediate our learning, development and everything else to do with the conscious world of educational activity.[106]

At the same time, Egan's work praises certain aspects of progressivism such as storytelling which he believes to most readily engage children's imaginations.[107]

Although the majority of critiques such as Egan's have been levelled at non-utopian brands of progressivism and their inherent flawed assumptions about children and their learning, utopian non-hierarchical models of education have scarcely faired any better. With a few exceptions such as Summer Hill School in Britain, the majority of schools around the world have retained a hierarchical model in which students do not participate in the decision-making process. Free schools are difficult to scale up, oversee and monitor. They have remained marginal as public education systems have spread around the world over the course of the 20th century. Therefore, even if Egyptian progressives had leaned more forcefully on the side of radical utopian progressivism, there are few guarantees that their endeavours would have been more successful.

Overall, Egyptian teachers were not alone in their inability to implement their middle-ground progressivism on a nation-wide scale, as teachers around the world found, and would continue to find, it difficult to implement progressive tenets, even in Britain where Hamley was teaching.

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[105] David C Geary, *The Origin of Mind: Evolution of Brain, Cognition, and General Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2005); Robert S Siegler, *Emerging Minds: The Process of Change in Children's Thinking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Susan A Gelman, *The Essential Child: Origins of Essentialism in Everyday Thought*, *The Essential Child*, Oxford Series in Cognitive Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[106] Egan, *Getting It Wrong from the Beginning*, 184-185.
[107] Ibid., 171-180

Conclusions

This chapter is a sobering reminder that the implementation of progressive education as conceived by Egypt's top pedagogues was not easy. From budgetary restrictions, to the Ministry of Public Instruction's control via examinations, inspections and a rigid curriculum, the average teacher found it difficult to translate such ideas to concrete practices. With its contradictions, restrictions and perhaps even outdated pedagogical assumptions, the progressivism of the early 20th century never became the standard model for education. As such, it would seem as though Hamley's critical observation from 1940, that only a few elite (rebel) Egyptian teachers (all educated abroad) were in fact enthusiastic about progressive education could be warranted. The following chapter will be dedicated to dispelling this assumption by introducing a much wider and more varied pool of progressive actors than that assumed by Hamley. It will demonstrate that despite its many shortcomings and the difficulties in implementation, progressive pedagogy was nevertheless attractive because of the ideological and political promises it made.

Chapter 4
Experimentations

What do you remember about this time period?

E.F: (Laughs) I remember the first time I taught a class. I told myself I would use a model elephant to explain my lesson about the anatomy of elephants and the animal world. I couldn't control the children (laughs). It was the first time I stood in front of twenty… thirty children and they actually destroyed the elephant. This is what I remember very well (…) teaching was a very difficult process, the children were young and difficult to control, and of course it was a new experience [for me].

- F. E Interview by Rania Abdel Rahman. Transcript n.d Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women's Oral History, The Women and Memory Forum

Did you like teaching?

H.E: Yes. (…) You see I had practical training at the model school first, the one that was attached to the Institute of Education. (…) We would experiment and were left to do whatever we wanted.

-E., H. Interview by Rania Abdel Rahman. Transcript, 1 August 2004. Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women's Oral History, the Women and Memory Forum

The two women interviewed above by Rania 'Abd Al-Rahman became teachers in the late 1940s. Through their oral narrative, we can hear traces of their pedagogical experiences. We learn for example, that E.F. vividly remembers the first time she went into a classroom and that she immediately chose to start her first class with a creative project, an experiment if you will, in order to entice her students. E.F. and H.E's accounts are important because of their ability to expose such undocumented, silenced moments of history as they reveal the everyday practices of ordinary teachers.

By experimentation, I mean the multitude of ways in which these practicing teachers tested out different pedagogical tools that they were taught during their training years or which were in vogue at the time. Experimentation ranged from the meticulous adoption of already existing progressive tools such as the Dalton Plan or the Project Method, to the creation of new practices such as switching up a teacher's explanation

style, their schedule or the introduction of an activity—all with the knowledge that any experiment was subject to either failure or success. One of its key features was bottom up-observation driven interventions that were based on the student's interest. In short, it is a playful and often times subversive pedagogical act which allowed teachers to be creative in their own right and attempt to improve their own teaching methods. At the same time, being 'experimental' was in and of itself considered to be part of what constituted a progressive education. It was not just a tool to test out progressive approaches, it was a progressive act in its own right and was oftentimes the only available way for teachers to participate in the progressive movement.

This chapter demonstrates that diverse actors were involved in the process of 'experimentation'. Rather than having one locus of experimental power, the philosophy of experimentation was eagerly adopted by teachers (although possibly not that many) throughout Egypt as they became interested in 'trial' and 'error' activities to better the learning environments for their students. The chapter will also argue that experimentation had a very important bearing on the development of a number of key educational policies during this period. Many of the country's major educational reforms actually originated in progressive conversations or were originally tested in experimental schools. Finally, the chapter argues that practicing teachers were committed to progressivism despite the multiple challenges they encountered because they believed these methods to be pedagogically effective and to constitute a winning recipe for the strengthening of Egypt's nascent democracy. With its utopian ideals of freedom and its promise to take care of children's individual needs, progressive education foregrounded a blueprint for the training of children in democracy and independence. In this sense, progressive pedagogy provided a language (and practices) of possibility and challenged the teaching styles of the day thereby laying the groundwork for a better future. Because it remains virtually

impossible to uncover the perceptions of thousands of practicing teachers vis-à-vis progressive education, this last argument, while largely speculative, will be supported by a variety of sources including oral testimonies, silences and concessions in the pedagogy press, an assessment of general political sentiments of the time, a re-evaluation of one of the country's most important pedagogical debates, and an evaluation of the kinds of pedagogical ideas that would have made the most sense given the political context of the time.

Experimentation, Progressivism and Critical Pedagogy

In the introductory chapter of this dissertation, I discuss the standard assumptions made by historians about the nature of progressive education—especially within colonial/semi-colonial contexts such as Egypt. One assumption in particular, that progressive education is a sort of 'illusion' that is blind to its own built-in disciplinarity, would be quite 'damning' to this chapter which explores the practical applications of progressivism in Egyptian classrooms. Viewed under this light, early 20th century Egyptian proponents of progressivism who, as I will argue in this chapter, regarded it as an emancipatory project for their nascent democracy would be misguided at best, malevolent at worst and not particularly worthy of remembrance. If progressive education is nothing more than a tool for control under the guise of kindness and love for children, then its proponents would naturally have to be accused of complacency with colonial/state power and in some sense being anti-democratic. Not only are contemporary scholars now questioning the efficacy and soundness of their methods from a pedagogical perspective (as discussed in the previous chapter), but the accusations here would also cast doubt on their larger intentions, ideology and political motivations. But as indicated in the introductory chapter, this dissertation adopts a different reading of progressive education

based on an interpretation of its nature and philosophical origins that rests on the movement's connection to critical pedagogy, an emancipatory project in its own right, and on new ways of thinking about the movement's support for experimentalism. These 'redeeming' features can help us make sense of our historical interlocutors as they navigated their way through the world of teaching in spite of the many limitations they faced. With this new reading in mind, it is possible to view Egyptian progressives of the earlier 20th century with fresh and more forgiving eyes and to understand their commitments to experimentalism and to progressive education at large—as a genuine and creative attempt to resist power and contribute to the establishment of their democratic society. Egyptian progressivism of the early 20th century may have its fair share of flaws, but its call for experimentalism can be considered as an important redeeming factor as it marks a world in which teachers believed that education for freedom and democracy was possible.

The History of Experimentation: The Experimental Schools

Most of what we know about experimentation within real Egyptian classrooms comes from Isma'il al-Qabbani, and more specifically, from the accounts he provided about the establishment of so-called 'experimental classrooms' within *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* in the early 1930s. Al-Qabbani's 1951 *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim* provides an in-depth retelling of this story: "In Egypt, we are in desperate need of such experiments, in order to align our education system with sound science,"[1] al-Qabbani writes. Accounts by other educators confirm al-Qabbani as the originator of the idea and his meticulous involvement in the establishment of these classrooms. In *Tarikh al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr al-Haditha*

[1] Isma'il al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1951), 3.

(The History of Pedagogical Thought in Modern Egypt), Historian and Professor of Pedagogy Sa'id Isma'il Ali suggests that al-Qabbani came back from visits to England, France and Switzerland convinced that the way to development and prosperity would be forged through an active education, one that did not rest on the guidelines of lecturers and the words of pedagogy books but would be based on meaningful and active experimentation.[2] After Al-Qabbani obtained permission from the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1932, the narrative goes, the first experimental classrooms were established at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*.[3]

Similar accounts of the early beginnings of experimental classrooms can be found in 'Abd al-Salam Dayf's work on al-Qabbani, Hasaan Muhammad Hasaan's *Ittijahat al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr min 1923 'ila* 1952 (The Direction of Pedagogical Thought in Egypt from 1923 to 1952), and most notably in Iman Farag's "Ismâ'îl al-Qabbâni et la mesure de l'intelligence". The latter in particular presents a critical view of the entire experimental episode. Farag decries the standardization of the experiment which—as she points out—eventually went against the very principles of experimentation. More importantly, she decries the 'foreign' influences of these attempts, often referring to them as "imported techniques" by underlining that many of the ideas implemented in experimental classrooms actually originated with Western thinkers including John Dewey, William James and Dalton.[4] She also implies that Isma'il al-Qabbani's power and "double status" as an expert and state functionary, gave him the space to put his knowledge to the test. However, she is quick to note that this "space" did not extend beyond the restricted and small confines of the laboratory and of the experimental classrooms to influence the

[2] ʿAlī, *Tarikh al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr al-Haditha*, 209.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Farag, "Isma'îl al-Qabbânî et la mesure de l'intelligence."

entirety of the education system.[5] Finally, she critiques the ways in which experimental classrooms remained financially unattainable to the majority of the population.[6]

Not all accounts of the origin and history of experimental classrooms are critical. In fact, in 1959, the Ministry of Education organized a conference entitled 'The Model Schools' in order to assess the work that had been carried out in these schools over the past 25 years.[7] Important pedagogues from the Nasser period, those who had witnessed the birth of experimental classrooms early on in their careers, provided positive accounts of that stand in stark contrast to the position accusing these classrooms of exclusion and foreignness.

From Experimental Classrooms to Model Schools

Indeed, Isma'il al-Qabbani's role in the introduction of pedagogical experimentation cannot be denied. After all, the founding of primary level experimental classrooms that would be attached to *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* came via a suggestion he made to the Ministry of Public Instruction in the early 1930s. Moreover, he played an active role in the establishment of the experimental pedagogy department at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and even served as its chair.[8] However, one should not assume that his was the only voice calling for this sort of enterprise. After all, as noted by pedagogue Amin Mursi Qandil, "from its inception, the experimental school was under the guidance of al- Qabbani,

[5] Ibid.
[6] Though Farag does not necessarily agree with Marxist thinker Luis 'Awad whose critique of experimental schools cast them as nothing more than "elite schools that contributed to a culture of lords and slaves", she does note that these classrooms were unaffordable to the majority of the population. For more on 'Awad's position see ʿAwad, "Husan Tarawuda Al-Istiʿmar fi Hayatuna al-Thaqafiyya: Al-Jamiʿa wa-l-Mujtamaʿ al-Jadid."
[7] Model Schools are the descendants of the experimental classrooms.
[8] ʿAbd al-Salam Dayf, "Fikr Ismaʿil Mahmud al-Qabbani wa Atharihi ʿala Tatawwur al-Tarbiya wa-l-Taʿlim fi Jumhuriyyat Misr al-ʿArabiyya", 120.

Qandil, Sayyid Khalil, and Sayyid Yusuf."[9] Nor should one think of experimental classrooms as removed from the intellectual milieu of the period. Reflecting back on the introduction of experimental classrooms in Egypt, pedagogues of the late 1950s were aware of the importance of the intellectual context which gave rise to the experimental ethos. In the November 1959 edition of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, Muhammad al-Hadi 'Afifi and Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghannam, two of the Nasser period's most prominent pedagogues, suggested that "what led to the emergence of this kind of [experimental] school was the development of the social sciences in general and of psychology in particular, analytical research and scientific application. This turned education into a field of experimentation and of scientific enquiry."[10] 'Afifi and Al-Ghannam's observation is poignant as it demonstrates the ways in which experimentalism became synonymous with science, evidence-based research and psychology. In the first edition of *Sahifat Ma'had al-Tarbiya* in 1937, Qandil expressed his pride in the newly established experimental schools claiming that they "did not follow a single pedagogical method, but that they selected a few fitting ones which they then tailored to the social needs of the Egyptian environment."[11] Much like intelligence tests, classroom experiments became necessary once it became clear that children and their learning were the subject of *scientific inquiry* and once it became necessary to test the theories developed by psychologists to evaluate their efficacy in the local context.

Ideas about experimentalism were already floating around Egyptian pedagogy circles in the 1920s, but it is with the onset of experimental classrooms in the academic year 1932/1933 that these ideas were crystalized and institutionalized. Unsurprisingly,

[9] Amin Mursi Qandil, "Al-Fusul al-Tajribiyya," *Sahifat Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, 1, no. 10 (May 1937):10.
[10] Muhammad al-Hadi 'Afifi and Muhammad Ahmad Al-Ghannam, "Al-Haraka al-Tajribiyya wa-l-Madaris al-Namuzajyya fi-l-Iqlim al-Misri," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 12, no. 1 (November 1959): 43.
[11] Qandil, "Al-Fusul al-Tajribiyya," 8.

Article IV of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*'s bylaws enshrined the principle of experimentation and discussed its benefit to future teachers and to the nation as a whole.[12] In other words, these classrooms were the *institutional site of experimentation* and served as spaces in which teachers could try out different teaching methods based on the latest pedagogical trends and scientific experiments. Initially, three primary level classrooms were established (a second primary classroom and two first primary classrooms.)[13] The new classrooms were free of charge and open to a wider public.[14] In fact, in their first years, the majority of students came from the villages and workers of Al-Duqqi neighbourhood where the Institute was located.[15] To avoid the confusion that the word 'experimental' came to elicit in the minds of parents, their name was transformed to 'model schools' by the late 1930s because of the negative connotations associated with the word *experimental*.[16] "No parent wanted their child to be subjected to experiments that could either prove to be a success or failure", al-Qabbani explains, "but most parents are not aware that we are not testing out unknown methods, we are carefully selecting methods that are backed up by science."[17] The model schools were, according to al-Qabbani, not meant to be a model.

While al-Qabbani was certainly not the only one to have been involved in the establishment of these classrooms, out of the four pedagogues named by Qandil, he remains the one who left the largest written account of this project which is why his writing continues to shape our understanding of this episode of Egypt's history of education.[18]

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[12] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim*, 53
[13] Ibid.,4.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] The two most important works al-Qabbani left behind regarding experimental classrooms—and by far the best documentation for their activities—are 1951 *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim* and Isma'il al-Qabbani *Al-Tarbiya 'an Tariq al-Nashat* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1958).

Isma'il al-Qabbani tells us that the purpose of these classrooms was to "test out the theories put forward by pedagogues and to discern which of them were the most suitable to the Egyptian context and how these should be applied to obtain the best pedagogical results."[19] He notes that the programmes designed for the initial classrooms centered children's needs through a curriculum which emphasized creativity and play. [20] This curriculum contained the usual suspects: Arabic language and penmanship, English, mathematics, geography, religion and ethics. But it also included music, art, sports, home economics/manual labour, storytelling, cinema, nature study, gardening, and a subject called 'projects.'

Subject	**Number of classes:** **First Primary**	**Number of Classes:** **Second Primary** Group A-- Group B	**Number of Classes:** **Third Primary**
Religion and Ethics	-	2 2	2
Arabic and Penmanship	14	12 11	10
English	-	6 6	8
Mathematics	6	6 -	-
Nature Study	6	3 -	-
Gardening Home economics	2} 4	4 -	-
Storytelling	3	2 -	-
Geography	-	2 -	-
Art/Drawing	4	4 4.	4
Music	3	3 3	3
Projects	-	- 18	17
Cinema	2	2 2.	2
Sports	4	2 2	2

[19] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim*, 3.
[20] Ibid, 12-13.

Total	48	48	48	48

Table 9: Subjects taught at experimental classrooms; Source: Isma'il al-Qabbani', Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim, 1951, p.19

That which distinguished these sorts of activities from similar activities carried out in 'normal' schools—according to al-Qabbani—was the emphasis placed on freedom.[21] Another important distinction was that such activities had no 'ulterior motive': Manual labour and art were encouraged not, as one might be inclined to think, for the sake of their 'future practical benefit', or to prepare students for their future trade by furnishing them with practical skills. The aim was to weave these subjects into the curriculum for their own sake, for their pedagogical and psychological value and for their ability to cater to children's learning styles, and to foster freedom of choice.[22] More importantly, these subjects emulated the progressive principles of their era, and gestured to the brand of Middle Ground Psychology that Egyptian progressives leaned towards. For example, the curriculum included geography but not history, and it elevated storytelling to a subject in its own right.[23] Al-Qabbani himself tells us that the pedagogical programme rested on the principles of *active learning*, both in its adoption of active methods of instruction, i.e., the use of activities and games in academic subjects, as well as in its introduction of practical, 'active' subjects for which children's individual and group engagement was necessary, such as sports.[24] The curriculum was also progressive in its introduction of the Project Method which allowed children to select a project, work in groups, conduct research, carry out an experiment or go on a field trip and present their findings to their peers. In short, it

[21] Ibid., 13.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Many early 20th century progressive educators—especially those espousing the stages of development theories—believed that history was a theoretical subject which was not suitable for children. Instead, they supported the introduction of geography and social studies thinking that these two subjects were far more concrete and therefore more relatable to children's immediate environments. As discussed in previous chapters, storytelling was an important feature of the progressive methods and was espoused by all progressives irrespective of where they stood on the pedagogical spectrum.
[24] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim*, 14-18.

was a curriculum that supported modes of learning where children were engaged in activities through a facilitated learning process that fostered curiosity and co-creation. The programme was also intended to be interconnected and was often based on larger themes that spanned different subjects. One could for example learn about photosynthesis in nature study, proceed to paint trees in Art class, recite a poem about plants in Arabic and listen to story about the forest in 'storytelling.' But the experimental classrooms were flexible enough to leave room for students to direct and suggest the content or the theme based on their own interests. This is why teachers had to be attuned with their students to help facilitate this self-directed learning process.

Almost immediately after the first set of experimental classrooms was established at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, their teaching staff organized a school magazine named *Samir al-Tilmidh* (The Student's Companion). Student magazines had been common in public schools since the 1920s, but this one was special: it adopted the language of progressive education in almost all of its editorial notes and had a wide-ranging reach beyond the classroom's walls.[25] *Samir al-Tilmidh* encompassed children's stories, folk stories and fairytales, short lessons, scientific information, art, and a section on boy scouts.[26]

In July 1937, Isma'il al-Qabbani submitted a new memo to the Minister of Public Instruction requesting permission to establish experimental classrooms at the secondary level. The Minister approved al-Qabbani's request which led to the establishment of the Faruq I Secondary School for boys.[27] Al-Qabbani served as the school's first headmaster.

[25] The first edition of Samir al-Tilmidh was published at the end of the academic year 1932/1933. The editorial team consisted of Ma'had al-Tarbiya's finest: Amin Sami Hassuna, Isma'il al-Qabbani, Muhammad 'Abd al-Hadi, Muhammad Shafiq al-Junaydi and Sayyid Ahmad Khalil. By March 1934 when the 7th volume was published the magazine was being distributed in the different primary schools and Iraqi Teachers colleges. See "Tahiyya 'ila al- 'Iraq," *Samir al-Tilmidh* 2, no. 7 (March 1934): 3.
[26] "Awladi wa Banati al-'A'iza'," *Samir al-Tilmidh* 1, no. 1 (May 1933): 1.
[27] Muhammad Ahmad al-Ghannam and Muhammad al-Hadi 'Afifi, "Al-Madaris al-Namuzajiyya fi-l-Iqlim al-Misri," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 12, no. 2 (January 1960): 65. For a comprehensive account of the school's activities in its first year see Isma'il al-Qabbani, "Madrasat al-Faruq al-'Awwalfi Sanataha al-'Ula," in *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1951), 47–52.

It is around this period that experimental schools were renamed "model schools"[28]. In 1939, *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* asked the Ministry to transform the Hada'iq al-Qubba school in the suburb of Heliopolis (northeast of Cairo) into a model school and in 1942 a secondary level was established to absorb incoming primary school graduates.[29] Due to the high demand on model programmes, *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* decided to transform the Al-'Urman primary school next door into a model school in 1945.[30] A secondary level was soon added. By 1952, When al-Qabbani became Minister of Public Instruction, two additional secondary model schools were established, one in middle/upper class district of Duqqi and the other in the suburb of Ma'adi and in both cases, members of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*'s teaching staff were selected to serve as their headmasters. In 1955, there were six model schools under the supervision of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and the total number of enrolled students was more than 4000.[31] Other teacher training institutions also supervised model schools. For example, *Ma'had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu'allimat* oversaw a kindergarten and a primary model school. In 1953, a school called Schutz for primary and secondary levels was established in Alexandria under the supervision of the Higher Institute for Education in Alexandria; it later became a preparatory school. In 1956, the Ministry of Education issued a decree which declared that model schools no longer needed to be under the supervision of higher teacher training institutes but that 'normal' teacher training colleges across the country could now supervise them.[32]

[28] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim*, 47.
[29] Al-Ghannam and 'Afifi, "Al-Madaris al-Namuzajiyya", 65.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., 66
[32] See Ministerial Decree No. 458 of 1956 on the Organization of Experimental Model Schools.

The Experimental Ethos: Theory and Reality

In the May 1952 issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid, one of Egypt's leading psychologist-educators, published an article on the necessity of pedagogical experiments. The piece presents a harsh critique of Egyptian educational policy precisely because the author believed that not enough time, energy, or economic resources had been spent on "experimentation." For Abu Hadid, those responsible for education had not only failed to believe in experimentation, but they also denied its usefulness.[33] Abu Hadid suggests that "experimentation is the starting point of any successful national endeavour. It can reveal facts, uncover the elements of the problems we face, highlight obstacles and challenge our intelligence."[34] In other words, it made much more sense to begin with small scale experiments and test them out, than to scale up the classical schooling models across the country.

This keenness to explore experimentation as an act of innovative pedagogy is emblematic of a broader 'experimental ethos' which swept the pedagogical scene during the interwar period. In some respects, we can speak of an intellectual mood which encouraged Egyptian pedagogues to toy with the idea of executing their own pedagogical experiments as a way to continuously contribute to debate around children, their learning, and their needs. This was encouraged in the pedagogy press and in teacher training manuals. Naturally, its repercussions were most felt within experimental classrooms and schools where teachers had a lot of room to manoeuvre.[35]

For example, Al-Qabbani tells the story of an initiative which was spearheaded by an inventive teacher at the Model School in Hada'iq al-Qubba in 1939, i.e., shortly after it

[33] Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid, "Darurat Al-Tajarub al-Ta'limiyya," *Sahifat Al-Tarbiya* 4, no. 4 (May 1952): 17.
[34] Abu Hadid, "Darurat Al-Tajarub al-Ta'limiyya", 20.
[35] A thorough examination of the projects carried out at the experimental classrooms can be found in Al-Qabbani's *1951 Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim*. More examples can be found in the final chapter of Al-Makhzanji, *Turuq al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*.

became an experimental school. The unnamed teacher in question noticed that his students were attracted by the butterflies in the garden. They persistently tried to catch them, first with their bare hands, then with their handkerchiefs, their *tarbush,* and finally using palm leaves—but the latter method was damaging to the butterflies themselves which is why the teacher told them about the existence of butterfly nets which they could produce in home economics class. This episode turned into a full-fledged pedagogical experiment in which students bought supplies to construct nets, expanded their knowledge of insects in biology class, and executed insect-related art projects in their arts and crafts lessons all thanks to the flexibility and ingenuity of this adventurous teacher.[36] Nine years later, in 1948, a teacher by the name of Mahmud Shukri Mustafa published an account of his experiences teaching English at the same school in the second edition of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*. Mustafa explains that he was facing multiple challenges in his classrooms because his students' performances were extremely diverse as they exhibited different academic levels. "One of the major challenges faced by teachers," he wrote, "is the existence of individual differences between students of the same classroom, resulting in a situation in which some students do not benefit from the lessons as they are unable to cope with the speed and levels of their peers."[37] Mustafa noticed that more than half his students were 'behind' after completing some tests at the end of the first academic term. To remedy this situation, he divided his students into three groups, each according to their academic abilities and proceeded to assign tasks that were suited to each level. This new system was carried out in two different classrooms. For Mustafa, the results of his experiment were quite promising as he noticed a significant amelioration in academic performance in both classrooms. "We should ask ourselves, what would the results have been like had we not

[36] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim*, 74-79.
[37] Mahmud Shukri Mustafa, "Al-Majmu'at fi Durus al-Lugha al-Injiliziyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 2 (October 1948): 69.

applied this group division according to student abilities? Most likely, the results would have been poor just as they were in the first term and as they are in most other schools at the end of the academic year."[38] The editor of the journal, by contrast, was a bit more sceptical. In a footnote, he questions the project's methodology suggesting that in order to substantiate such claims, Mustafa should have applied this method in one classroom only and compared it with the other in which no such method was introduced.

Another experiment narrated by al-Qabbani revolves around the creation of a Post office by a group of students at the experimental classroom at Hada'iq al-Qubba during the academic year 1939-1940. [39] Here too, the project was launched almost accidentally when a group of students and their teacher visited a nearby post office, prompting them to set up their own post office at the school in order to facilitate the correspondence between the students, teachers and staff. Their head teacher supported and creatively engaged with the students in order to make sure that the experience was pedagogically beneficial for his classroom through the inclusion of mathematics problems, arts and crafts activities, history lessons and on-site excursions to post offices in the area. In short, the teacher was compelled to flexibly weave academic content, activities, and pedagogical goals into their facilitation of this project.

In the April 1951 edition of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya,* psychologist-educator Muhammad Khalifa Barakat, published an article about the Project Method at the model school at Hada'iq al-Qubba. The project which caught his attention was about birds' nests. According to Barakat, during their outdoor sports lesson, a group of primary school students noticed a nest on top of a tree. "The teacher felt that their attention migrated from

[38] Ibid., 72.
[39] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Masa'il al-Ta'lim*, 1951, 80. A more detailed account of the 'post office' project can be found in Muhammad Khalifa Barakat, "Maktab Barid fi-l-Fasl," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 3, no. 5 (July 1951): 85–89.

the sports lesson at hand to the nest (…) [but] he did not consider this a disruption to the schedule. Instead, he saw it as a great opportunity to cater to the students' interests and launch a new project."[40] This unnamed teacher proceeded to bring down the nest from the tree and into their classroom for further inspection. From this point onwards, a full-fledged interdisciplinary project was launched between the class teacher, the Arabic language teacher, and the arts and crafts teacher whereby each one incorporated the theme of nests, birds and the biological development of species into their own lessons. School trips to the zoo were organised and paintings of trees and birds were encouraged. Yet again, his account showcases the flexibility and industriousness of these anonymous teachers. Pedagogue Amin Mursi Qandil certainly believed that teachers employed at experimental classrooms shared the necessary qualities that enabled them to support such pedagogical endeavours. In the article he published in the 1937 edition of *Sahifat Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, he insists: "Every teacher is a brother (and I'm not saying a father) to his students, full of compassion and love."[41] Qandil believed teachers were cooperative, motivated and committed to their work. For example, in the 1940s, the teachers at the Hada'iq al-Qubba Model School organized a summer camp retreat to discuss the pedagogical problems of the school and suggest solutions.[42]

Similar pedagogical experiments were carried out at the 'Urman Preparatory Model School (which was previously a primary school): In the March 1955 edition of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, the then headmaster of the school, Muhammad Wasif Hums, narrates the different ways in which teachers of the school were able to experiment with progressive

[40] Muhammad Khalifa Barakat, "'Ush al-Hada'a Yu'allim al-Atfal," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 3, no. 3 (April 1951): 73.
[41] Qandil, "Al-Fusul al-Tajribiyya," *Sahifat Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, 9.
[42] Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal, *Ittijahat fi-l-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Adaab bi-l-Jamamiz, 1949), 62. The same summer camp is mentioned in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. Its results were hailed by 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi as vital for the development of teaching practices. See page 67 of this dissertation.

methods in their classrooms and activities.[43] From the introduction of school excursions to a gardening project, a theatre group, art classes, sports, cinema and group projects, Hums' account paints the picture of an extremely active student population and a supportive school which facilitated the engagement of students in various fields and activities.[44] Teachers are largely absent from this account which focuses on the school as an engine for change. Even then, their important contributions can be inferred from the stories he recounts. For example, in his description of an agriculture project initiated by the students, Hums casually notes that throughout this student-led project, which presumably lasted for a few months, their teachers would regularly convene to discuss how they could incorporate this theme into the other subjects and select suitable content for their classes in order to mimic and complement the project.[45] A few years earlier, in 1952, Hums recognized the role that teachers played more directly: "With school trips, the role of the teacher is to study the venue in advance, write up a description of the intended trip in an enticing manner , (…) give them a map of the premises (…) introduce the students to some of the sites and information they will encounter on the trip."[46]

But there exists a more thorough account of the Al-'Urman School's teaching staff, one that does them more justice: In the February 1950 issue of *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, a teacher by the name of Mustafa Kamil Badran, who was employed by the 'Urman School in the late 1940s (and seems to have become Assistant Professor at the

[43] Muhammad Wasif Hums, the headmaster of the 'Urman Model School, had over 11 years of experience with the Project Method which he was able to implement first within the experimental classrooms at Ma'hat al-Tarbiya (4 years) and later as a teacher at the Model School at Hada'iq al-Qubba (7 years). More on his 'experimentations' can be found in Muhammad Wasif Hums, "Al-Mawad al-Ijtima'iyya wa Tariqat al-Mashru'at," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 4, no. 1 (November 1951): 84–96. Hums later became a key textbook author in the early Nasser period. He produced textbooks which embraced Arab nationalist and Nasserist narratives. (See Chapter 6). A more thorough analysis of his textbooks can be found in Makar and Abdou, "Egyptian Textbooks in Times of Change, 1952-1980."
[44] Muhammad Wasif Hums, "Al-Madrasa wa-l-Bi'a: Amthila 'Amaliyya Min Madrasat al-'Urman al-Namuzajiyya al-I'dadiyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 7, no. 3 (March 1955): 53.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Muhammad Wasif Hums, "Istighlal al-Maylu 'Ila al-Jam'," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 4, no. 3 (March 1952): 93.

Higher Institute for Teachers by 1950) recounts the ways in which, together with a group of fifteen other colleagues, he contributed to altering science education at the school.[47] Badran suggests that between 1946 and 1948, i.e., shortly after its establishment, the school offered the same science curriculum which was taught in 'normal' schools but with a significant twist: Teachers were instructed to resort to the 'deductive' method and to use the environment around them as inspiration for their lessons.[48] In other words, instead of simply lecturing, the school encouraged teachers to allow their students to come up with their own conclusions and follow the principles of critical thinking. Many teachers felt that the deductive method, while a far cry from the lecture format followed in other schools, remained inadequate because it only occupied one student at a time.[49] To grab the attention of a larger number of students, 'Urman teachers had to exert a lot of effort, pose many questions and fake their own ignorance. In short, this method was a waste of time. Instead, Badran and his colleagues came up with a system which would incorporate the Project Method into their science lessons because they noticed that students were far more engaged in project class than in other subjects. What transpired was a large number of experiments in which the 'Urman teachers tested out and developed tools to 'free themselves from the curriculum' and 'engage their students.' They turned the content into a set of assignments, work sheets, and questions and made sure that every theme was turned into practical student projects and scientific experiments. The teachers also introduced innovative evaluation methods in the hope that children would deduce broader theories from the experiments they were conducting. Badran suggests that the first year of

[47] The fifteen teachers are Ibrahim Shihata, Ahma Jamal al-Din, Al-Sayyid Fahmi Jum'a, Hasan al-'Ajamawi, Rushdi Fam, Zaki Nashid, Shafiq Muhammad Ibrahim, Luis Kamil Milika, Muhammad Mukhtar Shukayr, Muhammad 'Izz al-Din Abu Shadi, Mahmud Shukayr, Mansur Husayn, Munir Kamil, Najib Iskanadar and Mustafa Kamil Badran.
[48] Mustafa Kamil Badran, "Tadris al-'Ulum bi-l-Madrasa al-Namuzajiyya bi-l-'Urman," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* 23, no. 3 (February 1950): 168.
[49] Ibid., 169.

implementation was difficult because the teachers were not used to these methods, and a lot of time was spent trying to tweak and test them out. By the second year of implementation "teachers could teach the same themes as the preceding year with the same quality and in a shorter period of time."[50] Similar attempts to introduce innovative teaching methods were also introduced in geography classes at the 'Urman Secondary School in 1951.[51] This is perhaps why in Isma'il al-Qabbani's account of the school's activities there is little hesitation regarding the role of teachers and the level of effort they were able to exert in the facilitation of meaningful pedagogical interactions with students. They were in fact actively involved in the creation of new progressive methods for their students.

The fact that experimental schools integrated the Project Method as well as subjects that were inherently more flexible, and that they actively encouraged excursions, art classes etc., was instrumental in allowing teachers to experiment freely with their students and tailor their pedagogical content to students' interests. Such spaces were conducive to high levels of self-directed learning, play, and a lot of activities. The curriculum's built-in structures, if you will, were designed to make experimentation and play a part of a student's learning experience. However, experimentation was not just limited to the neatly tailored programmes offered at the experimental classrooms since it could also be voluntarily introduced by practicing teachers in their ordinary public schools.[52] Thus, the experimental ethos depended on the creativity of practicing teachers, whether they were employed in experimental classrooms or not.

[50] Ibid., 180.
[51] 'Abd al-Latif Fu'ad Ibrahim, "Tajriba fi Tadris al-Jughrafiya al-Iqlimiyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 3, no. 4 (July 1951): 80–84.
[52] In the late 1940s the Ministry of Public Instruction carried out an experiment to introduce film and cinema as a pedagogical tool in four different schools. Only one of them was experimental (The 'Urman Model School), two were 'normal' (The Sa'idiyya and al-Faruq Secondary Schools) and the fourth was a primary level teacher training facility (Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Ibtida'iyya). See Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal, "Istikhdam al-Sinima fi-l-Ta'lim," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 3 (February 1949): 44–53.

The pedagogy press contains a number of accounts by 'normal' public schoolteachers who were concerned with the quality of their educational offering and were eager to experiment more freely in their own classroom and change their teaching styles. In *Al-Ittijahat al-Haditha fi-l-Tarbiya* (The New Orientations in Education) psychologist-educator Muhammad 'Attiya al-Ibrashi, a lecturer at *Dar al-'Ulum,* tells the story of a young teacher who approached him about this issue: "What can I do when it is not in my power to change the entire system of the school at which I will be teaching?"[53] Al-Ibrashi's response rested on the idea that every teacher could in fact implement reforms irrespective of the system around them so long as he/she prioritized the wellbeing of the child. "A teacher can give students the chance to work without having to rely on him, by refraining, for example, from solving mathematics problems on the board and allowing students to solve them. (…) He can encourage his students to carry out their own research independently (…) and he can introduce interesting books that will make them love reading."[54] Similar advice was often expressed in the pedagogy press, especially in *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, where young teachers were encouraged to alter their teaching methods in order to make their classrooms livelier by encouraging student participation, group activities and critical thinking.[55]

Many of them succeeded, at least according to the accounts they provided in the press, in circumventing the rigidity of the system by relying on this 'experimental ethos' to transform their pedagogical offering into a more dynamic process. The July 1951 issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* contains a summary of a lecture delivered at the Club of *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya* by a headmaster named Salah al-Din Junayna:

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[53] Al-Ibrashi, *Al-Ittijahat al-Haditha fi-l-Tarbiya*, 224.
[54] Ibid., 224-225.
[55] See for example Ahmad Mahmud Tantawi, "'Ila al-Mudaris al-Nashi': Musahamat al-Talamidh fi-l-Fasl," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 4, no. 1 (November 1951): 78–80.

> It is very easy to apply some of the new methods in the kinds of schools that were originally conceived for this very purpose—such as the experimental classrooms attached to *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and the model schools. But what is important is to see whether these methods, or at least some of them, can be applied in normal schools.[56]

Junayna went on to describe a set of activities that were carried out at the Ahmad Mahir School, which, as he described it, was lacking in equipment, budget and suffered from a number of other problems related to space and size. One of the most progressive features discussed by Junayna was the introduction of a school radio and broadcasting service. According to Junayna, this innovation allowed students to become actively engaged in their school community by researching content, thinking about episodes, engaging with their peers and organizing trips. The school also encouraged students to contribute to their school magazine and the teachers crafted a 'Questions' box for students to write any questions they may have about their environment and the life around them. Junayna's experimental ethos seems to have been replicated by other practicing teachers as demonstrated by the presentations some of them gave at the Conference on Teaching the Sciences in 1942 as well as the Conference on Teaching the Social Sciences in 1944 where they shared some of their pedagogical experiments.[57] As one might expect, teachers with past experiences in experimental classrooms were more likely to adopt the experimental ethos once they landed in 'ordinary' classrooms and schools.[58]

The most popular subjects for experimentation—especially in non-experimental schools—was, of course, art. In "Al-'Amal al-Jam'i fi Ta'lim al-Funun" (Group work in

[56] Salah al-Din Junayna, "Tatbiq ba'd al-'Asalib al-Haditha bi Madrasa 'Adiyya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 3, no. 4 (July 1951): 90.
[57] Mahmud Zaki, "Tatbiq Tariqat al-Mashru'at fi Tadris al-'Ulum fi-l-Madaris al-'Ibtida'iyya," in *Mu'tamar Tadris al-'Ulum* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1942), 127–36; Yusuf Salah al-Din Qutb, "Tatbiq Tariqat al-Mashru' fi Tadris al-'Ulum fi-l-Madaris al-Thanawiyya," in *Mu'tamar Tadris al-'Ulum* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1945), 137–50. Hanna, "Tariqa fi Tadris al-Tarikh bi-l-Madaris al-Thanawiyya."
[58] See for example Halim Ibrahim Greis, "Muhawla Tajdidiyya fi Tadris Al-Jughrafiya," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 2 (October 1948): 55–60.

art education), an article published by Mahmud Bassiyuni in the March 1952 edition of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, there is an account of different experiments conducted by the students of the Higher Institute for Art who were training to become art teachers in regular schools. One of these aspiring teachers was restricted by the medium (clay) and the short duration of the class but he nonetheless succeeded in introducing the concept of group work to the classroom.[59] Using a theme that was familiar to all his students—the chicken coop—the teacher invited his class to use clay in order to recreate a chicken coop. Bassiyuni explains that the experiment was extremely successful in that it promoted a sense of community and comradery in the classroom since each student was responsible for the recreation of one part of the coop. It is no wonder that in 1957, upon his return from the International Society for Education through Art's second international conference, Bassiyuni became convinced that experimentation in art education was necessary and therefore proceeded to establish the committee for experimentation in public art education under the Ministry of Education.[60] Long before such committees existed however, experimentation in art education in general public schools was carried out by practicing art educators.

In between his prestigious posts within the Ministry of Public Instruction, Habib Jurji often taught at ordinary schools. In 1924, he was given the opportunity to teach art in a preschool. He used it to test out certain free drawing techniques for young children and ended up following their artistic development over the years.[61] But it was not just famous pedagogues like Jurji who were involved in art experiments, a quick look at the magazine of the Egyptian branch of the International Federation for Art Education, Drawing and Art Applied to Industries suggests that this experimental attitude was adopted by practicing art

[59] Mahmoud Al-Basyuni, "Al-'Amal al-Jam'i fi Ta'lim al-Funun," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 4, no. 3 (March 1952): 67–73.
[60] Mahmoud Al-Basyuni, *Tajarub fi-l-Tarbiya al-Fanniyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1964), 11–12.
[61] Habib Jurji, *al-Tarbiya al-Faniyya* (Cairo: Matba'at al-I'timad, 1934), 5.

teachers. The magazine contains entries from multiple primary and secondary schoolteachers documenting their introduction of new pedagogical methods, free hand drawing, free expression and novel projects within art classes. In an article entitled "Khitatti fi Tadris al-Rasm" (My Plan in Teaching Art) a teacher by the name of Habib Iskandar who was an art instructor at the 'Abbasiyya Primary School narrates his own experience with the implementation of the modern methods in his art lessons.[62] "During the summer holiday, my friend Mr. Muhammad Fu'ad Effendi from the Khalil Agha School and I decided to put forward a new art instruction programme in our respective schools that would incorporate the new methods of education."[63] Iskandar's article enumerates the different methods introduced by his new programme and the positive results that he observed via a presentation of his students' drawings and artworks. These few examples demonstrate that in 'normal' schools it was largely up to the teachers to infuse their classrooms with the progressive methods and to experiment with them without the structural, material and technical support that experimental schoolteachers had access to.

Clearly, not all teachers adhered to these methods or felt it necessary to follow them. School magazines in particular are excellent resources to try to uncover the ways in which different teachers actually conducted their classes. They also happen to be a concrete example of a progressive experiment as teachers saw them as spaces for free expression.

In the 1934 issue of the Shubra School, the magazine's chief editor, a teacher by the name of 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sayyid, who was a graduate of the both the University of London and Exeter, presents what he believed to be the raison d'être of the magazine at hand:

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[62] Habib Iskandar, "Khittati fi Tadris al-Rasm," *Majallat al-Ittihad al-Dawli li-l-Rasm wa-l-Tarbiya al-Fanniyya* 3, no. 3 (April 1936): 36.
[63] Ibid.

> This magazine is a special student journal (…) I wanted this magazine to have two facets. On the one hand, an educational/cultural magazine that would inject the spirit of research into the students and guide them towards sound logical thinking and teach them how to organize their thoughts and improve their language. On the other hand, I wanted it to present a genuine image of the different activities that are encouraged by the directors of the school and its teachers so that the reader may realize how secondary education has developed and thereby come to genuinely appreciate the effects of the new education in young modern youth.[64]

And indeed, the magazine's content suggests that students took the freedom to freely express themselves to heart. For example, the 1938 edition of the magazine contains a segment titled "Personalities" in which the students openly poke fun at their teachers.[65] While one teacher by the name of Wahba Kirulus is praised by the students for being democratic, another, Mahmud al-Halwani, is ridiculed for being too strict. Of the first, the students claim: "He always tries to minimize the formalities between the students and himself (…) he speaks to them with kindness (…) he helps the school in most of its activities (…) he is the president of the music society.[66] Of the second, we understand that he "never rests until everyone else is silent telling everyone to be quiet all the time."[67] In the 1938/1939 issue of the Hilmiyya Secondary School magazine, 'Abd al-Maqsud Ibrahim a teacher who happened to be the staff member responsible for school trips, listed over thirty trips that he had helped organize throughout the academic year.[68] These included trips to famous historical sites such as the Saqqara pyramids, museums, factories and the outdoors. 'Abd al-Maqsud believed that these trips "fostered "independence, provided (…) adventure (…) and were relaxing for the soul.[69]" Such accounts, often scattered across school magazines, highlight the individual differences between teachers

[64] 'Abd al-Hamid Al-Sayyid, "Al-Kalima al-Niha'iyya," *Majallat Madrasat Shubra al-Thanawiyya* 7 (1934): 88.
[65] Mahmud 'Abd al-Rashid, 'Abdullah 'Abd al-Latif Abu Samra, and Fawzi 'Abd al-Hafiz, "Shakhsiyyat," *Majallat Madrasat Shubra al-Thanawiyya* 11, no. 76–80 (1938).
[66] Ibid., 80.
[67] Ibid., 79.
[68] Ibrahim 'Abd al-Maqsud, "Rihalat al-Madrasa Hadha al-'Am," *Sahifat al-Hilmiyya al-Thanawiyya* 3 (1939 1938): 93–98.
[69] Ibid., 95

who could either adopt progressive practices or neglect them. In the very least, they demonstrate that some teachers were actively trying out progressive methods to improve their teaching style and their relationship to their students.

Ultimate Experiments: The Rural/Village Schools

If there ever was an *ultimate* pedagogical experiment, the so-called Rural/Village Schools would have to be it. Historian Omnia El Shakry links the creation of these schools back to the establishment of the Egyptian Association for Social Studies (EASS) in 1936, where the 'model village' projects originated which aimed at executing "social reconstruction projects."[70] The EASS also established the Cairo School for Social Work, and, as its name suggests, it was the main institution responsible for the training of social workers and the production of social research. As part of their larger effort to tackle Egypt's "woes", including disease, housing, hygiene and poverty, the EASS sought to create these model villages and replicate the project on a nation-wide scale. This is the context within which rural education was first conceived, according to the existing historiography. Much of the critique levelled at these schools revolves around their inherent social engineering ethos, their elitism and their built-in nationalist grandeur. El Shakry suggests that "the concern with welfare (…) was part of the nationalist and reformist project of generating a productive and vital population."[71] Motivated by "fear of the figure of the undisciplined rural subject and the fear of potential Bolshevism" these initiatives "attempted to contain radical social change."[72] In other words, the literature best remembers these schools as social laboratories which aimed at "reconstructing bodies and

[70]Omnia S. El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Post-Colonial Egypt* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), 132.
[71] Ibid., 140.
[72] Ibid.

minds [and] constructing a "new Egyptian" as much as reordering the built environment."[73] The same reconstructionist discourse is critiqued in Mitchell's *Rule of Experts* which locates the birth of so-called 'peasant studies' in the widespread rebellions of rural populations against occupying European powers during the interwar years. Mitchell focuses part of his critique on Father Henry Habib Aryout's famous book *The Egyptian Peasant* which became a cult classic among Western academics and cemented a set of unsubstantiated, elitist and orientalist images of Egypt's rural population.[74] Aryout's 'standard rendition' depicted the *fallahin as* unchanging, emotional, and exotic.

Similar observations have been made by Samia Kholoussy who maintains that discourses about 'peasants' in the interwar period tended to oscillate between three distinct positions. They either idealize the *fellahin* and see them as the "authentic contiguity of the Egyptian character, from the days of the pharaohs to the twentieth century", or they believe their plight to represent everything that was wrong with Egyptian society.[75] Or, they view the rural arena as a site of contestation over religion, gender and development. El Shakry, Mitchell and Kholoussy rightly pick apart these elite discourses about Egypt's rural population. What their critiques share in common is a reliance on sources either left behind by social workers, the EASS or literary and journalistic accounts produced by Egypt's urban elite. In the following, I revisit the 'rural schools' episode by bringing to light a new set of sources produced by a completely different group of interlocutors: Egyptian teachers. As it turns out, the first village school was established in collaboration with *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* and was originally based on research proposed by the association. How did teachers react to the rural school projects? How did they view their

[73] Ibid., 125.
[74] Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
[75] Samia Kholoussy, "Fallahin: The'Mud Bearers' of Egypt's 'Liberal Age,'" in *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919-1952*, ed. Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy J Johnson, and Barak A Salmoni (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 277.

own role as teachers, and were they necessarily motivated by the same set of ideational, political and social sentiments towards Egypt's rural population?

Already in terms of origin story, there are a few variations depending on the sources. A reliance on sources left behind by social workers and the EASS seem to suggest that the rural schools were originally thought of as part of the model village projects and the larger village reconstruction programme, as has been discussed above. But sources left behind by Egyptian pedagogues present a slightly different account. Writing in 1977, 'Abd al-Salam Dayf suggests that as a member of both the EASS and *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, Isma'il al-Qabbani played a very big role in the establishment of the first 'village school' in Manayil, a village in the governorate of Qaliyub North of Cairo. This 'model' village school was the fruit of a collaboration between both entities and El Shakry suggests that it was the success of this project which eventually encouraged the Ministry of Public Instruction to re-organize its rural education programmes in 1942.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Isma'il al-Qabbani submitted a report to the Under Secretary of Education in July of 1940 on the status of compulsory education and how to improve it. In it, he highlights that it was Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid who in 1925 suggested the establishment of rural schools at the "Elementary Education" Conference which was organized by the Teachers Syndicate.[76] Particularly infuriating for al-Qabbani, who by 1940 was observing the rise of the international rural education movement world-wide, was Egypt's pioneering but unrecognized contribution to this debate, precisely because Abu Hadid's recommendations were never seriously implemented. Moreover, the role played by *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* which, as early as 1939, had launched a full-fledged experimental project of its own on rural education, was also neglected. In other words, it was within progressive circles that these ideas were first articulated even though

[76] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim*, 48.

this was not always evident. Al-Qabbani alludes to the EASS rural/model school project in his memo but cautions the Ministry not to scale it up before the final result of all the experiments were taken into account. He also hoped the Ministry would give the same attention to the experiment put forward by *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*.[77]

It is interesting to observe the ways in which al-Qabbani's views on the village school project evolved over the years. In a memo submitted to the Ministry of Public Instruction five years later, on May 28, 1945, al-Qabbani critiqued the Ministry's rural primary education programme launched in 1942 and in which 35 different rural primary schools were established with the aim of spreading education as well as the improvement of the students' physical well-being and health, which understood rural education to be synonymous with professional training and technical education. Al-Qabbani believed that children in primary years were too young for technical/professional training:

> Rural Schools should not be technical institutes that mold children into agricultural laborers, they are supposed to connect the studies with the local life of the community in their environment so that their education would become lively (…) at the end of this programme, children would be directed to new educational paths based on their own inclinations and strengths.[78]

Seven years later, in March 1947, al-Qabbani prepared another memo within the context of the Higher Council of Education's meeting over a set of draft laws to reform public education. In it, he suggested that both *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* and the EASS had thought about developing rural schools *at the same time*. Here again, he levelled similar criticisms at the fixation on the technical aspects of this programme and the impediments it placed on educational advancement.[79] While al-Qabbani seems to have viewed the initial experimental phase positively, he was highly critical of later iterations of these initiatives fearing that they contradicted what he as psychologist-educator believed to be one of the

[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid., 111.
[79] Ibid., 140.

most basic principles of progressive education: that education should be tailored to the needs of children. Psychologist-educators such as al-Qabbani therefore seem to have been uncomfortable with the village school set up because they believed that such programmes created more rifts between classes or as al-Qabbani himself noted in 1955: "these programmes upheld a wall between primary and rural schools and prevented children from moving up the pedagogical ladder to the secondary schools."[80] Moreover, psychologist-educators like al-Qabbani were concerned that rural schoolteachers were not adequately trained and were ignorant of the rural environment within which they were operating. Education at these schools should be premised "on an understanding *(tafahhum)* of the rural environment (…) and the constant engagement (*tafa'ul mustamirr*) with it."[81]

Al-Qabbani's emphasis on *engagement* represents a slight departure from the elite social reconstructionist positions espoused by the EASS. While al-Qabbani certainly viewed the school as a vehicle for social advancement and the eradication of rural 'woes', he nevertheless maintained a skeptical position towards these programmes, especially when they contradicted some of his core progressive beliefs including the importance of linking the environment to educational content, dialogue, and the importance of emphasizing the needs and natural inclinations of children.

Psychologist-educator Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal also viewed the village school project in a similar manner. In an article published in the January 1951 issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya,* Jalal argues that "the goals of rural education in any community are determined by the special needs of the community, needs that are derived from their heritage, current conditions and future aspirations."[82] Like al-Qabbani, Jalal viewed the schools as vehicles for social change, but as a progressive pedagogue he also shared al-Qabbani's fears

[80] Ibid, 249-250.
[81] Ibid., 251.
[82] Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal, "Ahdaf al-Ta'lim al-Rifi," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 3, no. 2 (January 1951): 12.

regarding the transformation of such schools into professional training centers. One could obviously view Jalal and al-Qabbani's support for the rural schooling project as a sign of their inherent elitism. At the same time, the arguments put forward by Jalal suggest that, as psychologist-educators they were predominantly motivated by some of their own core beliefs about the ways in which children learn which were derived from their progressivism. It is precisely because Jalal believed that children's learning followed the stages of development theories and in particular that their cognitive process moved from the 'concrete' to the 'abstract', that they must be exposed to educational content which is concretely related to their environment: It had to be inspired by-and engaged with-the issues of their own villages. Jalal maintains that a fundamental change in the methods of instruction was necessary in order for such goals to be achieved and that traditional methods and the restrictions they placed on teachers could not make this possible."[83] In other words, rural education for both al-Qabbani and Jalal was intimately linked to progressive education given its facilitation of a dialogue between students and teachers. It was a vehicle to put progressive theories to the test. Such attitudes explain why psychologist-educators were so keen on establishing specialized teacher training colleges for the rural school programmes. After all, as Ramziyya al-Gharib, a professor at the Female Teachers' College exclaimed: "Teachers were vital for the success of the rural school and had to be trained accordingly. They must be social pioneers who love people and are loved by them."[84] While the Ministry of Public Instruction recognized the need for a new and special kind of teacher as early as 1942 when the rural school expansion project was adopted—one who was trained to understand the context within which he/she was operating—it is not until 1947 that the first teacher training college for rural schools was

[83] Ibid., 16.
[84] Ramziyya Al-Gharib, "Madrasat al-Qariya wa Dawru-l-Mu'allim Fiha," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 7, no. 1 (November 1954): 52.

established in Manshi'at al-Qanatir.[85] One of the important motivations for its establishment was the recognition that primary schools should do more than just prepare students for the secondary schools: they must take into account children's learning needs, their environment and their inclinations.[86] The success of the school at Manshi'at al-Qanatir led to the establishment of a similar school in Biy al-'Arab in the governorate of Munufiyya north of Cairo, in 1954, one in Minya in Upper Egypt in 1956 and one in the governorate of Kafr al-Shaykh in 1957.[87] Because such training colleges were spread out across different parts of the country, they were most probably able to reach teachers from different socio-political and economic backgrounds.

Away from elite pedagogical conversations around the village schools, it is interesting to uncover how practicing teachers viewed them, especially teachers who were posted as trainers at these rural teachers' colleges or those who were trained there. A few clues can be found in the pedagogy press, where such teachers would express themselves. We find such an account in the May 1952 issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* where Muhammad al-Shibini, who worked at the Rural Teachers' School in the village of Sars al-Liyan expressed his criticism of the conditions he was witnessing firsthand as a trainer based in the village. Al-Shibini decries the standardized curriculum offered at the schools which was "removed from the life that students were living and unsuitable to their needs and their psychology."[88] He also felt that the rural schools promoted individualism, not community. Equally concerning for him was the fact that the school failed to foster connections with the parents and that "no memorable effort was exerted in trying to

[85] See Abu-l-Futuh Radwan, *I'dad al-Mu'allim li-l-Madrasa al-Rifiyya: Al-Halaqa al-Dirasiyya li Mudarisi Ma'ahid al-Mu'allimin al-Rifiyya* (Cairo: Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim, 1957).
[86] Ibid. Introduction. See also Ibrahim 'Ismat Mutawi', "Madrasat Al-Mu'allimin al-Rifiyya ka Wihda Wazifiyya," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* 29, no. 3 (February 1956): 188–99. Mutawi' emphasizes the centrality of well trained teachers for the success of rural education.
[87] Radwan, *I'dad al-Mu'allim li-l-Madrasa al-Rifiyya*, Introduction.
[88] Muhammad Al-Shibini, "Ittijahat Tajribiyya fi-l-Ta'lim al-Rifi," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 4, no. 4 (May 1952): 22.

understand the circumstances of the student or their parents, thereby resulting in a rift between parents and teachers."[89] In short, al-Shibini believed that the education at the primary rural school of Sars Liyan was academic, it aimed at inculcating information which was unrelated to the students' psychological and sociological needs and desires. Despite its noble cause, the school's pedagogical foundations were not sound.

Similar sentiments are expressed by Dr. Ibrahim 'Ismat Mutawi', who, in 1955, was a pedagogy instructor at the Rural Teachers' School in Manshi'at al-Qanatir in Giza. Even though Mutawi' exhibits certain elitist social reconstructionist notions about the necessity for rural education and its role in ameliorating the lives of the country's rural population, he uses similar language to al-Qabbani suggesting for example that rural education should be based on "continuous engagement *(tafa'ul)* between the individual and his rural environment" and that its teaching methods are based on "learning by doing, and the direct and honest exposure to the real problems of rural life."[90]

It would be naïve to believe that all teachers adopted the same views. Among 'ordinary teachers' there were some who willingly saw themselves as saviors of the rural population and viewed their role as part of a larger reconstructionist project. For example, in the academic year 1949-1950, the Primary Schoolteachers' Institute in Asiyut (Upper Egypt) published the results of a larger research project which was carried out by its students on the village of al-Wasti. Their project was the result of a long study tour/camp in which the young aspiring teachers spent a number of weeks in the village in order to acquaint themselves with its conditions.[91] Needless to say, the language, presentation, and themes of their research are reminiscent of elite discourses about village life which were

[89] Ibid., 23
[90] Ibrahim 'Ismat Mutawi', "Dawr al-Ta'lim al-Rifi fi-l-Mujtama' al-Misri," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 7, no. 2 (January 1955): 27.
[91] Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, *Bahth Ijtima'i Iqtisadi li Qariyat al-Wasti Markaz Abanub Mudiriyyat Asiyut* (Asiyut, 1950).

popular at the time, and which were partially responsible for the emergence of social reconstructionist efforts. This variety of views demonstrates that teachers engaged in rural education, whether as trainers or practitioners, harbored different views, and did not always see themselves as social workers. The priority for many of them remained progressive education and the necessity of constructing rural education on the pedagogical foundations that they believed to be best suited for children. In other words, rural schools were the ultimate experiment which was developed as part of the experimental ethos within progressive circles in an attempt to put the theoretical ideas discussed in previous chapters to the test.

Para-ministerial Experimentations

The spirit of experimentation which gave rise to experimental classrooms and rural schools had a lasting impact beyond the Ministry's walls. Many teachers who were trained in the new progressive methods at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and elsewhere were often motivated to put their ideas to the test outside of the official public school system where they had more freedom. Unfortunately, there are few examples to demonstrate the degree of teachers' involvement in experimental activities outside of their schools because such activities, which happen informally and sometimes under the radar, were not properly documented. Nevertheless, the examples we have are important because of their power to show how influential these ideas came to be for teachers, who while not being able to implement them within the confines of the public education system, could at least experiment elsewhere and provide interesting learning experiences.

Ya'kub Famm, whom we encountered in previous chapters, represents the perfect example of a pedagogue who—together with a group of colleagues—tried to implement progressive practices within the context of a social programme he helped initiate. In

Atfaluna wa Kayfa Nusawishum (Our Children and How to Discipline Them), Famm retells the story of an initiative he helped launch called *Nadi Atfal al-Sha'b* (The People's Children's Club) which aimed at creating spaces of leisure and learning for children in underprivileged neighbourhoods in Cairo with the ultimate goal of serving their needs.[92] The idea for the club was born out of conversations among pedagogues in the late 1920s who felt that they wanted to 'serve their communities' but did not quite know how. Descriptions of the initial conversations suggests a certain level of elitism and ambivalence towards these children as well as an inherent desire to fashion and mold them into law-abiding model citizens.[93] But in later chapters, as the experiments developed, an emphasis is placed on respecting the children at all costs, treating them with dignity and love. The club was founded after extensive field research in underprivileged neighbourhoods around Cairo to 'understand' the problems they would be facing throughout their work. Once a 'thorough understanding' of the situation had been reached, the pedagogues behind the People's Children's Club appointed a young teacher as a volunteer to launch the club and promote it among the skeptical children of the neighbourhood. Famm and his colleagues very much believed that they were carrying out an experiment. "We were content with a simple space which had a gate and fence to monitor those coming in and out of the club.[94] We would construct a building later depending on our needs. This is because we knew we were launching an experiment and not a project that we were one hundred percent sure of."[95] The club sought to implement the core principles of progressive education by relying on the Project Method, artistic activities, group work, literacy programmes, manual labour activities, employment opportunities and a largely democratic internal governance

[92] Ya'kub Famm, *Atfaluna wa Kayf Nusawisahum* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditha, 1958), 97.
[93] See Ibid., 51-64; 95-96.
[94] Famm is careful not to specify in which Cairean neighbourhood this pedagogical experiment takes place.
[95] Ibid., 99.

structure in which the club members had a voice in the decision-making process. By the time of the book's publication, Famm explains that the club's membership had reached 500 children.

Famm also oversaw the work of another institution called *Mu'assasat al-Zifaf al-Malaki* (The Institution of the Royal Wedding) which, despite what the rather odd name may suggest, was actually aimed at providing an alternative to juvenile detention facilities by furnishing a space to house, feed, and educate boys who had been arrested by the police.[96] It was not a classical correctional facility in the sense that the boys were free to leave and come back as they pleased. The institution was set up by then Governor of Cairo 'Abd al-Salam al-Shazli Pasha and now functioned under the Ministry of Social Affairs. Famm was the institution's resident expert on matters of pedagogy and psychology and he worked to create rehabilitation programmes for the institution's 120 boys, often experimenting with the principles of progressive pedagogy as he saw fit.[97]

The most creative forms of para-ministerial experiments were conducted in the arts. As mentioned earlier, prominent psychologist educator, Habib Jurji, was instrumental in the application of progressive methods within the Ministry's official art curriculum. Beyond these initiatives however, Jurji established the Folk-Art School and worked with children who were not enrolled in the public schooling system. As someone who was deeply influenced by psychoanalytic approaches, and more specifically the teachings of Carl Jung, Jurji developed the idea that if left to their own Egyptian environment away from 'foreign' influences, children would create pure Egyptian art. [98] Jurji's son in law, the renowned architect Ramsis Wisa Wasif, took up many of the same ideas, albeit without the

[96] Famm fails to mention when the institution was established. However, its name (The royal wedding) and the position of its founder suggest that it must have been established in 1938, the year of King Faruq's wedding to Queen Farida and the year Al-Shazli Pasha served as governor of Cairo.
[97] Famm, Atfaluna, 154.
[98] See Mehri Khalil, "André Lhote and Egypt," in *André Lhote and His International Students*, ed. Zeynep Kuban and Simon Wille (Universität Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2020), 176.

obsession pertaining to the purity of Egyptian art, espousing instead a more universal approach which rested on many of progressivism's main principles: "I had this vague belief that every human being was born an artist, but that this gift could only be brought to light by encouraging artistic creation through the practice of craftwork from early childhood", he wrote in 1972. [99] With this philosophy in mind, the Ramsis Wisa Wasif Art Centre was established in the village of Haraniyya in the late 1950s, becoming one of the leading tapestry schools in the country.[100] The idea was to provide children from nearby villages with basic knowledge of weaving techniques and to leave them to freely create works of art without external conditioning as they saw fit. Despite their differences, both Jurji and Wasif's belief in children's innate artistic abilities, in freedom within learning environments and in democratic education were a catalyst for their pedagogical experimentations.

Progressive Ministerial Policies: Lasting Impact?

The principles of progressive education which were taught in the pedagogy and psychology classes of Egyptian teacher training institutions during the first half of the 20th century gave rise to an 'experimental ethos' among psychologist-educators and some practicing teachers prompting many of them to test out different progressive tools in their own classrooms. But if some Egyptian teachers readily adopted progressive principles and actually applied them in their classrooms, were any Ministerial policies specifically designed to get them to do so?

[99] Ramsis Wissa Wassef and Werner Forman, *Woven by Hand* (New York; London: Hamlyn, 1972).
[100] Yoanna Wissa Wassef, Suzanne Wissa Wassef, and Hilary Weir, *Egyptian Landscapes: 50 Years of Tapestry Weaving at the Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Centre Cairo* (Cairo: Ramsis Wissa Wassef Art Centre, 2006).

It may not always be evident, but many of the Ministry of Public Instruction's policies from the interwar period (and shortly after) actually originated in progressive conversations or as progressive pedagogical experiments. These were often enacted in order to cement such progressive principles as an integral part of the curriculum. Oftentimes, progressive ideas remained ideas. For example, in the academic year 1930-1931, Ministerial Decree No 3528 of 1930 was issued under the tenure of Minister Sayyid Ahmad Pasha, stipulating that the Ministry of Public Instruction study "open air schools" and the possibility of their establishment in Egypt.[101] Originally devised to combat disease among children in Germany, the open-air school movement was also closely associated with the basic principles of progressive education as it was greatly concerned with creating the perfect conditions and learning environments for children.[102] Outdoor learning was understood to prevent the spread of disease and to engage children with nature. In Egypt, progressive circles often discussed the efficacy of these schools as the education press dedicated lengthy articles to the subject.[103] There is little evidence in the sources however that these ideas were ever implemented in reality beyond the discussions that took place within the Ministry in 1930/1931. Moreover, the discussion seems to have primarily been motivated by the Ministry's wish to reduce the burden of school construction costs, given

[101] Tawfiq, *Wuzara' al-Ta'lim fi Misr wa Abraz Injazatihim 1837-1979*, 80.
[102] Open air schools were first established in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century and quickly spread to other countries such as the United States, France and Italy and Great Britain. See also Marjorie Cruickshank, "The Open-air School Movement in English Education," *Paedagogica Historica* 17, no. 1 (1977): 62–74.
[103] From 1927-1947 *Majallat al-Tarbiya* al-Haditha published 4 articles on Open air schools. Musa, *Al-Fihris al-'Am min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 248. Prominent psychologist-educator Muhammad 'Attiya al-Ibrahi was a supporter of the concept and wrote extensively about them in the press. See for example Muhammad 'Atiyya al-Ibrashi, "Madaris al-Hawa' al-Talq," *Al-Majalla al-Jadida*, no. 11 (November 1936); and Muhammad 'Atiyya Al-Ibrashi, "Al-Ta'lim fi-l-Hawa' al-Talq," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* 10, no. 3 (February 1937): 200–205. Amin Mursi Qandil was also a supporter of the movement. See Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris al-Juz' al-Thani*, 51.

the economic constraints exacerbated by the Great Depression, rather than a genuine attempt to implement the progressive model in Egypt.[104]

In other instances, Ministry officials adopted the language of progressivism in their reports. For example, in May 1933, the Ministry of Public Instruction issued a decree stipulating the establishment of a committee to review the status of secondary education and encourage a number of reforms which would—among other things—abolish rote memorization at the secondary level, increase practical subjects, decrease the overall workload and introduce subjects that were more relatable to students and more in line with their own abilities.[105] The adoption of such language suggests that progressive ideas had become part of the Ministry's official communications at least by the 1930s.

By contrast, other aspects of progressive education resulted in actual on-the-ground changes to the curriculum. Isma'il al-Qabbani, for example, suggests that the successful implementation of certain progressive methods at the experimental schools had an effect on the curriculum changes which took in 1935, 1945, 1947 and 1953.[106] In 1935, in line with progressive principles, the curriculum for the secondary schools was heavily reduced so as not to "exhaust students" or overburden them with an excessive workload.[107] The 1935 Arabic Literature curriculum was reorganized so that students could begin with contemporary literature first, then move on to medieval texts. The change was justified using progressive principles—particularly developmentalist ones—which stipulated that students must first engage with the "known" in order to move to the "unknown" and that they should be exposed to 'relatable' material first before moving to more obscure and less

[104] Salih and Al-Qusi, *Lamahat min Tarikh Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim Mumathalan fi A'mal Wuzara'uha*, 63.
[105] Muraqabat al-Ta'lim Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim, "Taqrir 'an Tatawwur Khitat al-Ta'lim al-Thanawi wa Nizam al-'Imtihan wa Shurutihi wa Ra'iy Muraqabat al-Ta'lim al-Thanawi fi Dhalik," Report (Cairo, 1935), 10-11, Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.
[106] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim*, 259.
[107] Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya Muraqaba al-Ta'lim al-Thanawi, "Taqrir 'an Halat al-Muraqaba fi-l-Sana al-Dirasiyya 1935-1936," Report (Cairo, 1936), 20, Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.

familiar territory.[108] The changes to the 1935 curriculum also gave secondary school students more free time on Monday afternoon so that they may engage in extra-curricular activities because these "bring out a student's personality, talent and inclinations."[109]

The tedious and detailed curriculum which was released through Ministerial Decree No. 4740 of 1937 similarly relied on progressive concepts and language. The instructions for the 'Morals and National Instruction' curriculum explains that teachers "must understand the psychology of children and use storytelling as a tool to entice them."[110] The Arabic curriculum instructions warn teachers not to overexert their students with unnecessary content, while the language composition requirements suggest that teachers select topics that are "suitable to the minds, environments and experiences of children."[111]

One thing to note is that many extra-curricular activities—which today are regarded as a normal component of schooling and not particularly or necessarily progressive—such as school trips, sports classes, music, and social work, actually originated in progressive conversations of the early 20th century. Their introduction into the schooling system via ministerial policies and curriculum reform projects should therefore be understood as part of progressive attempts to make schooling more relatable, enjoyable, and adapted to children's needs and inclinations. Many of these activities were introduced in the mid to late 1920s following the 1925 education reform programme. The post-1922 expansion of public education and the provision of needed funds for its amelioration were a catalyst for the emergence of such activities in public schools.

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[108] 'Ali, *Tarikh al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi Misr al-Haditha*, 185. 'Ali references the 1935 Curriculum for Boys Secondary Schools which was issued through a Ministerial Report.
[109] Ibid., 25.
[110] Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, "Qarar Wizari Raqam 4740 fi 19 Juniyu Sanat 1937 Shamil Khittat Al-Dirasa Wa Mawa'iduha wa Tartib Awqatuha bi-l-Maktaba al-'Amma wa Manhaj al-Dirasa bi-l-Maktaba" (Cairo, Ministry of Education 1937), 19.
[111] Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, "Qarar Wizari Raqam 4740", 24, 27.

According to Ministerial Decree No. 3614 of 1931, the Ministry of Public Instruction introduced cinema and film within to the official school curriculum in order to "entertain students, decrease classroom boredom, and present information through an exciting medium."[112] To do so, the Ministry established a committee to study and select fitting material. It is noteworthy that this took place one year prior to the establishment of experimental classrooms at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and their adoption of cinema as part of the curriculum. But this should not come as a surprise since the use of cinema as a pedagogical tool was an important topic within Egyptian pedagogical conversations in the 1920s and 1930s.[113]

In 1927, two years prior to the establishment of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, the Ministry of Public Instructions established a committee for sports and physical activities through Decree No. 3043 of 1927.[114] Before that, sports lessons—while present in schools—were not a particularly important or mandatory component of the curriculum.[115] The newly formed committee was tasked with the supervision and systematic introduction of physical activity in Egyptian public schools. This was followed by a decision in the late 1920s to encourage Boy Scouts through the introduction of previously absent scouting groups in the schools.[116] The committee's role grew further through Ministerial Decree No. 3768 of 1932 as more resources were poured into sports and recreational activities.[117]

In 1937, the Ministry established a specialized school for sports education for females and males (*Madaris al-Tarbiya al-Badaniyya li-l-Banin wal-l-Banat*) through

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[112] Salih and Al-Qusi, *Lamahat Min Tarikh Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim Mumathalan fi A'mal Wuzara'uha*, 64.
[113] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris*, 133–35.
[114] Salih and Al-Qusi, *Lamahat min Tarikh Wizarat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim Mumathalan fi A'mal Wuzara'uha*, 51.
[115] 'Atiyatallah, *Taqwim Al-Ta'lim fi Misr*, 45.
[116] See Tawfiq, *Wuzara' al-Ta'lim fi Misr wa Abraz Injazatihim 1837-1979*, 76. A sum of 50 000 EGP was allocated for the boy scouts.
[117] Ibid., 68.

Decree 4774.[118] "The aim of the sports curriculum", according to Decree No. 4740 of the same year, " is to cater to students' health, teach them ethics and social values and bring joy to their souls."[119] A report published in 1950 on the work of the committee for sports and physical activities echoed many of the same progressive sentiments:

> The school must prepare students for the life that they will lead in the future, a life in which they will be living in a community. In line with this pedagogical approach, schools must not be a space that fill students' minds with information, they must be like a small society, this is where sports and social work come in, as students learn to be responsible and understand team/group work.[120]

As part of this sports-oriented policy, more physical education classes were added to primary, elementary and secondary school curricula during the interwar period. For example, compared to the primary school curriculum from the academic year 1914/1915, which included no sports classes whatsoever, the curriculum for the academic year 1945/46 included three sports classes a week for the first and second years of primary school and two classes for the third and fourth years. Likewise, in 1945, secondary school students had at least one if not two (depending on the school year) sports lessons per week unlike their peers in 1914/1915.[121]

Given the Ministry of Public Instruction's interest in sports, it is unsurprising that schools fostered sports teams and sports-related extra-curricular activities. A quick look at school magazines is sufficient to furnish us with convincing evidence that this was commonplace across different types of public schools. From secondary to technical schools, educational establishments celebrated sports and documented their students'

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[118] Ibid., 95.
[119] Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, "Qarar Wizari Raqam 4740," 117.
[120] Al-'Idara al-'Amma li-l-Nashat al-'Ijtima'i wa-l-Riyadi, "Taqrir 'an al-Ahdaf al-lati Tatajihu 'Ilayha al-'Idara al-'Amma li-l-Nashat al-'Ijtima'i wa-l-Riyadi Dakhil al-Madaris al-Misriyya," Report (Cairo, 1950), 3, Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.
[121] See Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East*, 42, 50, 58. For comparative purposes see Amin Sami, *Al-Ta'lim fi Misr fi Sanatay 1914 wa 1915,* Appendix 2.

achievements in this domain.[122] Of course, the proliferation of sports in schools was not just a feature of progressive education. As historian Wilson Jacob Chacko as shown, the obsession with sports in interwar Egypt was in many ways a reaction to earlier British colonial discourses which portrayed Egyptians as physically weak and therefore unfit for self-rule.[123] Sports education was a vehicle to prove such discourses wrong and to strengthen Egyptians' minds and bodies. Yet the impact of progressive understandings of pedagogy on the introduction of such activities should not be underestimated. After all, progressivism's emphasis on the importance of movement for children's health and wellbeing, and its call for active learning, outdoor experiences, leisure and the wholesome development of children all played a role in shaping the Ministry of Public Instruction's decisions to strengthen its sports and physical activities curriculum after 1922.

In parallel to sports education, the Ministry of Public Instruction began to prioritize music as of the 1930s as part of a more general attempt to widen students' cultural tastes and morals. Music education was largely absent from schools prior to the 1930s as the subject was only sporadically covered—through individual attempts by a small group of committed headmasters and teachers. The period between 1931 and 1936 witnessed an increase in musical activities in schools and the systematic institutionalization of a proper music curriculum across all school levels, in part through the establishment of a music inspection division within the Ministry of Public Instruction.[124] While the connections to

[122] Students at public schools would join a range of sports societies and teams including football, fencing, table tennis, basketball and boy scouting activities among others. See for example Farid Sa'id, "Al-Al'ab al-Badaniyya bi-l-Madrasa," *Majallat Madrasat Shubra al-Thanawiyya* 7 (1934): 76; "Al-Nashat al-Madrasi," *Majallat Madrasat Shubra al-Thanawiyya* 11 (1937): 114–22; "Tarbiya Badaniyya wa Nashat Madrasi," *Majallat Madrasat al-Fayyum al-Sina'iyya*, 1940, 123–33; "Min Anha' al-Riyada," *Majallat Madrasat al-Ta'awuun al-'Ibtid'iyya bi Dusuq*, no. 2 (May 1952): 66–67.
[123] Wilson Chacko Jacob, *Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).
[124] 'Atiyatallah, *Taqwim al-Ta'lim fi Misr*, 73–75; Muhammad Ahmad Al-Hifni, "Taqrir 'Am 'an Tatawwur al-Ta'lim al-Musiqi fi Misr fi-l-Mudda min 1931 'ila 1936," Report (Cairo, September 1936), Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.

progressive ideas, especially developmentalist ones—such as the need for children to express themselves, the importance of the development of the senses and the joys of active learning—did influence the decision to adopt a music programme, ministerial reports suggest that the Ministry's music inspectors saw themselves as part of a mission to educate and civilize (*tathqif*) the Egyptian public through such programmes. In other words, the Ministry of Public Instruction's own language reflected a very traditional, elistist, and nationalist agenda rather than a pedagogical progressive and psychologically driven one. This is confirmed by the findings of historian Raja Adal, who suggests that "although there were occasional references to music's usefulness in educating healthy bodies, elegant girls, and expressive children, almost without exception educators reiterated music's role in cultivating moral children."[125]

By contrast, reports pertaining to drawing and art largely adopted the language of progressivism in their promotion of these new curricula. While an art inspection division was established by the Ministry through Law No. 20 of 1927 and Decree No. 2968 of 1927, art inspection was carried out by psychologist-educators such as Ahmad Shafiq Zahir, Yusuf 'Afifi and Habib Jurji, which may explain why the reports they prepared adopted progressive themes, focused on the child and on 'free expression'. As discussed earlier, Jurji and Zahir were themselves part of a more progressive network of Egyptian educators such as *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* unlike their music instruction colleagues.[126]

Adal documents the transition which took place within drawing education which, according to him, "gradually traded its instrumental role in primary school curricula, one that prepared children for modern professions like mapmaking, for a normative role in

[125] Raja Adal, *Beauty in the Age of Empire*, 62.
[126] Ibid., 173.

training their inner self."[127] For Adal, the jump to "free hand drawing", free expression and the development of the inner self through art occurred much later in the decade, more specifically by 1937 when Zahir published an article in *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* criticizing art education practices that were prevalent in Egyptian schools and that relied on geometric and verisimilar drawings and copying methods.[128] Given Zahir's earlier contributions to traditional drawing textbooks, Adal concludes that this critique may have also been levelled at his own work. But in fact, Zahir's critique of 'traditional' art education can be traced back to a report he prepared about ten years earlier and submitted to the Ministry of Public Instruction upon his return from the International Conference on Drawing and Art Education in 1928, in which he expressed a critique of the Egyptian art education system which neither relied on psychology nor applied 'the new methods' of art education.[129] As such, one can conclude that Zahir, Jurji and others were preoccupied with the introduction of progressive and new methods of art education as of the late 1920s, and given their role as Ministry inspectors they most likely encouraged the Ministry to adopt such language in its internal correspondence.

But perhaps the most important imprint of progressivism's experimental legacy on ministerial policies was the introduction of the preparatory school. In 1943, approximately ten years after the establishment of experimental classrooms, Ismai'il al-Qabbani suggested that the then system of education which only consisted of a primary level followed by a specialized and technical secondary level was unfit for children and their 'natural stages of development'. The solution, for al-Qabbani, was the introduction of a middle (later preparatory) school for children between the ages of ten and fourteen which

[127] Ibid.160–61.
[128] Ibid. 171.
[129] Ahmad Shafiq Zahir, "Taqrir Marfu' li-Hadrat Sahib al-Ma'ali Wazir al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya bi-Sha'n Tamthil al-Hukuma al-Misriyya fi-l-Mu'tamar al-Dawli al-Sadis li-l-Rasm wa-l-Tarbiya al-Fanniyya wa-l-Funun al-'Amaliyya wa Dirasat al-Turuq al-Haditah li-Ta'lim al-Rasm bi Faransa wa 'Italiya," (Report, Cairo, August 30, 1928), 20, Ministry of Education Museum-Archive.

would help students transition into a the more technical demands of secondary schools should they wish to do so.[130] In order to test this structure, al-Qabbani proposed that a middle school be established within secondary experimental schools. In so doing, experimental schools became once again a laboratory to test out whether restructuring proposals were useful and successful. By the mid 1950s, the Ministry of Education established a separate preparatory level with its own specialized curriculum for students from this age group.

A widespread practice?

If psychologist-educators were *intellectually* interested in progressive education because it awarded them exhilarating and meaningful academic conversations and allowed them to participate as intellectual equals within a growing international field of pedagogy studies, what did practicing teachers think of progressive practices? Beyond the experimental voices encountered in this chapter, can one say that ordinary practicing teachers as a whole were interested in progressivism and convinced that it was the right way to move forward? And if so, why would they engage with progressivism to begin with given its many challenges? Such questions are of particular importance because we know from other geographical contexts that not all teachers were in fact interested in progressivism during the interwar period. Laura Tisdall's work on progressivism in Britain, for example, demonstrates that while elite pedagogues were very much interested in progressive education, practicing teachers were not. Tisdall suggests:

> Most teachers' resistance to educational psychology was consistent and often vehement. However, especially when such resistance was expressed by practicing teachers, this may have had less to do with the content of training college and refresher course syllabuses, and more to do with the threat that developmental psychology posed to their own ideals of professional expertise. Far from being at the

[130] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim al-Ta'lim*, 95–101.

> vanguard of progressive reform, a significant number of teachers resisted progressive innovations because they felt they posed a challenge to their own authority, knowledge and professional identity.[131]

What were the sentiments of practicing Egyptian teachers, then? At first glance, one might be inclined to believe that they too had little interest in progressivism. After all, the education system was designed to obstruct such innovations. However, unlike the British context, there is little trace of dissent against progressivism among practicing Egyptian teachers, despite the difficulties they faced while trying to implement such practices. The most plausible explanation for this apparent acquiescence is that teachers likely supported these methods because they believed them to be an effective and vital experimental project in democracy, and that they held the secrets to creating a strong, democratic, and independent nation. In the absence of a large-scale survey of teachers' opinions, one can only try to use a simple process of elimination to demonstrate why this would have been the most plausible position to adopt.

Silences, Implicit Support, and Explicit Approval

In the absence of a comprehensive account of teachers' pedagogical leanings proving their unequivocal support for progressivism, the least that can be established is an absence of dissent. With a political climate that allowed for certain levels of critique in the press, it would have been perfectly possible for an anti-progressive group of educators to emerge and express their opinions. The absence of such dissenting voices is telling. Instead, support for progressivism is evident in journals across the board. As Iman Farag has demonstrated, even the Union of 'Ilzami Teachers' Syndicates magazine *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami*, to which practicing teachers contributed, often adopted progressive language. Journals such as *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, *Sahifat al-*

[131] Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 78.

Mu'allimin, *al-'Ulum* (The Sciences), and *al-Jaras*, featured contributions from a number of practicing teachers with positive experiences with progressive education. While their numbers may not have been significant, they nevertheless constitute an important sample. The oral narrative interviews carried out by Rania 'Abd al-Rahmna at the Women and Memory Forum in 2004 also support the notion of a wider acceptance of progressive education among practicing teachers. In eleven of the circa twenty interviews I consulted at the WMF, there are clear references to progressivism and its principles and an acceptance of its core tenets. None of the interviews featured any critique of the methods laid out by progressive education. The absence of critique is also a feature in non-pedagogy related journals: In Magazines such as *al-Thaqafa* (Culture), *al-Mussawwir* (The Photographer), and *al-Muqtataf* (The Excerpt) which often featured articles about education, critiques of progressive education are rare.

The three main pedagogy conferences alluded to earlier provide an important clue about teachers' positionality vis-à-vis progressivism. Seeing as they were well attended (particularly the science conference organized by *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, which attracted over 600 teachers), one can safely assume that practicing teachers found them to be—at the very least—interesting. This is also visible in their contributions. At the 1944 Cairo-based conference on teaching the Social Sciences, a lively discussion erupted after the first day of presentations. At first glance, some of these contributions could be interpreted as veering towards critique: "Teachers such as Shakir Hanna should not underestimate my intelligence by talking about a well-known pedagogical tool (The West method) which has multiple flaws and insinuate that it is a novel method of his own invention," one teacher explained.[132] Yet, the teacher in question was not expressing his disapproval of progressivism as a whole, he was merely pointing out that the methods

[132] Farag, "Éduquer Les Éducateurs : Les Revues Pédagogiques Égyptiennes de l'entre-Deux-Guerres."

presented were not new. In short, critiques of progressivism were rare. As shown throughout this chapter, practicing teachers' voices in the press and in oral testimonials confirm that many were eager to implement progressivism in their own classrooms, despite the difficulties such a task represented. To exclude the possibility of there being an alternative model capturing the attention of practicing teachers which would explain the lack of dissenting voices against progressivism, we must first explore depictions of these alternatives as they appeared in the pedagogy press and in teachers' writings.

The Fascist, the Traditional, and the Islamic Models

The first of these potential models is, of course, the fascist alternative which rose to prominence beginning in the 1930s. Historians Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski have shown that:

> most of the shapers of Egyptian public opinion were by and large unreceptive to Fascism and Nazism, largely rejecting the ideas and practices that characterized European fascism. Even in the later 1930s, when fascist regimes were at the zenith of their popularity and power, the majority (although not all) Egyptian voices supported liberal democracy against the fascist challenge. The multiple difficulties Egypt was experiencing in the 1930s notwithstanding, most Egyptian commentators sought to reform and improve, rather than to replace or destroy, the existing Egyptian parliamentary system.[133]

Much like the rest of the Egyptian intelligentsia, Egypt's pedagogues remained anti-fascist in their orientation, even though these systems promised order, discipline and control, features that one could have expected Egyptian pedagogues to be attracted to. As Salmoni notes, "Egyptian pedagogues were unreservedly critical of Nazi Germany, viewing it as a dictatorship mired in hero-worship" and many of them decried their pedagogical methods in which "people became soldiers, were stripped of intellectual freedom, as their rulers

[133] I Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s*, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2010), 9.

thought for them."[134] Salmoni's observations are confirmed through teachers' contributions to the pedagogy press; not just those published by the AUC's *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, but also in publications without an affiliation to Anglo-American institutions. In 1939, a teacher by the name of Muhammad Rida Muhammad published an article in *al-'Ulum* summarizing his impressions of a three week trip to Germany that same year. Needless to say, his impressions were less than flattering as he presents a sharp critique of the social and political context he was observing. In one instance, Muhammad notes: "The truth is that a tourist in Germany would feel as though he walked into another world, (…) a dream like world in which the individual loses his will, has been programmed like a machine without a personality, and works towards the good of the state; and sacrifices his children for the state."[135]

Such accounts were also echoed in *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami*. In 1935, the magazine published a translation of an article by R. Nicholson titled "Self-Imposed Dictatorship and How to Fight It": "What we fear in education is that children would get accustomed to following the opinions of others without choosing them for themselves. Correct education is fundamentally about nurturing freedom of opinion and of choice (…) We are in dire need of teachers who would free themselves from the shackles of dictatorship and resist it violently."[136] Naturally, and as noted by Salmoni, not all Egyptian educators were as critical of Nazi Germany. Citing one example from an article published in *Ma'had al-Tarbiya'*s Student Magazine, Salmoni suggests that "for this author then, the only method to take "nations and youth to the peaks of manhood and perfection" was German-style nationalist training, moral discipline, and insistence on order."[137] But Salmoni is quick to

[134] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 367.
[135] Muhammad Rida Muhammad, "Almaniya Kama Shahadtha fi-l-Sayf al-Madi," *Al-'Ulum* 6, no. 7, 8 (1939): 569.
[136] R. Nicholson, "Al-Diktaturiyya al-Dhatiyya wa Muqawamatuha," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 3, no. 1 (September 1935): 7–8.
[137] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 371.

point out that the author was a student at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* at the time of the article's publication, that he was not Egyptian but Syrian, and that his article was published prior to the eruption World War II. It must be added that the student in question begins his article by apologetically insisting that, even though his colleagues would be quick to judge him, he nevertheless wanted to highlight some of the positive aspects of German society.[138] The fact that al-Naqqash is compelled to use such an apologetic tone at the beginning of his piece suggests that the environment surrounding him at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* must have overwhelmingly been anti-fascist.

Similarly, one could conclude that Egyptian pedagogues were interested in some sort of an 'Islamic' model, rather than progressive pedagogy. Here too, appearances can be deceiving. This is because 'Islamic' education, whatever its definitions may have been for those referring to it in the pedagogy press, was used by psychologist-educators and practicing teachers alike, to support and promote the principles of progressive education—not to critique them. In his 1944 work, *Siyasat al-Ta'lim fi Misr* (Education Policy in Egypt), Isma'il al-Qabbani suggests that pre-modern education at al-Azhar, despite its many flaws "was connected with the life of the students and their emotions."[139] We find a similar position in Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani's presentation at the 1945 conference on progressive methods of education:

> If you analyse the opinions of modern educationalists and explore the principles that they are calling for, you will find that these are in fact calls to set the human mind free from traditional restrictions. It is not dissimilar to the calls to freedom prescribed in the Holy Qur'an which encourage people to think of themselves (…) [instead of] accepting what their leaders decide for them.[140]

[138] Al-Sayyid Shafiq al-Naqqash, "Al-Tarbiya al-Wataniya Fi-Almaniya," *Sahifat Ma'had al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 1 (1937): 80.
[139] Isma'il Al-Qabbani, *Siyasat al-Ta'lim fi Misr* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1944), 23.
[140] Al-Kirdani, "Al-Taftish Kama Huwa wa Kama Yajibu 'an Yakun," 132–33.

In his seminal 1938 dissertation, *Tarik al-Ta'lim fi 'Ahd Muhammad 'Ali* (The History of Education during under Muhmmad 'Ali), historian Ahmed 'Izzat 'Abd al-Karim nostalgically depicts the benefits of Azhari education suggesting that:

> The student was left to himself without any form of supervision in terms of attendance, or control over whether he was being studious or lazy. He was not subjected to any form of examination after he had completed his studies (…) Do we not find in this complete freedom enjoyed by the members of al-Azhar in past centuries similarities to the systems being introduced in modern universities today? These same systems that rely on freedom of choice and individual responsibility; the type of freedom that prepares them for the life of men ahead? Do not forget that the most knowledgeable members of al-Azhar from this century and the one preceding it, were exposed to such methods. There is no doubt that this sort of freedom tends to bring about strong wills and personalities.[141]

The notion that pre-modern, traditional and Islamic forms of education inherently bore resemblance to the methods espoused by progressivism seems to have been a popular trope in the pedagogy press, as recognized by historian Barak Salmoni. Citing psychologist-educator Asma' Fahmi, a faculty member of the 'Abdin Teachers School, and Husayn Yusuf Musa, Salmoni suggests that 'positive' attributes related to progressive education such as democracy, the freedom to choose the curriculum, equality and the need to account for children's needs and inclination were described as being indigenous to Islam.[142] These examples demonstrate that even when Islamic models were pursued, progressive pedagogy dominated the conversations and the excitement around its ability to promote freedom, independence and democracy took centre stage.

One final alternative with the potential to outperform progressivism in popularity among practicing teachers is the 'traditional model'. By this, I am referring to European style state-sponsored public education, a system that was initially introduced in Egypt in the 19th century but whose more troubling attributes were designed by the British

[141] Ahmad 'Izzat 'Abd al-Karim, *Tarikh al-Ta'lim fi 'Ahd Muhammad 'Ali*, 11–12.
[142]See Asma' Fahmi, "Dimuqratiyat al-Tarbiya wa-!-Ta'Iim 'inda al-Muslimin," *Al-Thaqafa* 2, no. 59 (1940): 322–24; Husayn Yusuf Musa, "Al-Hadlth al-Nabawi wa-l-Tarblya al-Hadltha," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 1, no. 1 (n.d.): 12–14; cited in Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 590-592.

occupation, and more specifically by Douglas Dunlop. That is, it would be perfectly plausible to suppose that practicing teachers were in fact content with the pedagogical circumstances highlighted in the previous chapter and that they did not regard progressive education as a solution, if there was never a problem to begin with. This would fit with Tisdall's findings about non-utopian progressives in the British context, who "it could be argued (…) created an invented opponent in the form of 'traditional' education in England and Wales, suggesting that it was much more coherent, intransigent and persistent than it actually was in order to present themselves as moving towards a better future."[143] In this sense, unlike psychologist-educators, practicing Egyptian teachers may not have regarded Egypt's public school system as a 'traditional' enemy after all. However, such a claim runs two important risks: First it ignores the multiple complaints documented in the last chapter by practicing teachers. More importantly, it obfuscates the intrinsic connection between the post 1922 education system and the British occupation.

Unlike in England, where 'traditional' education may have been a mere fabrication of child-centered imaginations, in Egypt, the bête noire was Douglas Dunlop and his lasting legacy. Turn of the century Egyptian education was under his "total control" from 1894 until after 1906.[144] In fact, he was "responsible for all aspects of the implementation of educational policies set out broadly by British High Comissioner Lord Cromer, he continued to restrain the expansion of European education, maintaining fees and curtailing scholarships."[145] Salmoni suggests that:

> As a Scotsman in the service of British policy, he combined an overarching hands-off approach to educational development with an unrelenting commitment to centralized control of Egypt's educational bureaucracy, regulations, and minutiae. In this he reflected his upbringing. Since the 1870s, Scottish education had been characterized by close state control of education, and Dunlop's training thus

[143] Tisdall, *A Progressive Education?*, 45.
[144] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 193.
[145] Ibid.

> resembled more closely the French or Prussian approach as opposed to that of England.[146]

But even when Dunlop left Egypt in 1919 after 25 years of service, his policies remained, or thus was the narrative in the Egyptian pedagogy press for years to come.

Many of the system's woes, such as excessive centralization, examinations, and inspections, originated from his tenure or were associated with his legacy in the accounts left behind by teachers. For example, at the 1945 conference on the Methods of New Education, Muhammad Sami 'Ashur, suggested that the system of inspection was "inherited baggage" from the early years of the 20th century, a time when inspectors' sole purpose was to "critique and find mistakes."[147] Similar sentiments were expressed by 'Abd al-Hamid Fahmi Matar in his 1939 *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun* where the teacher dedicates an entire section of his book to "the remnants of Dunlop": "The Egyptian school is still suffering from the heavy legacy left behind by Dunlop. (…) Schools are still preoccupied with unnecessary routine, and they remain detached from the environment around them."[148] Matar even cites a 1931 article from *Contemporary* magazine in which British inspector F.O. Mann, who had previously visited Egypt as part of the mission to assess the state of education alongside Edouard Claparède, admits that the British legacy on education was far less than ideal. In the article, Mann suggests that under Cromer, the British had subjected the country to one of the most controlling and far-reaching public examination systems world-wide.[149]

In a student-led interview in 1937, pedagogue Amin Sami Hassuna, (then director of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*) was asked whether he thought Egypt's education system had made any progress, Hassuna answered that Egypt was "free of colonial rule but that teachers

[146] Ibid.
[147] 'Ashur, "Nizam al-Taftish al-Hali wa Atharihi fi Sayr al-Ta'lim," 139.
[148] Matar, *Al-Ta'lim wa-l-Muta'attilun fi Misr*, 24.
[149] Ibid., 25.

were still governed by the methods imposed by Dunlop and the Dunlopians." [150] It was therefore imperative to "set teachers free so that education can become democratic, otherwise, there is no hope."[151] Hassuna's assertions suggest that he believed progressive education to be paramount for the continued independence and democracy of the country. At the same time, it was necessary for education itself to become democratic in order for this to materialize. In other words, a democratic and progressive education was vital for Egypt's resistance against tyranny and colonialism. These few examples demonstrate that while it is nearly impossible to ascertain the true sentiments of all practicing teachers, it is plausible to speculate that many saw progressive education as an important tool against the legacies of the British occupation. On a certain level, the Dunlopian 'tradition' became the manifestation of continued British presence while progressive pedagogy promised to hold the keys for resistance.

The Progressive Model and Democracy

Discussions of all three models reveal one important common thread: an admiration for the relationship between democracy and progressivism. When in 1923 the country's first constitution was promulgated, it cemented a semi-democratic system, a multi-party plurality and a new dawn for party politics. As stated in earlier chapters, the constitution ensured Egyptian control over all matters pertaining to education and created new opportunities for the expansion of the education system. But the interest in constitutional democracy did not just stem from this correlation. Many psychologist-educators and certainly a few practicing teachers believed in the importance and the power of the democratic process and expressed such beliefs in the pedagogy press. Public

[150] Amin Sami Hassuna, "Al-Tarbiyawa-l-Ta'lim," *Sahifat Ma'had al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 1 (1937): 3–6.
[151] Ibid.

intellectuals such as Taha Husayn relied on the democratic process to influence education policy. As historian Hussam Ahmed notes, for "Taha Hussein, the battle for education and the battle for democracy were one and the same."[152] Historian Suzie Ferguson suggests that this interest arose even earlier:

> The post-1908 political order—whether you called it constitutional, democratic, or representative—required a new kind of subject: one whose freedom and autonomy was substantial enough that his decisions could ground the legitimacy of an electoral-democratic state. This new political subject posed a problem to theorists in the Arab world and elsewhere working in the wake of the great nineteenth-century Age of Education. As anyone who had ever encountered an infant or glanced at the pages of a newspaper would know, men were not born free and self-owning, as the new electoral-democratic system required, but malleable and dependent. This paradox of upbringing and freedom became as a key concern for Arab political thought in the early decades of the twentieth century, as writers attempted to square the new demands of the constitutional age with a thorny philosophical question: how could you raise a man to be free?[153]

With its promise to bring about a bright and democratic future and to cement these newly acquired political gains of independence, progressive education promised to secure Egypt's nascent democracy for the future. The merit of progressive education lay in its ability to chart a democratic and independent reality. In the introduction to her translation of John Dewey's *Democracy and Education,* psychologist-educator Ihsan al-Qusi, who was an inspector of secondary education, suggests that she decided to translate parts of the book in the hope that it would be taught at Egyptian teacher training institutions not just because it was originally produced for a democratic nation such as the United States, but because it was "unique in its philosophy, modern in its theories which are suitable to the present age, scientific and social development."[154] This notion that it was a book fit for the 'Zeitgeist' of the interwar period was also echoed by colleagues of al-Qusi.

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[152] Hussam Ahmed, *The Last Nahdawi: Taha Hussein and Institution Building in Egypt* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2021), 122.
[153] Susanna Ferguson, "Love's Labor: Gender, Sex, and Theory from the Arab East", Chapter 3 (Manuscript submitted for publication in 2023).
[154] Ihsan Al-Qusi, *Risala fi Falsafat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1928), 7.

In May 1952, two months before the Free Officers' coup, psychologist-educator Al-Dimirdash Sarhan, who was an instructor at the Institute for Female Teachers at the time, published an article titled "Al-Madrasa fi Mujtama' Dimuqrati" (the School in a Democratic Society). In it, Sarhan makes an interesting argument: That schools have the duty to uncover the deficiencies and challenges of the society to their students but that they cannot lead a revolution against their own societies. They must therefore tread a fine line between educating their pupils about the social woes of their society without actively encouraging them to go against it. Because Sarhan believed that Egypt had chosen democracy out of conviction that it was a system which allowed for the most freedoms for its individuals and the best chances for development, it was the duty of Egyptian schools to "support the foundations of a democratic life in its utmost form."[155] Similar sentiments are expressed by Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal in his writings on rural education. Jalal suggests that "if the purpose of education is to advance the society, it must instill the democratic spirit of cooperation and solidarity through the training of students in self-governance, something that can easily be achieved in rural societies given their high sense of community." [156] Teachers' magazines such as *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* echoed similar ideas where, as early as 1925, pedagogues like Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf insisted that "a democratic life requires that citizens fulfil their duty so that they may participate intelligently in governing their country through elections. This is why countries have made primary education mandatory and free."[157] Even *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami*, the voice of compulsory and elementary teachers, emphasized the importance of independence and free thought.[158]

[155] Al-Dimirdash Sarhan, "Al-Madrasa fi Mujtama' Dimuqrati," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 4, no. 4 (May 1952): 38.
[156] Jalal, "Ahdaf al-Ta'lim al-Rifi," 15.
[157] Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf, "Al-Ittijahat al-Haditha fi-l-Tarbiya," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 3, no. 3 (June 1925): 220.
[158] Hasan al-Najjar Ahmad, "Kayf Nu'awwid al-Tifl al-Thiqa bi-l-Nafs," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 1, no. 4 (December 1933): 17–18.

Finally, it is important to note that even Egypt's most famous and impactful pedagogical debate of the 20th century which took place in the 1940s, the so-called quantity vs. quality debate ('*kamm*' vs. '*kayf*') between Taha Husayn and Isma'il al-Qabbani, was in reality a debate where both parties represented two different versions of democratic progressivism. Accounts of this debate have varied over the years with scholars in the 1960s suggesting that it was a black and white affair between those who championed free education (Husayn) and thereby sided with democracy and social justice; and those who focused on quality (al-Qabbani) enabling reactionary and outdated British policies and serving the bourgeois class and the feudal system.[159] The main instigator for this debate was the proposal to abolish primary school fees in 1944. As discussed in the previous chapter, this decision resulted in overcrowding in the more superior primary classrooms thereby contributing to a decline in quality as per progressive standards. This is why for Ism'ail al-Qabbani and others, the elementary and primary systems should have been unified first to avoid the mass migration to the superior primary system. The scholarship on the debate has come a long way since the 1960s. The pioneering revisions of Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali and 'Abd al-Salam Dayf demonstrate, through an analysis of al-Qabbani's writings from 1925 until 1958, how this debate actually reflected his genuine commitment to social justice, contrary to popular misrepresentations. Misako Ikeda, Barak Salmoni and more recently Hussam Ahmed have presented this debate in a more nuanced light, and indeed there is no need to reproduce here what they have already shown.[160] It

[159] See 'Awad, "Husan Tarawuda al-Istiʿmar fi Hayatuna al-Thaqafiyya" ; and 'Ali, *Nazarat fi-l-Fikr al-Tarbawi*.

[160] ʿAli, *Nazarat fi-l-Fikr al-Tarbawi*; Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 539–42; Ikeda, "Sociopolitical Debates in Late Parliamentary Egypt, 1944-1952"; Ikeda, "Toward the Democratization of Public Education:The Debate in Late Parliamentary Egypt, 1943–52"; Ahmed, *The Last Nahdawi: Taha Hussein and Institution Building in Egypt*; Ahmed, "Statecraft and Institution Building between Two Revolutions: Taha Hussein and Egypt's Road to Independence (1919–1952)."

suffices to add, however, that both sides of the debate were supportive of the democratic project but that each envisioned a different method of application.

Given al-Qabbani's commitment to the 'Middle Ground Psychology' project, his vision for a sound democratic society was predicated on the provision and the prioritization of quality *basic* education above all else, whereas for Husayn, higher education was the key. Al-Qabbani famously stated that the purpose of primary schooling was not professional training but to prepare young children for a future in society so that even if they never transitioned to secondary or higher education, they could nevertheless participate in public life: "Does it suit us to have a worker or a farmer who understands nothing in life's matters except things related to his profession? (…) Would this person be a productive member of society? (…) Can he participate in social action? Can he cast his vote in a democratic election?"[161] It was not just necessary to focus on primary/elementary levels because it was often the only accessible one to students, but because progressives believed childhood to be fundamental for the development of the cognitive skills, such as critical thinking, self-reliance and independent thought, upon which a true democratic project rested. This position was also consistent with al-Qabbani's own personal experience: In 1906, eight-year-old al-Qabbani caught the attention of then Minister of Public Instruction Sa'd Zaghlul when he visited the local *kuttab* where al-Qabbani was enrolled. Impressed with the child's intelligence, Zaghlul proceeded to wage a battle against Douglas Dunlop and his primary school fee policy, by insisting that al-Qabbani receive a scholarship to the primary schools, an incident often considered as the first 'break' with British educational policy.[162] It is thanks to this opportunity from a young age, that al-Qabbani became al-Qabbani. In other words, his intellectual awakening could

[161] Al-Qabbani, *Dirasat fi Tanzim Al-Ta'lim*, 17.
[162] Muhammad Sa'id Qadri, "Isma'il al-Qabbani," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 16, no. 1 (November 1963): 3–4.

be traced back to this early experience. By contrast, Husayn believed that it was through higher education that an intellectual awakening and by extension a true democracy, could thrive:

> Only those who have received solid higher education—and managed, thanks to this kind of education, to understand the many groups of people and appreciate their different needs and aspirations—can imagine what elementary education should be like and how to disseminate it correctly. The basis of education in Egypt is not elementary education. Higher education is the basis of the entire Egyptian awakening *[assas al-nahda al-misriyya kuliha]*. A wise educational policy is one that ensures the university is created first and before anything else. A democracy that stands on elementary education alone is standing on a weak basis and cannot deal with the calamities and the horrors which face political systems.[163]

This position is aligned with Husayn's personal educational experience: A graduate of al-Azhar whose perceived intellectual awakening primarily took place when he enrolled at the public Egyptian University—as an adult.

Both Husayn and al-Qabbani were in fact democratic progressives. The heated debate between them was fought over questions of practical applicability and not necessarily ideology.

In light of this ubiquitous pro-democratic context in which even ardent archnemeses were ideologically related, it is plausible to speculate that many practicing teachers placed themselves somewhere on the 'progressive spectrum.' It is also likely that they embraced progressivism precisely because of its promise to secure independence and strengthen Egypt's nascent and frail democracy. Continued British presence and control over other aspects of Egyptian life and their political meddling and interference, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, created a sense of urgency and a need for action. While different segments of Egyptian society negotiated the contours and forms of such action, it is likely that practicing teachers embraced progressive education as an adequate response. Admittedly, this was not a response that advocated for a revolutionary overthrow of the

[163] Taha Husayn quoted in Ahmed, *The Last Nahdawi: Taha Hussein and Institution Building in Egypt*, 123.

regimes in place, but it was one which teachers believed would safeguard the principles of democracy and social justice in the long run.

Progressivism may not have spread as psychologist-educators hoped it would, but unlike other geographical contexts, the reasons for its failures were symbolically tied to the legacy of the British occupation. This meant that progressivism was something of an uncharted territory: few had tried it, its allure and reputation were intact, and the few who implemented its methods provided rave reviews in the press. In the eyes of many pedagogues who—due to their circumstances—were able to implement progressive practices, the methods were actually effective. The few testimonials we have of practicing teachers which are featured in this chapter suggest a certainty in their efficacy and a belief that they were indeed more suitable for children. In other words, the enthusiasm and seriousness encountered in the writings of practicing teachers and in the accounts left behind by certain headmasters suggest that that progressive methods were believed to be useful and effective. Many teachers believed that they actually worked.

Moreover, progressivism allowed educators to project their democratic aspirations onto the immediate setting of the school. As demonstrated in the above examples, classrooms were the first democracy laboratories as teachers experimented with different progressive methods with the ultimate purpose of teaching children how to become active independent-minded and conscientious democratic citizens. As Salmoni notes:

> when Egyptian educators spoke of schools where open elections produced responsive leaders who cooperated with fellow students through delegation of responsibility—under the watchful yet unintrusive eye of the school administration—it is likely that they were conveying a clear counter-image (and remedy) to the socio-political malaise confronting their Egypt.[164]

Progressivism gave Egyptian teachers a recipe for the resistance of continued British control by providing a language and practices of resistance and continued hope for a better

[164] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 485–86.

future. It therefore lends itself to being the most likely pedagogical model attracting young practicing teachers.

Conclusions

This chapter traces the lived experiences of practicing teachers and the experimental ethos which encouraged them to test out theories and meticulously develop best practices in their classrooms. These experiments—whether within experimental classrooms or elsewhere—were sometimes used by the Ministry of Public Instruction to reform certain aspects of the education system. While experimental classrooms presented the ideal breeding ground for such endeavours, teachers contended with their limited resources and their own enthusiasm to deliver similar outcomes elsewhere. Through such experiments, they were able to test out theoretical ideas, but also chart new avenues for Egyptian pedagogy.

Embedded within the experimental ethos was the notion of practical applicability on a larger scale. Despite the limited accounts we have of the life and professional experiences of practicing teachers, there are plausible reasons to believe that progressive education was popular as it promised to hold the keys to a true democratic society and to bring Egypt's colonial reality to an end. As such, it was a good thing for children *as well as* for democracy as a whole. Was there also something in it for the teaching profession? The following chapters will take a closer look teachers' syndicates and associations to understand how these groups viewed 'Middle Ground' progressive education and how they navigated its principles and embedded them in their activism and advocacy work.

Part III

Tanzim (Organizing)

In the following two chapters we travel with Egyptian teachers beyond school walls. Up until this stage, the dissertation has followed psychologist-educators at their teacher training institutions and practicing teachers within the confines of their classrooms suggesting that progressive education was a thread that wove the educational ecosystem together during the first half of the 20th century. In its attempt to follow teachers more closely, the following chapters will focus on education professionals within their syndicates, associations and organizations to explore their forms of public engagement and their activism. It takes a closer look at the ways in which teachers organized, the issues that they most closely aligned with and the groups that they came to form as well as their relationship to the press.

Chapter 5
Teachers' Associations: Between Progressive Education and Economic Rights

R.E.: There was no teachers' syndicate, so we decided to establish a syndicate for teacher graduates of universities, and I became the deputy president of this syndicate."

- E., R. A. Interview by Rania Abdel Rahman. Transcript, 1 August 2004, Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women's Oral History, The Women and Memory Forum

Yuda' siruhu fi ad'af khalquh (His secrets are placed in the weakest creatures/ It is possible for even a mouse to confer benefits on a lion)

-Egyptian Proverb

When Rania 'Abdel Rahman interviewed veteran teacher R. E. in 2004, E. told her the story of how together with a group of male colleagues they set up the first teachers' syndicate. She specified that it was a syndicate for teachers who were holders of a dual degree, one from an Egyptian university and the other from a teacher training college. In her account, R.E. suggests that no such syndicate existed prior to her group's initiative and that it was established only *after* Taha Husayn became Minister of Education in 1951. R.E.'s narrative is confusing because she seems to conflate *Rabitat al-Mudarisin al-Jam'iyyin* (The Collective of Teacher graduates of the University)—which, as the name suggests was the syndicate for dual degree holders—with the official teachers syndicate, *Niqabat al-Mihan al-Ta'limiyya* (The Syndicate of Teaching Professions) which was set up by Husayn through Law No. 129 of 1951. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, a teachers' syndicate already existed prior to 1951.

R. E.'s account—with its discrepancies—remains important. It is perhaps thanks to these oral history narratives' 'spaces of conflation' that one can discern official narratives and their counterparts. E.'s account fleshes out the breadth of teacher engagement during the

first half of the 20th century and gestures to the important yet inaccurate trope that prior to 1952, Egyptian teachers were not organized, or only weakly so.

The purpose of this chapter is to revisit teacher activism in Egypt between 1922 and 1956 in an attempt to understand the teaching profession on its own terms. I explore the forms of teacher activism by taking a deeper look at the different teachers' associations which were active during the first half of the twentieth century. Away from a purely nationalist lens, the chapter tries to understand why and how teachers were engaged in such activities and what these groups can tell us about the broader social history of Egypt. I make two main arguments: Contrary to what is assumed by the literature, the teaching profession, much like many other professions of the time, was very active. Teachers came together within associations, syndicates and coalitions to discuss their grievances and also ponder the state of education in the country. The field of teacher activism was dynamic and extremely diverse with some groups acting more as think tanks or policy advisers and others taking it upon themselves to defend the socio-economic rights of their profession. However, from the most conservative of these groups to the more progressive, they all shared an interest in progressive education making a glue which gave the profession as a whole a kind of shared identity, despite the vast differences in economic status, geographical location and institutional background.

Second, I argue that the supposed dichotomy implied by some historians between teachers' call for progressive education, on the one hand, and the call for their own economic and social rights, on the other, should be questioned. This is because as an intellectual force, progressive education allowed teachers to call for the amelioration of their material conditions and social standing. It also allowed them to make demands about the right to participate in the decision-making process within the Ministry of Education.

Progressive education was a vehicle for teachers to expresses an aspiration to become part of a more prestigious profession, one in which monetary and social compensation would be higher. It was appealing because it allowed teachers, even the less confrontational ones, to make clear demands to improve their conditions, and shape their own professional and personal future.

Which associations?

Elsewhere in this dissertation, I have argued that a long line of historians since the 1980s have relegated teachers to the broader umbrella of nationalist politics believing that "educational thinkers in Egypt (...) saw themselves as integrally involved in cultivating the nation, setting national priorities, and crafting the tone and substance of nationalist thought."[1]

It certainly also does not help that some of the main founders of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 including Hasan al-Banna, were teachers. In other words, if teachers were not nationalists, they were most certainly Islamists, or they were a combination of both. Yet, with its exploration of teachers as nothing more than closeted nationalists or Islamists, the literature has failed to capture the often-complicated motivations behind teacher activism, the nuances of their individual and collective aspirations and the richness of their own thinking.

In *The Striking Cabbies of Cairo and Other Stories*, John Chalcraft argues that

> [c]abdrivers, dyers, masons, tailors, and weavers and their changing guilds, and their petitions, protests, and strikes are almost completely invisible in the existing historiography, in spite of their importance for economy, society, and even the rise of nationalism. History "from below" has commonly been ceded to studies of the rise of a working class selling its labor power for wages to capital.[2]

[1] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 190.
[2] John T. Chalcraft, *The Striking Cabbies of Cairo and Other Stories: Crafts and Guilds in Egypt, 1863-1914*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 1.

In other words, these groups have been "overshadowed by the story of the rise of a labour movement apparently based among industrial wageworkers."[3]

Teachers are obviously not part of the groups that would normally feature in such works. They are neither part of the industrial working class, nor do they belong to the class of craftsmen, and only seem to share with the latter the absence from the literature. In fact, some would consider it a stretch to count them among the struggling subaltern classes by virtue of their adherence to Egypt's growing middle class, or the *effendiyy*a. However, it is perhaps precisely because of their middle class *effendiyya* status that teachers have been overlooked by the literature. Their middle class-ness has blurred the boundaries between them and other professional groups, rendering them only noteworthy as part of a larger nationalist, or Islamist movement or as members of the various political groups and parties emerging in the wake of 1919. Absent from historical exploration is the question of their social engagement as a profession during the first half of the 20th century.

The only work to have attempted to explore teacher activism during this time period is Iman Farag's "Éduquer les éducateurs: les revues pédagogiques égyptiennes de l'entre-deux-guerres" and there is hardly anything else about the matter. This chapter builds on Farag's work by taking a deeper look at the histories of these associations.

Aborted Representation: Niqabat al-Mu'allimin Egypt's official teacher syndicate

As one might expect, teachers had an official syndicate prior to 1951 called *Niqabat al-Mu'allimin* (The Teachers Syndicate) but curiously enough there are only a few traces of it in the literature. It is therefore quite legitimate to have questions about its

[3] Ibid., 5.

popularity among teachers, if some of them, like E.R., suggest that no such institution existed prior to her involvement in the establishment of *Rabitat al-Mudarisin al-Jam'iyyin*.

The oldest account we have of the syndicate exists in the *al-Kitab al-Dhahabi li-Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-Uliya* which, as mentioned in Chapter 1 was published in 1935. This publication commemorating fifty years since the graduation of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*'s first cohort, contains a chapter describing the history of *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin*, (The Teachers Association), an association of graduates of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*. In it, a pedagogue by the name of 'Abd al-Hamid Hamdi Mursi, mentions the syndicate as the *Jam'iyya*'s legitimate predecessor. Hamdi, himself a member of the *Jam'iyya*, who was employed by the Ministry of Public Instruction and who was part of organizing committees for both the conference on Teaching the Social Sciences and the Sciences, suggests that the syndicate was born out of the 1919 moment: "Teachers had to show solidarity with their *Umma* (nation). The common pain united all teachers irrespective of their alma mater and so they came together under one leadership that would represent them. This is how the Teachers Syndicate was born in 1920."[4] Mursi goes on to suggest that the syndicate eventually succumbed to political in-fighting and that different factions joined different political parties thereby making it impossible to project a united front. As a result, Mursi claims, different factions within the syndicate began to organize themselves to "safeguard their own interest" along institutional lines.

Mursi's account of the syndicate's trajectory from an initially unifying force to a fragmented body is commensurate with that provided by historian Iman Farag.
Farag has noted that teachers' modes of 'organizing' were based not according to their positions or institutions but according to their alma mater. "An Egyptian teacher was, for example, an alumnus of "*Dar al-'Ulum* or *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* and remained so

[4] Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin, *Al-Kitab al-Dhahabi*, 250.

throughout his life."[5] Furthermore, Farag notes that teachers associations were quite fragmented only sharing in common a belief that the social status they were given was incommensurate with the immense societal role they were meant to be playing. Given the deep fragmentation exposed in the last two chapters as a result of Egypt's two-tier education system, it is understandable why one would come to such conclusions. After all, if teachers differentiated between each other on the basis of whether they were graduates of the *Awwali* Teacher Training colleges or the prestigious *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* or *Madrasat al-Mu'alli*min, it is no surprise that this type of discrimination would continue beyond their training into their professional lives and would become a dividing force within teacher associations. It would be perfectly predictable for such difference to resurface within the context of a syndicate housing the entire spectrum of the teaching profession. But to succumb to such an interpretation is to fail to understand what really happened between members of the syndicate or to assess the real dynamics at the root of its operation.

Rather than adopt a sort of 'rise and fall' narrative about the Teachers' Syndicate, it is far more useful, following the footsteps of Iman Farag, to dissect *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin*, the syndicate's only publication for clues.

Farag maintains that the publication only lasted between 1923 and 1925 but there are issues of the magazine from 1926, which are not housed at Dar al-Kutub (The National Library) suggesting that the publication may have been in print far longer than previously anticipated by historians. By following the magazine's trajectory from 1923 to 1926, a slightly more nuanced image of the syndicate's innerworkings can be drawn at least regarding its initial years of operation. This image, of course, contains traces of

[5] Iman Farag, "Éduquer Les Éducateurs".

fragmentation and of in-fighting but it also contains a story of commitment, professional comradery and solidarity, and a dedication to progressive education.

Furthermore, unlike what has been suggested by Farag, Mursi and others, it seems that the syndicate had a much longer lifespan than previously believed. Indeed, the syndicate was mentioned as late as 1944, at the conference organized by *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* on Teaching the Social Sciences by a teacher named Fahmi Manqarius from the Heliopolis Secondary School. Commenting on a lecture about how to broaden teachers' horizons, Manqarius suggested that the Ministry of Public Instructions should make books and other publications accessible to teachers at subsidized prices since it was *they* who were most in need of such materials. He noted that *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* or the Teachers' Syndicate should be responsible for paying the difference in price.[6] Even though we have no tangible clues about the longevity of the syndicate's activities, Manqarius' assertion suggest that it may have at least been operational until the early 1940s.

Seeing as the syndicate's initial aim was to unify the teaching profession under one umbrella, one should expect its composition to reflect a certain degree of diversity. By looking at the professional affiliations of its members throughout the issues of *Sahifat al Mu'allimin* this assumption can be confirmed. The magazine's editorial board from 1923 to 1925 primarily consisted of secondary schoolteachers, Dar al-'Ulum and Madrasat al-Mu'allimin instructors and headmasters and indeed these groups were the most prolific. However, the magazine often included articles by compulsory and elementary schoolteachers suggesting that the syndicate was open to all teachers irrespective of their background.[7] To become a member of the syndicate, teachers had to submit an application

[6] Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha, *Mu'tamar Tadris al-Mawad al-Ijtima'iyya* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1945), 197.

[7] See for example Bassyuni Sarhan, "Al-Tariqa al-'Amaliyya li Tahfiz al-Qur'an fi-l-Madaris al-'Awwaliyya," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 6 (December 1924): 532–35.

which required approval from the syndicate's elected board and pay the membership fees. While this may have hindered the acceptance of many teachers, the board often admitted new members whose background did not 'fit the profile'. For example, on May 28, 1924, the board decided to admit a teacher by the name of Ghubrial Zaki into the syndicate even though he only had a primary school degree which he had obtained in 1901.[8] However, Zaki had spent more than ten years working as a teacher in various public schools. Even though some members such as Muhammad Rif'at were opposed to this motion (citing the need to secure the interests of teachers who held more advanced degrees and the need to ensure high standards within the syndicate) the board eventually agreed to admit Zaki into the syndicate. An interesting thing to note here is that in Rif'at's objection, he explicitly stated that Zaki was wrong not to have joined the syndicate when it was first founded. This suggests that the membership process grew increasingly more difficult with time and that in its initial years, the syndicate was indeed accepting of teachers from different backgrounds.

In its fifth year (October 1923-June 1924), the syndicate published an appendix with its annual budget in *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* which included a commentary about membership fees and suggested that there were 558 registered members but that only 350 of them had actually paid their membership dues in full or in part.[9] This number represents only about 11% of the total number of Egyptian teachers in the academic year 1923/1924 which was around 4832.[10] One should therefore assume that the majority of Egyptian teachers were not part of the syndicate that was meant to represent them, at least not in its fifth year.

[8] "Mahadir al-Jalasat," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 4 (July-August 1924): 398.
[9] "Taqrir 'An Halat al-Niqaba al-Maliya fi Sanatha al-Khamisa," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 4 (August 1924): Appendix.
[10] The total number of teachers can be calculated by adding the number of elementary, primary and secondary schoolteachers for the academic year 1923/1924 which can be found in Abu Khuldun Sati' al-Husari, *Hawliyyat Al-Thaqafa al-'Arabiyya*, 372, 374, 376.

The syndicate was also inclusive of Coptic teachers. Coptic names appear regularly as authors or within the syndicate's minutes of meetings. The syndicate even defended the case of a group of Coptic teachers when they presented a petition appealing to obtain equal job opportunities with their Muslim counterparts in April 1924.[11] At the time, the board approved the petition and promised to take up their case with the Ministry of Public Instruction. But while there was significant Coptic representation, women were absent from the picture. This is to say that although the syndicate did attempt to unify the teaching profession by blurring the lines between the more distinguished teacher training colleges and the lower ranking ones, opening itself up to the Coptic minority, and insisting—at least initially—to admit teachers from all walks of life, there were serious limits to its inclusivity policy.

In order to better understand how the syndicate attempted to represent the profession despite such shortcomings, it is useful to take a closer look at its recorded activities. While Iman Farag primarily relies on the magazines from the years 1923 and 1925 to analyze the syndicate's work, I find the issues from the year 1924 (the magazine's second year and the syndicate's fifth year) to be the most interesting. This because these regularly included the board's minutes of meeting thereby allowing us to see how the structure operated in practice. The board seems to have wanted to transparently transmit its innerworkings to a wider public, at least throughout the year 1924. The other important observation here is that the syndicate operated on a democratic basis insofar as it regularly held board elections.

In her work, Iman Farag cites excerpts from the magazine's January 1925 issue which announces a "new era" for the syndicate:

> The syndicate was originally established to fill a gap: to unify teachers' efforts for the elevation of education and its men to the standards desired by the nation. But

[11] "Mahadir al-Jalasat," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 3 (May-June 1924): 296.

> the syndicate has strayed from its original course as some members view it as a means to pursue material demands going as far as to think that this was the syndicate's only aim and judging it inept when it failed to deliver on its material promises.[12]

By looking through the meeting proceedings, it becomes quickly evident that the essence of this emergency board election was to vote for internal restructuring and a re-orientation of the syndicate's mission statement. The members voted to re-affirm the syndicate's prioritization of educational reform over the economic concerns of teachers. Farag misdates this article suggesting it appeared in an issue of the magazine in 1923 when in fact it appeared in January 1925 following the election of a new board. By analyzing the activities of the syndicate in the year preceding the new board election, i.e., the year 1924, we can better understand the reasons behind this strong support for the adoption of an 'academic' mission instead of a 'corporatist' one—a tension that Farag suggests was part and parcel of the syndicate since its establishment.

The year 1924 began on what appeared to be a positive note: After the election of Sa'd Zaghlul, leader of the *Wafd* movement-turned political party and the political figurehead of the 1919 Revolution to the Egyptian parliament, a delegation from the syndicate's board went to meet him to extend its warmest wishes on behalf of the teaching profession.[13] But more importantly, things seemed to be looking up because the president of the syndicate, Muhammad 'Atif Barakat, was appointed Under Secretary of Education at around the same time, which ignited hope among members that their institution would now receive the support it needed and manage to survive.[14] This is because the syndicate was actually on the brink of closing down. In the meeting between Barakat and the members of the board, the board highlighted the plight of the syndicate and the fact that it

[12] "Niqabat al-Mu'allimin fi 'Ahdaha al-Jadid," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 3, no. 1 (January-February): 102..
[13] "Majlis Niqabat al-Mu'Allimin fi Hadrat al-Ra'is al-Jalil," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 1 (January-February 1924): 3–6.
[14] Barakat was elected as President of the syndicate multiple times according to the letters exchanged between him and the members of the board in the first issue of *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* in 1924.

almost had to 'close its doors' had it not been for the perseverance of a few brave members.[15]

But hopes were quickly dashed when the syndicate received the President's resignation letter in February 1924, in which he cited the conflict of interest between his new position at the Ministry and his role as President of the syndicate as a cause for his resignation.[16] The syndicate held new board elections on the 4th of April to replace Barakat. Shaykh Abu-l-Fath al-Fiqi won the election and became the new President. Fiqi was already the editor in chief of *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* at the time, and he was also a member of parliament representing the *Wafd* party.[17] After the board elections, the syndicate sent a note to Sa'd Zaghlul, as speaker of parliament informing him of the election outcomes and affirming the syndicate's support for Zaghlul and its trust that he could deliver complete independence for Egypt and the Sudan.[18]

Al-Fiqi's position as a Wafidist explains why Farag suggests that the syndicate was initially established by *Wafd* supporters. It also explains her second assumption that later political rivalries between the *Wafd* and its opponents led to the disintegration of the syndicate whose members split along party lines. There is however very little evidence for this second assumption, especially given the fact that we have no record of when the syndicate actually ceased to exist.

One of the most important reoccurring issues discussed in the syndicate meetings during the year 1924 was a decree issued by the Cabinet of Ministers that same year

[15] "Fi Niqabat al-Mu'allimin Bayn al-Naqib wa 'A'da' al-Niqaba," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 1 (January-February 1924): 6–8.
[16] Muhammad 'Atif Barakat, "Niqabat al-Mu'allimin Istiqalat al-Naqib wa Qubuliha," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 1 (January-February 1924): 9–10.
[17] Fiqi graduated from Dar al-'Ulum in 1907. He obtained a degree in Education from the University of Redding in 1910 and taught at various primary schools before becoming inspector of elementary. A short biography of his life and accomplishments can be found in Muhammad 'Abd al-Jawad, *Taqwim Dar al-'Ulum*, 160–61.
[18] "Niqabat al-Mu'allimin bi Misr," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 2 (March-April 1924): 95–96.

concerning the amelioration of teachers' conditions. In February 1924, even prior to the new board elections, the syndicate decided to appoint a sub-committee encompassing Ahmad Fahmi al-'Amrusi, Ahmad Abu-l-Fath, Qustandi Tiufanidis, Abu-l-Fath al-Fiqi, Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi, Hasan Khalifa, Sayyid Yusuf, Ahmad 'Abd al-Hadi Sabiq in order to meet the Under Secretary of Education and plead that the decree be executed. Three weeks later, on the 19th of March, the board discussed the outcomes of a meeting between the Under Secretary and a few members of the syndicate including Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani, Ahmad 'Abd al-Hadi Sabiq, Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi, and Hasan Khalifa which primarily centred around a sum of 20,000 LE that was promised to teachers by the Cabinet of Ministers.[19] While acknowledging the role that teachers played in society and their value to the government, the Undersecretary highlighted the many impediments to making public education available to all children.

> We cannot expand elementary education without also expanding primary, secondary and technical schools. (…) This great project will inevitably lead to a rise in the education budget so that in a few years most current teachers will have been promoted to the higher echelons of the teaching profession. We must therefore increase the number of inspectors, primary and secondary headmasters and establish new positions.[20]

In other words, while the amount of 20,000 LE was indeed available, it was up to the Ministry to spend it as it saw fit in light of its own priorities and its newly embarked upon education expansion project. The Under Secretary acknowledged that the 20,000 LE alone were by no means sufficient for this ambitious project to come to light since the education costs per child exceeded 20 LE per annum and those eligible for schooling exceeded two million children. However, precisely because the majority of the education budget was already allocated to teachers' salaries, there was no need to give teachers an even greater

[19] "Suwwar Mahadir Jalasant Majlis al-Niqaba min 11 Fibrayir Sanat 1924," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 2 (March-April): 192–93.
[20] "Niqabat al-Mu'allimin wa Wakil al-Ma'arif," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 2 (March-April 1924): 198.

share. Teachers were being asked to be patient and sacrifice in order for the government to honour its commitments to the expansion of public education as stipulated by the 1923 constitution.[21]

By May 1924, the Ministry seems to have warmed to the idea of granting teachers the coveted 20,000 LE. In a board meeting, Fiqi announced that during a private conversation, the Under Secretary had not only agreed to give teachers the sum but that he had also proposed that the syndicate prepare a list of those most worthy of obtaining a raise and submit it to the Ministry. The board thought it more appropriate to leave such decisions to the "judgement of the Ministry."[22] But by June 1924, there was still no word from the Ministry on the matter prompting one syndicate member, Muhammad Hasan, to send a letter to the board demanding an official intervention on the part of the syndicate to inquire further and investigate.[23] The following two board meetings did not reach quorum and were therefore cancelled. In an unexpected turn of events, the Under Secretary and former president of the syndicate passed away in September 1924.[24]

On September 21st, the Minister of Public Instruction sent a letter to the Ministry of Finance confirming his approval to spend the 20, 000 LE to improve the conditions of teachers. Two days later, the board convened to discuss the matter deciding that the President of the syndicate should meet both officials and ask that the payments be made as quickly as possible.[25] The board also decided to send a notice to all members asking for their financial support and reminding them to pay their dues. Coptic discrimination in the hiring process was also brought up, an agenda item that had been tabled at the preceding meeting on September 18th, but the matter was tabled once again and does not seem to

[21] Ibid., 199.
[22] "Mahadir al-Jalasat," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 4 (August 1924): 399.
[23] "Mahadir al-Jalasat," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 5 (October 1924): 503.
[24] "Mahadir al-Jalasat," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 6 (December 1924): 605.
[25] Ibid., 604.

have been discussed again throughout the remaining months of the year. In fact, this was the last substantive meeting held in 1924. The rest of the sessions were either cancelled, or only discussed logistical matters. By December 3rd, members were decrying the state of affairs, the syndicate's poor financial conditions and the performance of its leadership. As a final attempt to salvage the situation, the secretary was asked to convene a general meeting with representatives from every school in Cairo to discuss the conditions of the syndicate and propose strategies to move forward. It was decided that a new board would be elected should this final attempt fail to save the syndicate. Yet, in the next available entry from December 18th, we learn that Qustandi Tiufandis, Sayyid Yusuf, Mahumd Murad, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf, Ahmad Farid al-Miliji and Muhammad Hasan decided to hold new board elections implying that all attempts to save the sinking ship had in fact failed.

The next available information we have about the syndicate is from the infamous January 1925 issue of the magazine, which declares the beginning of "a new era" following the new board elections as the syndicate was now going to recalibrate and focus more forcefully on academic research and on the improvement of education as a whole. The new board was comprised of Muhammad Labib al-Kirdani as President, a young Isma'il al-Qabbani, Muhammad Amin Lutfi, Sayyid Yusuf, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf, Muhammad Rif'at, Ahmad Abu-l-Fath, 'Abd al-Hamid Hasan, Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi, Muhammad Hasan, 'Ali Mustafa Musharrafa, Mahmud Yusuf, Muhammad Badran, Mustafa 'Amir and Amin Mursi Qandil.

At first sight, the declarations made in the January 1925 issue of *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* could be considered quite damning since it highlights the voice of a syndicate anxiously trying to distance itself from an economic rights-based platform. But there are important issues to consider before jumping to such a conclusion.

First, I note that seven of the new board members, Muhammad Labib al-Kirdani, Sayyid Yusuf, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahid Khallaf, Muhammad Rif‘at, Ahmad Abu-l-Fath, Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi and Muhammad Hasan were in fact members of the old board. More importantly, four of those seven were part of the sub-committee that was asked to negotiate the question of teachers’ salaries with the Under Secretary in early 1924. One of these members, Muhammad Hasan, was the one who brought up the issue of the 20,000 LE at the June 1924 meeting insisting that the board inquire about the state of affairs. Ironically, once the decision was taken to hold new board elections in late 1924 and early 1925, Hasan joined a smaller committee that was established to “encourage members of the syndicate to adopt its new orientation.”[26] In other words, even though Hasan was a fervent advocate of amelioration of teachers’ financial conditions, he wholeheartedly embraced the syndicate’s new focus on education reform, policy advising and academic research. The avowed reason for the deteriorating conditions of the syndicate was that “it had lost sight of its original purpose” by focusing on teachers’ material conditions. But if this was the case, why were supporters of this economic rights-based platform not sidelined when the new board was elected in early 1925? And why would some of them embrace this new policy with open arms?

A closer examination of the conversations taking place within the board in the lead up to this declaration reveals that the adoption of more ‘academic’ interests (particularly in issues related to progressive education) was viewed as a means to make the case for teachers’ socio-economic rights more convincingly. In the July-August 1924 issue of *Sahifat al-Mu‘allimin*, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahid Khallaf who was part of the 1924 board, the interim committee to promote the syndicate’s new policies, and the new 1925 board, suggested that the syndicate must take a new direction by prioritizing education

[26] “Jalasat Niqabat al-Mu‘allimin,” *Sahifat al-Mu‘allimin* 3, no. 1 (January 1925): 104.

reform through pro-active initiatives such as the organization of a public conference on education. Khallaf's view was that the syndicate only took up issues that were proposed to the board. The impact of such a 'reactive' position was two-fold: A bad reputation among teachers who did not see it as a true defender of their cause and interests, and a bad reputation among the wider public who viewed it as inept.[27] "I do not need to point out," Khallaf wrote, "what kind of an impact such a conference would have on the wider public in terms of increasing their respect for teachers and their appreciation of (…) the role they play. The sense that teachers are sacrificing for the greater good will increase their support base, it will strengthen their cause and will convince the public of the righteousness and fairness of their material demands."[28] In other words, if teachers were to pro-actively position themselves as supporters of sound education, they could gain the respect of the wider public thereby increasing the chances of successfully campaigning for higher salaries.

As stated in the introduction, to assume a certain dichotomy between those who positioned themselves more closely with the academic exploration of progressive education and activist groups calling for socio-economic rights is simplistic. In reality, progressive education allowed teachers to call for the amelioration of their material conditions and social standing. This is because progressive education, by design, necessitates enormous pedagogical skills, specialised training, and technical knowledge. A progressive pedagogue was required to master a whole new skill set such as foundational knowledge of child psychology, creativity, facilitation skills, theatrical skills, persuasion skills and above all patience. This in turn, allowed pedagogues across the board to call for higher social standing and a more serious acknowledgement of their skills and importance

[27] Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf, "Iqtirah," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 4 (August 1924): 368.
[28] Ibid., 369.

to society. It is therefore no wonder that *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* very often featured articles about progressive education even in 1924, at the height of the syndicate's campaign for higher salaries and better compensation.[29]

Finally, it is important to consider other factors which may have led to the syndicate's re-calibration in 1925 such as, for example, the fact that starting June 1924, the President of the syndicate Al-Fiqi was very often absent. He missed a total of seven out of thirteen syndicate meetings between June and December. He was completely absent in July and again starting October 17th until the end of the year. This, coupled with the board's inability to reach quorum on a number of occasions, must have been particularly frustrating for the syndicate members, especially given the syndicate's financial difficulties and its inability to collect sufficient membership fees as illustrated in the meeting minutes. There is also something to be said about Khallaf's assessment concerning the reactive nature of the board. By following the minutes of meetings from the year 1924 more closely, it becomes blatantly evident that the board never proposed an agenda point of its own. All agenda items were always proposed by the members of the syndicate. This lack of a genuine leadership seems to have played a role in tarnishing the President and Secretary's image vis-à-vis the other syndicate members, though it speaks to the inclusivity and openness of the 1924 board. When the new board was elected, *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* largely ceased to publish the minutes though there are some exceptions such as in the first issue of the following year 1926. Despite their scarcity, the minutes of the new board's meetings are just as telling insofar as they demonstrate a distinct agenda centred around research and policy. We find in them a strong emphasis on the principles of

[29] 'Abd al-Hamid Hasan, "Tariqat Montessori fi-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 3, no. 1 (February 1925): 5–14. Mustafa 'Amir, "Al-Ta'lim al-'Ibtida'i wa-l-Thanawi wa Darurat 'Islahihim," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 2 (April 1924): 166–70. Mahmud Hamza, "Al-Al'ab wa-l-Malahi," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 3 (May-June 1924): 211–17. 'Abd al-Hamid Hasan, "Al-La'bu wa Atharihi fi-l-Tarbiya," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 3 (May-June 1924): 231–40. A. D., "Al-Tarbiya al-Haditha," *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* 2, no. 4 (August 1924): 343–35.

progressive education in its broad understanding, a trend that was already present in previous issues of the magazine.

Non-Inclusive Teachers Associations: how graduates of teacher training colleges created their own cliques

With the multiplication of teacher training institutions during the first half of the 20th century some teachers began to organise themselves along institutional lines. The trajectories of three such groups, *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin* (The Teachers Association), *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya* (The Association of Graduates of the Institute of Education) and the group of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* students behind *al-Jaras* magazine are explored below.

Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin

Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin was born out of a moment of dissatisfaction with the Teachers' Syndicate, in particular its reactive position and its tendency to cater to competing factions.[30] 'Abd al-Hamid Hamdi Mursi's account about the beginnings of the *Jam'iyya* dates its origins to a general meeting taking place on 5 November 1930 in which a new committee was elected called *Jama'at Khariji al-Mu'allimin al-'Uliya* (The Collective of MU graduates). The original aim of this new group was to "elevate and improve the cultural/intellectual and material conditions of MU graduates" and to raise their awareness through the organization of lectures, conferences and the establishment of institutions of higher learning.[31]

[30] Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin, *al-Kitab al-Dhahabi,* 250.
[31] Ibid., 251–52.

It is interesting to see that much like the syndicate, the *Jam'iyya*, a more narrow and insular teachers association that was ordained with royal patronage, connected the question of financial conditions to a larger project of cultural and educational improvement. It should be noted that their economic dissatisfaction was exacerbated by the fact that many were unable to find employment given the economic recession of the early 1930s.
Much like the syndicate, the *Jam'iyya* was closed off to women, but this unsurprising given that *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* was a male only institution.

The first board elections took place in June 1931, and twelve board members were elected. In subsequent years, the association grew from an initial group of 35 members to 245 by 1933 after targeted attempts to unify different groups of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* graduates under one umbrella. By 1934, the association's membership had grown to 634 members and in 1937 there were 1087 members.
In terms of its activities, the association was dedicated to the organization of monthly lectures at different social clubs and in hotels.[32] Its members also organized a set of academic conferences such as a "Day of the Teacher Conference" in 1933 which featured lectures by Egypt's top pedagogues on questions of curriculum and lesson planning, the social life of the school, and appropriate study times.[33] The conference was said to be so successful that the Ministry of Education took its recommendations into consideration by adopting school activities as part of the curriculum reform project of the same year. In 1934, *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin* organized a second conference, opting to focus less on education reform and more on teachers conditions by highlighting the plight of unemployed graduates of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*. The choice of conference topics

[32] Ibid., 252–55.
[33] Prominent members of the Teachers syndicate like Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf and Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani presented papers at the conferences organized by *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin* suggesting a certain level of collaboration between both institutions.

reflects the group's initial mission statement which sought both to defend the rights of teachers and to promote sound educational policy and the latest insights from pedagogy studies.

One of the group's most lasting impacts was the publication of a journal titled *Sahifat al-'Ulum* (The Sciences). The magazine was initially published by another group called the Graduates of European Universities, but when they ran out of funds and failed to obtain the necessary publishing permits, they gave up the rights of their magazine to the *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin*, thereby granting them access to an already existing, albeit extremely small, readership. With a new editorial board in place, the magazine began to focus more closely on educational themes alongside 'scientific' ones. In its new quest to publish educational content, the magazine came to focus on progressive pedagogy much like the majority of educational journals. It is therefore not surprising that the Ministry of Public Instruction became among the magazine's biggest clients ordering copies for its school libraries (806 copies to be precise in the early 1930s), thereby resulting in a rapid increase in readership.

The association's publications also included a yearly book and in 1935, it published the famous Golden Book documenting the history of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*—one of the most important records we have about this institution.

Some of the magazine's most famous editors were active in other institutions such as the Teachers' Syndicate and *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, the Egyptian branch of the International New Education Fellowship. Sayyid Basha served as the Secretary of the *Rabita* in the 1940s, and was also the editor of *al-'Ulum* at around the same time. While Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf who served as editor in chief of *al-'Ulum* in the late 1930s, was also a board member of the Teachers' Syndicate in 1924 and 1925 and a member of the *Rabita* in the mid 1940s. This not only suggests a certain level of

collaboration between these institutions but also marks the development of a very clear and active network of pedagogues with a distinct identity, a set of practices and specific platforms.

From an operational perspective, the association established different sub-committees including a committee for the defence of the interests of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* graduates and a committee for the establishment of an official club for its members. The association was also often solicited to comment on important policy issues by the Ministry. For example, in 1939, the Ministry sent the *Jam'iyya* a list of questions to determine the ways in which a meaningful reform of Egypt's two-tier primary school system could be carried out. The association's response was subsequently published in the January 1939 issue of *al-'Ulum*.[34]

At this point it would be useful to address the elephant in the room: the *Jam'iyya's* royal patronage. Out of all the teachers' organisations explored in this chapter, this is the only one that had such close ties to the Monarchy. Prince 'Umar Tusun donated a collection of his writings to the club's library and issues of al-'Ulum were sent to members of the Royal family.[35] In May/June 1938 the magazine ran a special issue on Iran in honour of Princess Fawziyya's engagement to Muhammad Reza Pahlavi. Such a connection to the royal family undoubtedly bestowed a special status upon the association and must have facilitated its operation and its access to funding. At the same time, it could also be argued that royal patronage made it more difficult for the association to adopt critical positions vis-à-vis the monarchy or even the Ministry of Public Instruction. As such, despite its mission to safeguard the rights of graduates of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin*,

[34] Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin, "Muzakira 'an al-Ta'lim al-'Awwali," *Al-'Ulum* 6, no. 1, 2 (February 1939): 19–23.
[35] The May and June 1938 issue of the magazine were sent to King Fu'ad as announced in the January/February issue of 1939.

there is little evidence to suggest that the association was able to articulate a fully independent voice. Having said this, it should also be noted that traces of the Jam'iyya are few and far between. Apart from the account we have by Mursi in the Golden Book which was published by the association itself no records of their meetings, decisions and activities are available. Even al-'Ulum, the association's only publication contains very little about its innerworkings, unlike *Sahifat al-Mu'allimin* thereby making it difficult to assess its role for the teachers' movement as a whole. With the eventual closure of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin* and its replacement by *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, members of the *Jam'iyya* made changes to the association's bylaws thereby allowing all teachers with a higher degree to join it.[36] While ostensibly more inclusive, such changes still excluded large groups of teachers, especially graduates of elementary teacher training colleges. With *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*'s rise to prominence, new groups of teachers associations emerged around this more attractive institution thereby slowly rendering the *Jam'iyya* less influential.[37]

The Birth of a network around Ma'had al-Tarbiya

In a building overlooking the iconic Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo lies the office of *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-*Tarbiya. It is a beautiful Art Deco Style building, with a grand yet slightly dilapidated entrance. I first visited the office in September 2019 following an invitation by the association's current President, Dr. Muhammad Hassuna to look at the first issue of *Sahifat al-Ta'lim* which was published in 1948. Unfortunately, the President maintained that their office did not house an archive or records about the organization's past—except for their existing collection of *Sahifat al-Ta'lim*, the

[36] 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi Li Sanat 1949,* 205.
[37] As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the Jam'iyya was able to survive until the 1960s.

organization's most famous publication. Despite this lack of resources, it is nevertheless possible to reconstruct the general contours of this association and understand the influence it had on the wider public.

Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya was first established in 1943 by Isma'il al-Qabbani and a larger group of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* graduates and instructors. By 1948, the group had over 500 members and was presided over by a board of trustees which also oversaw its financial status. By 1951, it had changed its name to *Rabitat Khariji Ma'ahid al-Tarbiya* (The Association of Teacher Training College Graduates) suggesting that the group expanded its membership base to include graduates of other teacher training colleges, including the training colleges for female teachers coinciding with the new law governing teachers association (Law No. 219 of 1951). As such, as of the early 1950, women became active contributors to the magazine.

The original aim of the group as stated in the first issue of *Sahifat al-Ta'lim* was to "spread and promote the principles of modern education and to implement them within Egyptian teacher training institutions."[38] Its members also aimed to strengthen the bonds between the institution's graduates and to elevate their status.[39] In adopting such aims, the group mirrored many of the ideals of its predecessor such as *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin* and the Teachers' Syndicate, as it theoretically sought to combine a commitment to the economic betterment of the teaching profession with a research/policy advisory role. However, even though the group officially listed the betterment of teachers as a top priority, most of its activities centred around research, academic debates and questions of pedagogy. For example, the group's main activities encompassed research projects that were periodically

[38] Isma'il Al-Qabbani, "Taqdim Al-Sahifa," *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* 1, no. 1 (June 1948): 1–3.
[39] 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi li Sanat 1949*, 207.

presented to the board, public lectures about education, academic conferences on education and pedagogy, the publication of the group's research and lectures.[40]

One of the group's most famous contributions, a mere two years after its establishment, was the organization of the famous conference on the Methods of New Education in 1945. Similarly, its members hosted a conference on education policy as well as countless lectures on the latest trends in pedagogy studies. Finally, the group's most lasting legacy by far was the publication of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, one of the longest running and most influential journals on education and pedagogy studies from the mid twentieth century until at least the 1970s.

Though this list of activities may be impressive, it is noteworthy that only one of the group's activities, "social events and excursions for teachers" can actually be counted as an activity that was directly aimed at teachers.

But one should not underestimate the role that the group played in advocating for teachers' rights, even if this was done indirectly. For example, as mentioned earlier, at the 1945 conference on 'The Methods of New Education', virtually all participants insisted that the teaching profession was crucial for the implementation of progressive practices. This is why the conference called on the Ministry of Education to increase teachers' salaries precisely because they were seen to be embarking on a new kind of education, one that required additional and more sophisticated skills.[41]

Conference attendees were also critical of what they deemed to be 'unfair' working conditions and a very heavy workload as stated in previous chapters. "Teachers are worn out by the current workload, one conference paper insisted, "the teacher is exhausted when he has to face overcrowding in the classrooms, he is exhausted when he is expected to

[40] Ibid.
[41] Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya, *Mu'tamar Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 55, 85, 89.

maintain order, he is exhausted when he teaches, he is exhausted when he grades written assignments."[42] If under progressive principles teachers were expected to offer high quality and innovative teaching, it follows that their workload should be reduced. This is why the 1945 conference attendees made specific demands on the Ministry to reduce the seventy-hour work week to give teachers some breathing ground and grant them the right to "enjoy life."

The 1945 conference also allowed teachers to put forward a third important demand: the right to participate in the decision-making process within the Ministry of Education. The fact that progressive pedagogy centred children's needs, their learning abilities and the uniqueness of each and every individual child and given that teachers were the ones in closest proximity to school students, it followed that they should be given a voice in matters such as curriculum design, school management and larger educational policy. "Those who occupy the highest positions within the Ministry of Education" exclaimed one of the conference papers, "are unfortunately far from the educational field (…) the only one who truly feels the weight of fifty students in one classroom is the teacher."[43] The attendees also maintained that the further one got from the classroom, the less one could understand the problems of education. This is perhaps why the conference emphasized the importance of decentralization and, more importantly, increased power for teachers in the decision-making process.

Thus, even though *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya* was initially only accessible to the graduates of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and primarily focused on activities that were academic and cultural in nature, that fact that progressive issues were high on its agenda, actually

[42] Ibid., 168.
[43] Ibid., 53.

allowed its members to indirectly make the case for the amelioration of teachers' economic conditions and their participation in the decision-making process.

The Association of Ma'had al-Tarbiya Students

Orbitting the *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya* was *Rabitat Talabat Ma'had al-Tarbiya* (The Association of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* Students) which was comprised of the institution's student body. The only traces we have of this group can be found through their magazine, *al-Jaras*, which was mentioned in previous chapters.

Al-Jaras was a student-led satirical magazine that often poked fun at the insititute's teaching staff. Very few issues of the magazine are available at Dar al-Kutub, but one in particular from April 1948 is significant insofar as it lists the members of the association which published it. Through this list, we can infer that the association was comprised of both students and teachers at the instiute. For example, the President of the association during the academic year 1947-1948 was Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz, one of the leading psychologist-educators mentioned in Part I of this dissertation, and the secretary was none other than Yusuf al-'Afifi, the artist teacher and colleague of Habib Jurji.[44] The board also included former students such as Zaki Salih, Hasan Musa and Hasan Rashad but the vast majority of its members were students. As one might expect from a student group, the team behind *al-Jaras* was quite active. The association was divided into different committess including a committee to run the activities of their social club, a sports committee, a committee for lectures and debates, one for excursions, the sciences and the arts and of course the team behind the magazine itself.

Although this collective was not primarily occupied with teachers' socio-economic rights per se, it did pave the way for a more open and critical engagement with authority.

[44] Al-Qusi, "Risalat al-Ma'had."

Through *al-Jaras* and its satirical and often-times critical approach to *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, its teachers, curriculum and its environment, the student body was able to renegotiate and redefine the contours of the conversation around progressive education, break taboos, and create an atmosphere of debate. Teachers were never above crtique and the magazine often featured its fair share of negative portrayals. For example, the April 1948 issue of the magazine included a highly critical piece by a student named Riyad Habashi in which he listed all of the grievances he had against the instiution—suggesting that he was one among many unhappy students and calling himself a revolutionary. At the same time, the magazine often featured satirical accounts poking fun at progressive methods themselves, calling them into question or lamenting the inconsistencies between the progressive methods they were promised and the outdated methods they were subjected to.

Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha: *The Egyptian branch of the New Education Fellowship*

The office of *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*.(The New Education Fellowship) lies in the *same building* as *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, at number 13 Tahrir Square. The office has been closed for a while and attempts to meet with its current president, Professor Muhammad al-Sakran, have never materialized. When I visited the building in 2019, there was a lock on the door. But *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* was once a bustling space of conversation, conviviality, and activism—even as late as the 1980s and 1990s.[45] Despite its long history, the association has rarely been mentioned in the literature and there are noticeable silences about its role, origins and raison d'être. The association does not even feature in Iman Farag's work on teachers' associations.

[45] According to Professor Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali who was the President of the fellowship in the 1980s, the association hosted important political and pedagogical debates until the 1990s.

Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha has been mentioned on multiple occasions in this dissertation, by contrast, for good reason: Not only were many psychologist-educators among its active members, but the fellowship also contributed to the debate on progressive education through its activities including the multiple conferences, round table discussions and policy papers it organized and produced. It is therefore worth providing a more detailed portrayal of one of the most influential and active teachers associations of the first half of the twentieth century in Egypt and show how it related to and interacted with the rest of the teaching profession.

Depending on which source one consults, there are two different founding dates for the *Rabita*. In the Ministry of Public Instruction's seminal publication *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi Sanat 1948* (The Cultural Record of the Year 1948), we find an entry about the association which dates its establishment to 1936.[46] However, the records of the New Education Fellowship (NEF), the mother organization based in London, and the official correspondence it houses with members of the Egyptian group, indicate that the group was actually founded in February of 1938.[47] Writing to the London headquarters on the 28th of January 1939, the then treasurer of the Egyptian branch Kamil al-Nahhas, confirms this date in a letter concerning subscription fees.[48] This is not to suggest that Egyptian pedagogues were not in contact with the fellowship before that. In fact, as far back as 1929, they participated at the annual conferences hosted by the international Fellowship. For example, the August 1930 special issue of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* was entirely dedicated to a report authored by Saniyya 'Azmi the headmaster of the teacher training

[46] 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi li Sanat 1949*, 214.
[47] The New Education Fellowship was founded in 1921 by Beatrice Ensor, an educator and founder of a progressive school in London. The Fellowship published one of the most important progressive journals "The New Era" (now New Era in Education). It is now called the World Education Fellowship.
[48] "Egypt Section Correspondence" Institute of Education, University of London, DC/WEFII/94.

institution for female teachers in Bulaq about two international conferences she had attended in 1929 organized by the NEF. As the official Egyptian representative sent by Ministry of Public Instruction to the NEF's conferences in Sinior Denmark and in Geneva, Switzerland, 'Azmi provided a 100-page report on the papers, conference talks, workshops, fairs and ideas she had encountered during her travels.[49] 'Azmi even accepted an invitation by Édouard Claparède to explore the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute during her stay, having already met the famed child psychologist during his 1928 sojourn in Cairo.[50]

In February of 1938, upon hearing that an Egyptian branch had been established, the London headquarters sent a letter to 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, with the list of Egyptian participants from the 1936 NEF World Conference in Cheltenham so that they may be invited to join the newly established Cairo-based association. The conference in 1936 was attended by twenty Egyptian participants including Ihsan al-Qusi, Asma' Fahmi, 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Majid, Muhammad Khlafalah, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, and Muhammad Husayn al-Makhzanji, to name a few; i.e., some of the most prominent names from the field.[51]

Both of these episodes suggest that there were multiple connections between Egyptian pedagogues and the NEF prior to the establishment of the Egyptian branch which may explain why the entry in the *Sijil Thaqafi* dated its establishment earlier than 1938.

In any case, the records of the NEF and indeed the correspondence with members of the Egyptian branch, most notably 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi, provide interesting insights into the branch's modest beginnings.

[49] Saniyya 'Azmi, "Mu'tamar al-'Ittihad al-'Alami li-l-Tarbiya al-Haditha," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha,* no. Mulhaq (August 1930): 4–95.
[50] Ibid., 94–95.
[51] Egypt El Koussy Correspondence", Institute of Education, University of London, DC/WEFII/93.

Four months after its establishment, al-Qusi corresponded with the secretary of the NEF Miss Claire Soper, informing her that the group had been formed. "We have formed our own group, but being ambitious and optimistic, I was waiting for it to grow into a section. We have now about 48 members who paid their annual subscription of P.T. 50 or 10/- [piasters]. We have our own constitution and have had a few very successful meetings."[52] With the letter, al-Qusi enclosed a copy of the *Rabita'*s constitution which was approved at a general meeting on March 2nd, 1938. The constitution stated that the Egyptian branch's main objective was "to pursue in Egypt the general aims of the Fellowship with due consideration to the needs of the Country and its local conditions."[53] It also stipulated that the section would seek to pursue such aims "by all possible means" including the establishment of a specialized research council to study educational problems and discuss them in special periodical meetings, public lectures, conferences, the publication of research, the establishment of an educational reference library and cooperation with like-minded organizations.[54]

The articles of the constitution suggest that the *Rabita* was built on a rather democratic internal structure. The president and vice-president were elected each year at the general meeting. Presiding over the operations and direction of the *Rabita* was an executive committee which consisted of the president, the vice-president and ten members elected for two years at the annual general meeting. Both the secretary and the treasurer were elected by the executive committee. Ordinary members of the branch were able to participate in the decision-making process through a number of mechanisms. For example, members could submit their suggestions for the general meeting to the executive

[52] "Egypt El Koussy Correspondence", DC/WEFII/93.

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.

committee which then reserved the right to include them on the agenda. However, if ten members submitted a suggestion, it would automatically be adopted on the agenda. Members could also call for an irregular general meeting if at least one quarter of them sent a written application to the executive committee for this purpose. The resolutions of the general meeting were decided by a majority of the votes of those present at the meeting which could not be held unless at least half of the members residing in Cairo were in attendance. Otherwise, the meeting would be postponed for fourteen days and would be held irrespective of the number of attendees provided that only the agenda of the postponed meeting would be discussed. In theory, such procedures ensured that the voice of ordinary members was heard. The mechanisms also provided a system of checks and balances to safeguard members from an autocratic executive committee. A case in point is the clause pertaining to changes to the constitution, which stipulated that this was indeed possible if two thirds of the branch's members approved them.

It is impossible to say for certain, in the absence of further supporting evidence, whether the Egyptian branch was indeed considered to be democratic by its own members.

We do know however, that the branch frequently changed its leadership.

The correspondence between the Egyptian branch and the international headquarters reveals a turn-over at the level of the executive committee. Writing in 1951, J.B. Annand, the International Secretary welcomed the branch's new secretary, Yusuf Salah al-Din Qutb "I learn from Dr. El Koussy today that you have taken on the work of Secretary of the N.E.F in Egypt. I hasten to welcome you and send you my best wishes in your work."[55]

In 1942, the president of the Rabita was Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani, by 1948 it was Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid.

[55] "Egypt Section Correspondence", DC/WEFII/94.

While the Rabita's structures seem to have been democratic, a question remains about its accessibility to a wider teacher audience. To become a member, a person had to be nominated by two members of the branch and approved by the executive committee. In addition, there was an obligatory annual membership subscription of P.T. 50. It is therefore safe to assume that access to the Rabita may not have been easy for all teachers—especially those outside of Cairo since the branch's headquarters were in the capital.

In spite of this, the Egyptian branch's membership grew substantially in the decades following its establishment. As seen in the early letters sent by al-Qusi to the headquarters in London, in its initial month, the branch was able to garner the support of 48 members. By 1942, when the *Rabita* hosted the conference on Teaching the Science the number had grown to 73 and by 1949 it had reached 80.[56]

Speaking to an international audience at the NEF's Paris conference in 1946, al-Qusi explained that many members of the association were also part of the Ministry of Public Instruction. But the branch seems to have been a magnet for instructors of *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* as well as the crème de la crème of pedagogical thought in Egypt.[57]

In a letter addressed to the Cairo branch, the NEF inquired about *Ma'had al-Tarbiya's* NEF membership status, since, as it appears from the correspondence, the Institute had become a member of the NEF in1940 but had failed to pay its membership dues for the year 1945.[58] This of course suggests that there were major overlaps between the Institute and the Egyptian section, a fact that was also confirmed by al-Qusi in 1946: "The relationship between the fellowship and the Institute is almost accidental because the

[56] See Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha, *Mu'tamar Tadris al-'Ulum* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1942), 204;. Al 'Idara al-'Amma li-l-Thaqafa Wizarat al-Ma'arif al-'Umumiyya, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi Sanat 1948* , 214.
[57] See page 348 of this dissertation for a full list of members of the *Rabita*.(Appendix 2).
[58] "Egypt Section Correspondence", DC/WEFII/94.

president of the fellowship happens to also be the director of the Institute. You must also realize that the Institute is overseeing pedagogical experiments in its experimental schools. There is therefore a strong alignment between the goals of the Institute and those of the Fellowship."[59]

However, it would be a mistake to understand the association as a homogenous entity. Naturally, with its strong connections to *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* it is safe to assume that there was an inclination to adopt 'Middle Ground Psychology' on a wider scale among the branch's membership. Yet, it is also true that there was diversity in terms of interests and focus. As discussed in previous chapters, supporters of the Child Art movement and the more utopian leaning progressive ideals were represented in the fellowship through Habib Jurji, Ahmad Shafiq Zahir and Yusuf al-'Afifi, the three art teachers with connections to Egypt's surrealist movement. The initial founders *of Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* included psychoanalysts such as al-Qusi, Sumayya Fahmi, a student of Jean Piaget, Amir Buqtur, a student of John Dewey, graduates of Dar al-'Ulum, and a renowned British progressive pedagogue named Constance Bloor, among others.

But the diversity sometimes went beyond mere interest or emphasis. A case in point are the diametrically opposing positions that different presidents of the *Rabita* adopted at the time of the famous *kamm* vs *kayf* debate regarding the elimination of primary school fees. While Abu Hadid, was in favour of the removal of said fees, Al-Kirdani was against it. In the public debate between Husayn and al-Qabbani, Abu Hadid sided with Husayn while al-Kirdani sided with al-Qabbani.[60] And while the majority of progressive educators supported al-Qabbani's position, the fact that different presidents of the *Rabita* had

[59] Asma' Fahmi and 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Qusi, *Taqrir Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha bi Baris Aghustus 1946* (Cairo: Matba'at Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyya, 1946), 58.

[60] Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam Al-Kirdani, "Darurat Rasm al-Khittat wa Tabayyun al-Ahdaf," *Al-Thaqafa* 6, no. 308 (November 1944): 2007–8. Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid, "Ma'ali Wazir al-Ma'arif," *Al-Thaqafa* 8, no. 404 (September 1946): 1011–12; Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam Al-Kirdani, "Tawhid Al-Marhala al-'Ula fi-l-Ta'lim," *Al-Thaqafa* 8, no. 388 (1946): 1–3.

different views on the matter, stands as a testament to the diversity which existed within the Egyptian branch and is in some sense reminiscent of the sorts of dynamics one found in the progressive movements elsewhere around the world. That is, members of the Rabita seem to have held divergent views much like the rest of the international progressive movement.

The association's membership was also diverse in terms of its composition. In a predominantly male organization, there were nevertheless fifteen female members in 1942, among them, Asma' Fahmi, Ihsan al-Qusi, Emily 'Abd al-Mesih, Sumayya Fahmi, 'A'isha al-Kashif and Constance Bloor. In this sense, one can safely say that *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* gave women the right to vote before the Egyptian state did. By 1948, three female members of the *Rabita* were part of its executive committee and thereby part of the decision making-process.

Female members of the association often held important leadership positions in the field of education: Asma' Fahmi was the Undersecretary of the Institute of Education for Female Teachers and Constance Bloor, Ihsan al-Qusi and Sumayya Fahmi were also teacher trainers. They were also prolific writers since they often contributed to the press and authored extensive teacher training manuals and psychology textbooks and translated important international works into Arabic.[61]

Most importantly, while access to the association may not have been easy for all teachers, the *Rabita* seems to have at least embraced diverse religious affiliations and nationalities judging by the list of members from 1942.

Identity politics aside, this relative diversity seems to have also been reflected in the association's impressively active record, at least in its first decades.

[61] Constance Bloor, *Temperament: A Survey of Psychological Theories* (London: Methuen & Co, 1928); Fahmi and Al-Qusi, *Taqrir Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-HadithabBi Baris Aghustus 1946*; 'Abd al-Mesih et al., *Tarbiyat al-Tifl wa Mabadi' 'Ilm al-Nafs*.

In April 1939, about a year after the establishment of the *Rabita,* ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi submitted a short report about its activities in its first year to the headquarters in London. “Last year we had six general and public meetings and seven committee meetings in all,” he wrote enthusiastically.[62] As mentioned in preceding chapters, one of the first activities the *Rabita* organized was the lecture series on examinations, which the members deemed an urgent matter. “The main problem was to discuss the locally acute problem of examinations. A number of meetings were held; some in the form of symposia and some in the form of lectures. One of the meetings was attended by an audience of over 600 (…) A report about all this work on examinations written in Arabic is now in the press and will appear in the course of a week”, al Qusi wrote.”[63]

In July of 1939, the Egyptian branch organized a summer course for teachers and headmasters at a secondary school in Alexandria. While membership to the Egyptian branch may not have been accessible to all, this particular event specifically targeted teachers from all over the country and included a participant from Sudan. There are two contradictory accounts of the number of attendees at this conference. In the correspondence with the London office in 1939, al-Qusi suggests that the total number members who regularly attended the summer course was 25. Later, in 1946 while speaking at the NEF conference in Paris, he suggested the number was closer to 40. All attendees were required to pay a participation fee which covered their boarding expenses and those of the speakers. With this conference, the *Rabita* utilized its strong connection to the Ministry of Public Instruction and to *Ma‘had al-Tarbiya* and solicited the participation of some of Egypt’s most important pedagogical speakers including Al-Qusi, al-Qabbani, Kirdani, Khaki and Kamil al-Nahhas and Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahid Khallaf. The course

[62] “Egypt El-Koussy Correspondence”, DC/WEFII/93
[63] Ibid.

also included some excursions as well as two 'public teas' for publicity purposes that were open to the public, one of which was delivered by al-Qabbani on European progressive schools.

The course itself was divided into three parts: The first two, titled "The Trends of Modern Education" and "The Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence" were perfectly in line with standard (middle ground) progressive interests. As for the third part, which dealt with "problems of local interest", it focused on 'moral education', language teaching in Egypt, the adaptation of education to local environments, and the raison d'être of the modern Egyptian teacher. The choice of topics combined the usual tropes of progressivism with what pedagogues deemed to be the most pressing issues to the Egyptian context. It is also interesting to note that conference attendees spoke of hosting another such conference in Aswan at a later stage as well as the possibility of opening an Alexandrian branch of the NEF. However, there are no records to support that either endeavour ever took place suggesting that these initiatives were most likely shelved.

Nevertheless, in the years following 1939, the Cairo-branch of the NEF remained extremely active. It hosted four additional conferences including the one on the rural schools mentioned in Chapter 4, the conferences on teaching the Social Sciences and the Sciences, and a conference on education policy in Egypt which was hosted in collaboration with *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin* (The Teachers Association).[64]

The available evidence suggests that serious efforts were made to enable attendance at these conferences and to make them accessible. For example, the report on the conference on Teaching the Sciences includes the initial call for participation which was circulated by the *Rabita* among teachers and via pedagogical institutions. The call openly stated that the *Rabita* "was happy to receive as many participants from the teaching

[64] Fahmi and Al-Qusi, *Taqrir Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha bi Baris Aghustus 1946*, 56.

profession as possible whether as conference attendees or speakers" and that interested participants should contact the President of the *Rabita* at the latest by October of 1941.[65] To make matters easy for teachers travelling from outside of Cairo, the *Rabita* obtained the support of the Ministry of Public Instruction, which in turn requested that the railway authority decrease its fees for teachers wishing to participate at the conference.[66] The Ministry also offered its boarding facilities at *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* and *Ma'had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu'allimat* to the conference attendees. In its quest to attract as many participants as possible and keeping in line with its goals to connect with like-minded peers in the region, the *Rabita* extended its conference invitation to a range of neighbouring countries and while the many Arab institutions expressed a great deal of enthusiasm (according to the conference report), it was only the government of Iraq, which actually sent participants to the conference. One of them was the president of the Iraq-based branch of the NEF, Dr. Fadil Jimali. The other, was none other than Matta Akrawi, the Head of the Teachers College of Baghdad, and better known as the co-author of the famous 1949 report "Education in the Arab Countries of the Near East" alongside Rodrick Matthews.[67] Finally, the *Rabita* made sure to host the conference during the mid-year break in February thereby ensuring that the highest possible number of teachers could be in attendance. As a result, the conference was attended by over 600 participants from diverse backgrounds as mentioned in previous chapters.

In addition to technical and academic conferences, the *Rabita* was also engaged in pedagogical experiments, in true progressive fashion. For example, Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid oversaw the Model Village school in al-Manayil following the publication of the report on village schools. Similarly, al-Qusi oversaw a basic literacy experiment and

[65] Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha, *Mu'tamar Tadris al-'Ulum*, h.
[66] Ibid., i.
[67] Ibid., k.

published the results in a report which was later used in the development of children's textbooks.[68]

Part of the *Rabita*'s role was also to conduct research following a research agenda that was set based on day-to-day pedagogical problems faced by the Ministry of Public Instruction. This again suggests that the relationship between the Ministry and the *Rabita* was close, as the *Rabita*'s perspectives often weighed in on new policies. As such, the *Rabita* presented a number of reports and studies on questions of illiteracy eradication, the unification of compulsory and primary schools, the ideal age for foreign language instruction etc.[69] The *Rabita* also hosted a number of public lectures and regularly invited guest speakers to lecture its own members, including a few notable international speakers such as Hamley, whom we encountered in previous chapters.

Judging by the kinds of activities carried out by the *Rabita*, one can safely suggest that it intervened on multiple levels: it co-developed education policies, it was a research center in its own right, and it operated as a training/pedagogical collective for Egypt's teaching profession. Absent from this list is—of course—the question of collective organizing, salaries, and professional advancement. Indeed, the *Rabita* was not a teachers' syndicate nor did it officially seek to safeguard the socio-economic rights of Egyptian teachers. Neither its internal constitution nor the list of activities suggests that members of the *Rabita* were necessarily preoccupied with such questions.

In this sense, we are reminded of *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* which was published by the Teachers College at the American University in Cairo and co-edited by Amir Buqtur. Despite the similarities in their names, the journal and the association actually have little to do with each other (apart from the fact that Amir Buqtur was also a

[68] Fahmi and Al-Qusi, *Taqrir Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha bi Baris Aghustus 1946*, 57.
[69] Ibid.

member of the *Rabita*). *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* in fact pre-dated the *Rabita* as it was first published in 1927.[70]

In its October 1938 issue, its editors expressed their "delight and admiration for the newly established *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*" and hoped that "it would inaugurate a new era in Egypt" and would extend its influence beyond the Ministry's walls."[71]

While historians have had little to say about the *Rabita*, Iman Farag's work has had much to say about the journal carrying the almost identical name, and not all of it is positive. Farag implies that the *Majalla* was part of an American "Middle East policy" which sought to introduce 'foreign' principles of progressive education as part of a larger cultural/colonial project. More importantly, Farag maintains that the journal was devoid of any reference to teachers' grievances or socio-economic concerns and that it neglected local institutions: "It is not surprising that whole sections of the Egyptian education system—Azhari education, compulsory education, (…) are simply non-existent in the journal."[72] However, such claims are exaggerated since the magazine did engage with all of these topics, albeit not as rigorously or frequently as other issues.[73]

The reason I bring up Farag's critique is because judging from the above, it would be easy to come to similar conclusions about the *Rabita* and not just because of their similar names. Indeed, one could easily imagine a critique which would invoke both the connection to Western centres of influence as well as the lack of interest in teachers' socio-economic rights as damning evidence for an elitist or even colonial approach to teacher activism. After all, the *Rabita* was the official Egyptian branch of the NEF, it

[70] "Journal of Modern Education: 1927-196." n.d. Report. The American University in Cairo. The American University in Cairo Biographical Files Collection: Amir Boktor Files. University Archives, Rare Books and Special Collections Library, American University in Cairo.
[71] "Al-'Am al-Thani 'Ashr," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* 12, no. 1 (October 1938): 1–3.
[72] Farag, "Éduquer Les Éducateurs."
[73] Musa, *Al-Fihris al-ʿAm min Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*, 208–10, 222.

regularly corresponded with the London headquarters sharing updates, ideas and notes and its members paid an annual membership fee.

However, such critiques would be misguided at best: This is because the *Rabita* was the embodiment of a local expression of progressivism. Not only did its members share very local concerns (examinations, the unification of the two-tier primary school system etc), but its relationship to the London headquarters disrupts the centre-periphery model. In its correspondence with the NEF, the Cairo branch was independent, perceptive and assertive. The correspondence suggests that the Cairo branch saw itself as an equal to other branches around the world, often giving advice, sharing their own expertise and contesting certain suggestions.

A particular set of letters sent between the Cairo branch and the London office in 1946 is quite telling in its demonstration of the former's independence from the latter. At the end of August 1946, Miss Soper sent al-Qusi a letter informing him that whilst in Paris to attend the 'Federation Internationale des Professeur de l'Enseignment Secondaire', a certain Mr. A. Gossart was in attendance, the Director of the French Lycee in Cairo. Miss Soper suggests that "at one point, the New Education Fellowship was mentioned, but Mr. Gossart said he had never heard of the Fellowship." She went on to say that she had of course written to him and sent him materials but that perhaps al-Qusi should "see that he is invited to some of the Fellowship's meetings in Egypt? He may not, of course, be interested in our aims, but he should at least be aware of our existence."[74]

In his response, which came later in the year, al-Qusi was very categoric about the matter: "I received your letter and found out that Mr. Gossart is known to some of our members. Most of our meetings are carried out in the Arabic language which makes it difficult for

[74] Koussy Correspondence, DC/WEFII/93.

him to follow."[75] Through this response, al-Qusi certainly never directly declined the proposal to invite Mr. Gossart, he nevertheless made it clear that it was not a top priority. He also made it clear that the Egyptian branch was not willing to change the language of communication for the headmaster of the French Lycee.

Al-Qussi followed these lines with an announcement that he had written a 38-page report about the NEF annual meeting in Paris in 1946 in Arabic and that the report (cited on multiple occasions in this chapter) would be published shortly.

Following al-Qusi's response, Ms. Soper was quick to respond by thanking al-Qussi for his letter and by congratulating him about the report requesting that he send a copy of parts of it, should they ever be translated into English. There was no further mention of Mr. Gossart.

The Egyptian branch's independence can also be substantiated through the infrequent number of letters to and from the London office and delays in the Egyptian response to the London headquarters. Moreover, the letters usually centred around organizational and logistical matters, not content. From the payment of subscription and membership fees, to requests to send particular journals etc, it seems as though there was in fact little interreference in matters of content, pedagogical thought or directives. In most cases, the Egyptian branch would report back about its activities in one or two letters per year detailing its accomplishments and its plans for the future. It is also worth mentioning that the Egyptian branch was originally formed organically from within an initial group of progressive pedagogues following a few years of contact with the NEF. In other words, although, of course, the Egyptian branch was part of the larger international network, it was very much driven by a locally informed group of progressives.

[75] Ibid.

The Underdog: Ittihad Niqabat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami

As the name of this union suggests, Ittihad *Niqabat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* (The Union of 'Ilzami Teachers Syndicates) was made up of compulsory and elementary schoolteachers, the most forgotten and neglected group within the teaching profession. If we take a closer look at the sources previously consulted by Iman Farag, specifically the issues of *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami*, we can paint a more detailed picture of this group, its motivations and its relationship to progressive pedagogy.

Farag's account is critical to understand the activities of the union and the battle it waged for fair salaries. It also goes into great detail to show their tools of resistance against a Ministerial policy imposing a particular dress code on the compulsory teachers in an effort to demarcate—and alienate—them from the more 'elite' teaching profession and thereby continue to deny them adequate monetary compensation.

Unlike Farag, however, I focus not just on the issues of its first year 1933-1934, but I also explore later issues from the years 1934-1935 which demonstrate that the union evolved over a two-year period in its thinking and tactics in ways that mirrored the trajectory of the Teachers' Syndicate between the years 1923 to 1925. Much like the syndicate, the union started off by setting a clear economic rights-based agenda and demanding increased salaries. In parallel, senior members of the union also valued the importance of propagating progressive principles. But after the group faced major repercussions precisely for being vocal about their demands, the union adopted an appeasing discourse, one that favoured the advocacy of pedagogy studies, progressivism and the importance of knowledge production through their magazine as means of achieving their end goals and improving their conditions. While one could undoubtedly view the *Ittihad* as the closest to a working-class union, its trajectory was not so different from the other groups illustrated in this chapter.

Although groups of compulsory and elementary schoolteachers were formed in the wake of the 1919 Revolution, the Union of Compulsory Teachers' Syndicates was actually established in the late 1920s by a group of teachers from Upper Egypt, more specifically Shaykh Ramadan Yusuf and his colleagues from the town of Girga.[76] When the Ministry of Public Instruction embarked on its education reform project in 1925, it established approximately 700 new compulsory schools.[77] But the salaries awarded to teachers at these schools were unsatisfactory since they were inferior to those offered to primary schoolteachers. But more importantly, they were even lower than those offered to teachers employed by elementary schools which were established prior to the new reform project. In other words, even within the same track, there were marked differences in monetary compensation. It was precisely this unfair salary scheme that became the catalyst for the creation of the union, and the unification of all previous individual and collective efforts to improve elementary teachers' conditions since 1919.

While Farag suggests that the union seemed relatively cohesive, it was also highly decentralized. This is because it was made up of sub-syndicates spread across the country. In almost every issue of *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* there was a section titled *Shu'un al-Niqabat* (The Affairs of the Syndicates) featuring news and reports from various elementary teachers syndicates around Egypt. From the latest local election to news about syndicate events, this section demonstrates the wide-ranging influence and its impact. It also speaks to its diversity and levels of activism among its membership.
Despite this decentralization, the group seems to have had a strong leadership embodied in its board of directors which was elected to centrally run the union on a nation-wide basis.

[76] "Juhud Rijal al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami li Tahsin Halahum," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 1, no. 4 (December 1933): 22–23.
[77] "Juhud Rijal al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami li Tahsin Halahum," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 1, no. 3 (November 1933): 17–19.

The years in which the magazine was published, i.e. between 1933 and 1935, the union's president was Shaykh Ramadan Yusuf. Because he was also the founder of the group in the late 1920s, it is safe to assume that his presidency predates the magazine. The secretary of the union was Sultan Salam, who occupied the post until his passing in June of 1935. He was subsequently succeeded by Ahmad Basyuni. [78] As for the Undersecretary of the union, the post was occupied by Muhammad Jawhari 'Amir, a man whose role in the union lasted well into the 1950s.[79]

Even though new members were periodically elected to the board of directors, the enduring presidency of Ramadan Yusuf throughout the three years suggest a continuity in leadership. The union's magazine contains the minutes of some of the board's meetings thereby giving us a sense of the kinds of questions that were frequently discussed by its members. For example, at the board of directors' meeting in early July 1935, the heads of the sub-syndicates put forward a number of suggestions that were first articulated during the preceding general assembly meeting. These suggestions include one proposed by the Girga syndicate to amend the penalties on school absences. Another suggestion put forward by the Cairo-based compulsory teachers syndicate was to organize a public conference on compulsory education. As for the Fayyum syndicate, it put forward a motion concerning increased material compensation for *'Ilzami* teachers who were graduates of *Dar al-'Ulum*.

Similarly, the board of directors' meetings in 1934 followed a comparable trajectory. While the majority of the meeting was dedicated to the issue of salaries, members of the board were very adamant on discussing their newly published magazine and to look into ways to making it financially sustainable.[80] Though records of these

[78] "Shu'un al-Niqabat," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 3, no. 1 (September 1935): 45.
[79] See Chapter 6.
[80] "Shu'un al-Niqabat," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 1, no. 3 (November 1933): 36–37.

meetings are infrequent (presumably because the board only met once or twice a year) they tell us a number of things about the union. First, it confirms the decentralized nature of the institution suggesting that members from Aswan to Alexandria were actively setting an agenda alongside the board of directors. Second, it shows how geographically diverse the union really was as we find members from virtually every corner of the country openly discussing what they deemed to be pressing issues for the compulsory schoolteachers of their own localities.

Third, we get a sense that despite the persistence of Shaykh Ramadan, the union followed a fairly democratic process. This is evidenced by the magazine's frequent publication of syndicate election results at the sub-syndicates level. However, general assembly meetings were infrequent in large part due to the ongoing struggle between the union and the Ministry. Finally, despite the geographic diversity, there is a clear absence of women and religious minorities at the helm.

It must be said that *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* saw itself as speaking to a predominantly Muslim audience, unlike other publications. And in fact, seeing as the historic ancestor to the compulsory schools was *the kuttab*, there is something of a structural reason why this may have been the case. At the same time, the lack of contributors from religious minorities is striking. With the exception of a government report about compulsory education reform which was authored by a Coptic Ministry inspector named Iskandar Ibrahim Yusuf and which was provided to the magazine through a teacher named Zaynab al-Hakim, there is a complete absence of religious diversity.[81] Beyond these references, contributors, editors and the members of the syndicates across the country were predominantly Muslim men.

[81] Zaynab al-Hakim, "Taqrir 'an al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami li-l-Ustadh Iskandar Ibrahim Yusuf," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 2, no. 10 (June, 1935): 80-86.

In the very first issue, Shaykh Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi, the editor of the magazine and a man we encountered in this chapter as an active board members of the (original) Teachers' Syndicate between 1923 and 1925, begins his editor's note with the words: "We give praises to Allah and we ask him to enlighten our paths (…) and open us up to Islam's message."[82] Subsequent issues of the magazine, especially in the year 1933-1934 included a standard section about Islam and its virtues often titled "Fi-l-Din" (On Religion). Al-Fiqi himself continued to use his editorial note to promote a moral and religious message at least throughout the first year of the magazine. In the second issue of October 1933, he writes: "Oh teacher (…) make patience your habit and accept hardship in the name of education (…) model your life after our prophet who conquered magic and irrationality."[83]

It must be said that the Union did have some female members since they were sometimes referenced in the board of directors' meeting minutes. For example, in the March 1934 board meeting, the members discussed a request for assistance from a retired female teacher named Safwat Mahmud Ja'far from Cairo. The board of directors eventually decided that her syndicate in Cairo should approve her request and buy her a sewing machine so that she may support herself.[84]

However, they were rarely given a voice in the magazine except via a column titled al-*Tadbir al-Manzili* (Home economics) which first appeared in the magazine's second issue

[82] Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi, "Kalimat al-Muharrir," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 1, no. 1 (September 1933): 1–2.
[83] Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi, "Ayyuha al-Mu'allim," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 1, no. 2 (October 1933): 1–2.
[84] "Shu'unal-Niqabat," November 1933, 52.

and was authored by a compulsory schoolteacher from Tanta named ‘Ismat Mahmud Abu-l-Nur.[85]

But women were also discussed by male authors especially in the magazine’s first year. More specifically, their appearance, their role in society, what they ought to wear, and whether and how they should mix with men in public were recurrent themes. For example, in the February 1934 issue, the head of the Qina compulsory teachers syndicate, Muhammad Qutri, wrote an article titled Al-Hijab (Covering), which criticized the norms and codes imposed by the West on Egyptian women. “Women are weak, impressionable, and easy to manipulate (…) Islam has ordered women to stay home and not to leave it without permission and to cover up and be chaste and modest (…) the keys to solving our moral deterioration is through wisdom. It is in the hands of men, for men are responsible for their subjects.”[86] Qutri was hardly the only one to pursue this line of reasoning. In the following issue, a contributor by the name of Ibrahim Muhammad al-Tukhi advanced similar statements. Even ‘Ismat Abu-l-Nur, resident female contributor, pronounced herself in favour of women’s modest attire, and highlighted their ‘delicate’ nature.

Much like other teachers magazines, *Sahifat al-Ta‘lim al-’Ilzami* featured different sections on ‘general knowledge’, the latest in pedagogy studies and reports on the latest inventions. But its religious and patriarchal discourse stands out if compared to all the other publications of the same genre. While these could hardly be called secular or feminist, they never quite placed the same emphasis on issues of religion and seemed less concerned with issues of public morality.

Having said this, it must also be stated that this discourse with its religious undertones and patriarchal approach was not static and was often mixed with progressive ideas.

[85] Ibrahim Muhammad al-Tukhi, “’Ila ’Ayn Nahnu Musawwaqun,” *Sahifat al-Ta‘lim al-’Ilzami* 1, no. 7 (March 1934): 59–60.
[86] Muhammad Qutri, “Al-Hijab,” *Sahifat al-Ta‘lim al-’Ilzami* 1, no. 6 (February 1934): 47–48.

By March 1934, Fiqi began to adopt the themes of progressive pedagogy in his editorial note. “Oh teacher, select reading material that is suitable for the students’ abilities, their environments and their age.”[87] Furthermore, the magazine had a fixed section dedicated to the latest pedagogical trends and progressive pedagogy and invited various influential psychologist-educators to contribute to the magazine.

By contrast, Iman Farag’s account of the union maintains that while compulsory schoolteachers were quite invested in progressive education, frequently referencing it in their magazine, they had more pressing priorities: greater recognition of their efforts and an amelioration of their salaries—which were markedly inferior to those of their counterparts in primary education. She also suggests that in terms of percentages, and compared to *Sahifat al-Mu‘allimin*, which was published ten years earlier by the Teachers’ Syndicate, the compulsory teachers’ magazine dedicated less space to progressive issues. However, since Farag does not give us more information about her calculations, it is difficult to take them at face value, especially if one takes into account the fact that progressive language permeated other sections of the magazine including those dedicated to religion.

What one gains by looking at later issues of the magazine, especially those from the year 1935, is a new insight into the ways in which the group attempted to navigate its struggle against the unfair system of wages—and it is precisely herein that a more ‘academic’ approach came to play a far bigger role than previously recorded. While the first issues of the magazine were combative and vocal, later issues, demonstrate that the union’s leadership had repositioned itself amidst a changing political climate.

[87] Muhammad Hasan al-Fiqi, “Ayyuha al-Mu‘allim,” *Sahifat al-Ta‘lim al-’Ilzami* 1, no. 7 (March 1934): 1–2.

In order to understand this change, it is necessary to highlight that the higher echelons of the board of directors and senior members of the union including Shaykh Ramadan were transferred to schools in remote locations across the country in late 1933 as a form of punishment for their defiant role in the struggle to ameliorate their salaries.[88] Nevertheless, the union persisted. With the appointment of Ahmad Najib al-Hilali as Minister of Public Instruction, the tide changed in favour of compulsory teachers and the union had better chances of negotiating their financial situation.

The most important document illustrating the trajectory of the union is a report titled *Taqrir Majlis al-Idara 'an al-Sanawat al-Thalatha al-Madiya* (Report by the Board of Directors on the last Three Years) which was published in September 1935, in the first issue of the magazine's third year.

> Before the board of directors enumerates the efforts undertaken and the results it reached (…) we must first address a grave issue: the belief among many of our colleagues that the union only did what it did to increase teachers' salaries. But raises and salary increases are nothing more than a tool that the union uses in order to reach a higher goal which is to elevate the status of this group of teachers to a level that is worthy of the honours of the profession and what it provides for this country.[89]

The board went on to suggest that this belief was dangerous because associations and groups that are formed with the sole purpose of reaching a goal that is in the hands of an exterior force, will either reach their goal and—having no other purpose—disintegrate, or fail to obtain their goal, lose enthusiasm and disintegrate. To tie the purpose of the union solely to an economic rights-based agenda was to deprive it from accomplishing its real goal, the amelioration of the teaching profession as a whole and the contribution towards spreading education.

[88] "Shu'un al-Niqabat," November 1933.
[89] "Taqrir Majlis al-'Idara 'an al-Sanawat al-Thalatha al-Madiya," *Sahifat al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* 3, no. 1 (September 1935): 47.

Following this logic, the report goes on to enumerate the countless efforts of the board to negotiate salaries. But it insists that "that which preoccupied members of the board the most was how to safeguard our magazine, the most noble of our works."[90] The report called the magazine, "the most important and noble occurrence in the history of the union" and a "beautiful dream" that was brought to life through the efforts of 'loyal' members of the union. The board's concluding message was that all the external attacks faced over the past years were insignificant if compared to the attacks unleashed by some of its own members, those who belittle and doubt the magazine's importance. "You must return such members to the righteous path", the editors urged, and those who refuse to see the value of the magazine were to be disowned "for they are not worthy of being affiliated to knowledge nor to education."[91]

The significance of this report cannot be understated. It shows the evolution of the union's project over a three-year period mimicking in many ways the trajectory taken by the Teachers Syndicate ten years earlier. While the union's leadership remained, its emphasis on the promotion of the magazine as a vehicle for the betterment of the teaching profession as a whole is reminiscent of the syndicate's attempts to pursue a more academic track. In both scenarios we observe an attempt to promote 'sound' education as a means to elevate the teaching profession both technically and financially.

All in all, the members of union were still not at the very bottom of the teaching profession's social ladder. One could even argue that real underdog was the even more marginalized *Ittihad al-Ta'lim al-Hurr* (The Union of Free Education), a collective made up of teachers with no teaching degree who were hired by private and community

[90] Ibid., 50.
[91] Ibid., 53.

schools.[92] The union of compulsory teachers by contrast, was a diverse and resilient body which sought to cleverly negotiate the position of its members as it best saw fit.

By the early 1950s, the union had re-invented itself once again: It changed its name to *Ittihad al-Ta'lim al-'Ibtida'i li-l-Mu'allimin al-'Ilzamiyyin* (The Union of Compulsory Teachers for Primary Education) after the unification of the primary school system. By that point, Muhammad Jawhari 'Amir, the former Under Secretary, had become President of the union. The new union published a new magazine called *Al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal* (The Elementary Teacher) which was forced to adapt to the changing political climate under the new Nasser regime, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusions

In 2009, during the final years of Mubarak's reign and at the height of union-led unrest against his regime's economic policies, a group of teachers established the independent teachers syndicate as an alternative to the official Syndicate of the Teaching Profession, which was established in 1951 with the help of Taha Husayn, but later morphed into a government controlled and highly centralized entity. Free Officer and Minister of Education Kamal al-Din Husayn 'Abd al-Rahman had even acted its president whilst being Minister in the mid-1950s thereby marking the end of a relatively diverse era for teacher activism in Egypt. Commenting on Kamal al-Din Husayn's presidency, R.E posed the obvious question in her 2004 interview with Rania 'Abdel Rahman: "Who were we supposed to complain to now if we wanted to complain about the Ministry itself?" The new 2009 syndicate's internal bylaws state very clearly that it aims to ameliorate the deteriorating conditions faced by teachers and address their declining salaries and wages.

[92] Isma'il Husayn, "Shakwa Ittihad al-Ta'lim al-Hurr," *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* 9, no. 3 (February 1936): 235–40.

Unsurprisingly, the bylaws also state that the independent syndicate aims to work on the professional and cultural development of the profession as well develop alternative policies to reform education in Egypt as a whole. In combining these two aims, the new 2009 syndicate is reminiscent of the organizations featured in this chapter and of the countless others for which we have little documentation including the Cairo branch of the International Federation for Drawing, Art Education, and Art Applied to Industries and *Ittihad al-Ta'lim al-Hurr*.[93] Like the 2009 independent syndicate, the groups explored in this chapter often aimed to combine an economic-rights based agenda focusing on wages, salaries and the betterment of the teaching profession as a whole, with a more academically inclined focus on questions of how to ameliorate education—via the language of progressive education. While some organizations were more forceful in their articulation of socio-economic rights than others, none of them can be classified as radical, anarchist or outwardly revolutionary in their outlook or operations. However, a closer look at even the more subdued of these organizations suggests that they all advanced a socio-political agenda that was mediated by their adoption of progressive education as a language of professional valorisation. In short, progressive education became a vehicle to subtly and diplomatically lay claim to economic and social rights and to advance a greater role for teachers the decision-making process. In the following chapter I explore exactly how the diversity of teacher activism came to be centralized culminating not only in a unified organizational structure, the 1951 syndicate, but an increasingly unified voice in the press.

[93] There were other teachers groups operating during the first half of the 20th century such as Jam'iyyat Dar al-'Ulum (The Association of Dar al-'Ulum) and al-Ittihad al-Dawli li-l-Rasm wa-l-Tarbiya al-Fanniyya wa-l-Funun al- 'Amaliyya (The International Federation for Drawing, Art education and Art Applied to Industries-Cairo Branch).

Chapter 6
Teachers in Publishing

What made want to start your own radio programme?

I.Z.:I love children (…). At the time, 'Ali Khalil and Muhammad Fathi were famous radio hosts and I asked them if I could host a children's show as soon as I graduated [from the Teachers Institute]. They agreed and so I got my own weekly show where I would host one-hour interviews with children. I even hosted and recorded shows from my living room surrounded by my neighbour's children, a piano and a piano teacher who would accompany them while they sang.

- *Z., I. Interview by Rania Abdel Rahman. Transcript, n.d. Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women's Oral History, the Women and Memory Forum*

I turned to the taxi driver and asked him how things were with him. He said he wasn't complaining. 'No,' I said, 'I mean since the revolution and all that.' (…)
'Before the revolution you could only pick up a fare in the posh districts, now the army people also ride in taxi, that means we have the posh people and the army,' (…) No, he said, he wasn't complaining.
'I am glad to hear it,' I said
'Yes, things are not so bad. Of course, one takes what God gives.'
Of course. And if there is no God, nobody gets anything.

-*Waguih Ghali, Beer in the Snooker Club*

I.Z., a female teacher who graduated in the mid 1940s from the teacher training college was educated—much like the rest of her peers—in the methods of progressive education. The above lines from her oral testimony serve to highlight a previously neglected mode of teacher activism: public engagement through broadcasting and the press. As will be explored in this chapter, teachers were not just active within their associations, they also often tried to advocate for their ideas through the written (and sometimes oral) word. In an attempt to reach a wider public, disseminate new concepts and influence the debate on education in the post 1922 moment, teachers published their thoughts in magazines, journals and newspapers. They were also actively involved in the field of translation. The story of teachers' engagement with the press mirrors that of unionizing. In many respects, it is a story of gradual centralization and institutionalization

beginning in the 1950s after a long and rich history of plurality and active knowledge production. This chapter tells the story of how for teachers, publishing was essentially activism's 'second arm' by exploring the history of *Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr* (The Committee of Authorship, Translation and Publishing), *Majallat al-Thaqafa* and other magazines which together formed the corpus of what we can call the pedagogy and teachers press. It argues that teachers, especially (but not just) senior psychologist-educators were actively involved in publishing precisely because they saw it as a vehicle to influence the debate on education and encourage progressive standards. It also demonstrates how such avenues were gradually closed off with the advent of the new regime in 1952 and how despite political change, teachers continued to rely on a variety of tools from 'the progressive toolbox' to better align themselves with the new political realities.

Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr

In 1914, a group of *Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Uliya* graduates and their colleagues from the Khedival School of Law established the committee of authorship, translation and publishing. Concerned about the state of publishing in the country and the lack of available resources in Arabic, the group sought to translate the most important works into Arabic to promote knowledge and science.[1] The original members of this committee included some of Egypt's most famous pedagogues including Ahmad 'Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf, Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid, and Yusuf al-Junaidy. The original group was later joined by Amin Mursi Qandil and Ahmad

[1] 'Amr Mustafa Lutf, "Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr," *'Alam al-Kitab* 2, no. 15 (December 2017).

Amin. Together, they collectively formed a board consisting of fifteen individuals. Ahmed Amin actually served as the committee's president for forty years, until his death in 1954. To join the committee, one had to be proficient in Arabic and be well educated. Knowledge of a foreign language was also required, unless one demonstrated exceptional abilities in a scientific field. Because the committee operated more like a club, the ultimate decision to admit a new member was up to its board of directors.[2]

The original budget of the committee was set for 500 Egyptian Pounds, which were divided into 500 stocks, each stock at a value of one EGP. Every member was expected to purchase at least ten stocks. By the 1940s, the number of members had grown to about forty.

Lajnat al-Ta'lif's board financially operated as a company, but in all other respects it was an editorial committee. This meant that works would not be published unless they were approved by its members. In fact, authors had to comply with edits and suggestions or face the consequences. In an article about the committee appearing in *Al-Hilal* magazine in 1922, the author stressed that countless works had actually been rejected because their authors refused to incorporate the committee's suggestions.[3] Depending on the circumstances, the committee would incur the publishing costs or share the printing costs with the author. In all cases, the author would receive fifty percent of the profits.

The first books published by the committee were school textbooks. These were titled: *The History of Arab Literature*, *the Principles of Chemistry* and the *Principles of Algebra*. Then came a series of texts that were popular among school students such as the *Principles of Philosophy.*

[2] "Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr," *Al-Hilal* 30, no. 8 (May 1922): 752–53.
[3] Ibid.

By the 1920s however, the committee had started publishing content on pedagogy, education and psychology alongside the translations of important works in history, geography and the sciences. In fact, *Lajnat al-Ta'lif* became one of the most important publishers of pedagogical content in the country, choosing to focus on education as part of its ethos. It also solicited the Ministry of Public Instruction's help in the selection of the topics.[4] The *Lajna'*s ties to education also came via its own members who by the 1940s included some of *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*'s most prominent members including the initial founders Khallaf, Abu Hadid, Kirdani, and pedagogues such as Sayyid Basha who—as previously discussed—also served as the *Rabita's* secretary in the early 1940s.[5] This unique composition of members meant that the content produced and encouraged by this group was congruent with the promotion of progressive education as the *Lajna* promoted works focusing on psychology, pedagogy, art education, and education reform.

A closer look at some of the committee's publications over the years can shed light on this close relationship. Even though the list in Table 10 is by no means extensive, it does provide insights about the broad categories and genres under which the *Lajna's* content could be classified. For example, we find teacher training manuals and pedagogy books on psychology and education such as Amin Mursi Qandil's famous *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris* and his *'Usul 'Ilm al- Nafs*, two of the earliest manuals discussed in Chapter 2 which combined insights from the new psychology with issues of education. In his introduction to Part II of *'Usul al-Tarbiya*, Qandil explicitly thanks the *Lajna* for its support: "I must take this opportunity to thank everyone who had a hand in bringing this work to light, especially our blessed committee, the Committee of

[4] 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi li Sanat 1949*, 121–22.
[5] "Egypt Section Correspondence" Institute of Education, University of London, DC/WEFII/94.

Authorship, Translation and Publishing, for which I wish all the success and progress so that all of its hopes of spreading knowledge and culture in the country will be fulfilled."[6]

In later years, the *Lajna* even developed a specialized series for teachers titled *Silsilat Maktabat al-Mu'allim (The Teachers Library Series)*, which was meant to become part of a teacher's personal book collection focusing on the latest research and latest methods in pedagogy studies. This series was curated and organized by Isma'il al-Qabbani.

The *Lajna*'s second favourite literary genres were teachers magazines such as *Al-Jaras* – and *al-'Ulum*.

Then there were translations of major international pedagogical works into Arabic such as the translations of some of Susan Isaac's works as well as Bertrand Russel's *On Education*. But the *Lajna* also sought to facilitate the publication of important Ministerial reports, as well as the conference proceedings of the major pedagogical conferences that were organized by associations such as *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha*. In fact, the *Lajna* seems to have facilitated the publication of most of the *Rabita's* work which makes sense given the overlap of their members. Finally, the *Lajna* published works that were akin to anthologies such as the Golden Book of *Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin* as well as *Hawliyyat al-Thaqafa al-'Arabiyya* (The Yearbook of Culture), a yearly series which enumerates the different institutions, lectures, groups and publications in the field of culture and education and perhaps one of the most important documents we have on cultural and knowledge production in mid-century Egypt. By the late 1940s the *Lajna* had published over 300 books.[7]

[6] Amin Mursi Qandil, *'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris al-Juz' al-Thani*, Introduction.
[7] 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi li Sanat 1949*, 123.

Title	Author	Year
Ikhtibar al Dhaka' Kurasat al-Ta'limat (Intelligence Testing at the Primary Level-And Instructions Manual)	Isma'il al-Qabbani	1939
Siyasat al-Ta'lim fi Misr (Education Policies in Egypt)	Isma'il Al-Qabbani	1944
Al-Tarbiya 'an Tariq al-Nashat (Education through Activities)	Isma'il Al-Qabbani	1984
'Usul al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris Parts I and II (The Principles of Education and the Art of Teaching)	Amin Mursi Qandil	1928 and 1929
'Usul 'Ilm al- Nafs Part 2 (The Principles of Psychology)	Amin Mursi Qandil	1929
Al-Tarbiya wa Atharuha fi-l-Fard wa-l-Mujtama ' (Education and its Impact on the Individual and Society)	Riyad Muhammad 'Askar	1948
Al-Tathqif al-Zati aw Kayf nurabi Anfusna (Self Education)	Salama Musa	1950 (second edition)
Al Yad al-Mufakira fi-l-Ashghal al-Yadawiyya 1934 Part I and Part II (The thinking Hand in Manual Work)	'Abdalla 'Ali Haggag, Muhammad Shafiq al-Guneidy, Mahmud Yusuf al-Razzaz	1934
Khulasat 'Ilm al-Nafs (The Summary of Psychology)	Ahmad Fu'ad al-Ahwani	1945

Al-Madrasa al-Awwaliyya al-Rifiyya (The Elementary Village School)	Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha	1944
Mu'tamar Tadris al-'Ulum (The Conference on Teaching Science Subjects)	Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha	1942
Mu'tamar Tadris al Mawad al-Ijtima'iyya (The Conference on Teaching Social Sciences)	Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha	1945
Mushikalat al-'Imtihanat fi Misr The Problem of Examinations in Egypt)	Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha	1939
Mu'tamar al-Ta 'lim al-Thanawi (The Secondary Education Conference)	Al Jami 'a al-Amrikiyya bi-l-Qahira	1955
Al-Mu'tamar al-Thaqafi al-'Awwal(The first Cultural Conference)	Jami'at al-Duwal al-'Arabiyya	1949
Al-Hadana Nafsiyyat al-Tifl fi-l-Sanawat al-Khams al-'Ula (Kindergarten: The Child's Psychology in the first Five Years)	Susan Isaacs translated by Sumayya Fahmi	1946
Al-Tifl fi-l-Madrasa al-'Ibtida'iyya (Children in Primary Schools)	Susan Isaacs translated by Muhammad Mukhtar al-Mitwalli	1945
Majallat al-Jaras (The Bell Magazine)	Rabitat Talabat Ma'had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu'allimin	1948
Al-'Ulum (Sciences)	Jam'iyyat al-Mu'allimin	

Silsilat Maktabat al-Mu‘allim I‘dad al-Durus (The Teacher Preparation Series: Preparing Lessons)	George Henri Green and Muhammad Khairi Harbi	1949
Silsilat Maktabat al- Mu‘allim Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha fi-l-Madrasa al-Namuzajiyya (The Teacher Library Series: The New Methods in Model Schools)	George Greenland (Translation) Teachers College University of San Jose	1953
Silsilat Maktabat al-Mu‘allim Risasalat al-Mu‘allim (The Teacher Library Series: The Teacher’s Message)	George Henri Green and Muhammad Husayn al Makhzanji	1953
Silsilat al-Fikr al-Hadith fi-l-Tarbiya (The Modern Thought Series: On Education)	Betrand Russel translated by Ahmad ‘Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani and Ustaz Muhammad Muhammad Ghamrawi	1953
Al Kitab al-Dhahabi li-Madarast al Mu‘allimin (The Golden Book of Madrasat al-Mu‘allimin)	Jam‘iyyat al-Mu‘allimin	1934
Hawliyyat al-Thaqafa al-‘Arabiyya 1949 (The Yearbook of Arab Culture)	Sati‘ al-Husari	1949
Taqrir ‘An Nash’at al-Ta‘lim al-Awwali Muqaddam ’ila al-Majlis al-A‘la li-l-Ta‘lim (Report on the Development of Elementary Education)	Ministry of Public Instruction	1946

Table 10: List of some of Lajnat al-Ta ‘lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr’s publications

Apart from publishing, the *Lajna* was actively engaged with the pedagogical and cultural debates of its day through a number of side activities. In the 1920s, it hosted 'tea' gatherings about than six times a year for its own members to discuss matters pertaining to the committee as well as to generate broader conversations.[8] By the 1940s, the committee was hosting a weekly lecture every Thursday with prominent local and international speakers from the literary, academic and cultural worlds.[9]

But its biggest and most successful 'side-project' was by far the publication of *al-Thaqafa* (The Culture) a weekly journal dedicated to artistic, literary, pedagogical and cultural knowledge production under the editorial leadership of Ahmad Amin.

The first issue of *al-Tahaqafa* was published in January 1939. In its editorial note titled "Why are we publishing this magazine?", Amin confidently wrote: "Both the Eastern treasures that I have described, and the Western wealth that lies around us have not been adequately captured in journals and magazines. In fact, not a hundred journals could capture the breadth of knowledge around us [from both cultures] (…) We felt we had the ability to embark on this noble job."[10] From that point onwards, *Al-Thaqafa* became one of the most important cultural publications of the inter-war period. It published articles on current affairs, theatre, music, philosophy, history and of course pedagogy. The journal translated the debates over psychoanalysis and developmental psychology, the role of art in education and the importance of freedom in the classroom to a wider audience.

Many of Egypt's leading novelists, critics and scientists contributed to this publication—from the psychoanalytic perspectives of 'Abd al-Aziz al-Qusi, to the literary contributions of renowned author and novelist Tawfiq al-Hakim.

[8] "Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr."*Al-Hilal*, 752–53.
[9] 'Idarat al-Tasjil al-Thaqafi, *Al-Sijil al-Thaqafi li Sanat 1949*, 123.
[10] Ahmad Amin, "Limaza Nusdir al-Majalla," *Al-Thaqafa* 1, no. 1 (January 1939): 2–3.

In matters pertaining to education, the publication was quite diverse attracting practically all important (mostly male) progressive pedagogues in the country. Psychologist-educators, members of the *Lajna*, and of other progressive networks, religiously published in *al-Thaqafa*. Ahmad ‘Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani contributed to the magazine on an almost weekly basis.[11] In the very first issue of *al-Thaqafa*, al-Kirdani’s article was titled: *Fi-l-Tarbiya wa ‘Ilm al-Nafs* (On Education and Psychology). It was almost as though he was setting the tone for what was to come in the issues ahead. But al-Kirdani did not just write about progressive education, he also ventured into politics (by commenting on the on-going world war), culture and even science.[12] Similarly, psychologist educators like Muhammad Khalaf Allah published close to fifty articles in *al-Thaqafa* between 1939 and 1947 with a diverse set of texts tackling pedagogy.

Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid was also a regular contributor to *al-Thaqafa*. Like Al-Kirdani and Khalafallah his repertoire was primarily focused on pedagogy and psychology. As previously discussed, the famous ‘*kamm*’ vs ‘*kayf”* debate played out on the pages of *al-Thaqafa* where al-Kirdani and Abu Hadid defended opposing sides of the debate—one siding with the removal of fees for primary schools and the other opposing it. It should also come as no surprise that both Taha Husayn and Isma‘il al-Qabbani were regular contributors to the journal. In this respect, *al-Thaqafa* was an important vehicle for the transmission of one of Egypt’s most important pedagogical debates of the 20th century. This is perhaps exactly what its editors intended for it to be: a magazine with a pedagogical mission that shaped public opinion on matters related to education. In the first

[11] Ahmad ‘Abd al-Salam Al-Kirdani, “Fi-l-Tarbiya wa ‘Ilm al-Nafs,” *Al-Thaqafa* 1, no. 1 (January 1939): 31.

[12] Al-Kirdani published a number of articles on the solar system and on the properties of certain chemical compounds.

issue of its third year, in January 1941, Ahmad Amin verbalized this position in his editorial note:

> I will never forget the day we published the first issue of our magazine, and the Lajna gave it its utmost attention knowing that it was the first work of its kind and that it departed from what the committee was used to undertaking. This is because the journal facilitated a direct face to face encounter with the public for the first time thereby creating a connection, minute by minute and hour by hour. The journal was therefore obligated to continuously provide sound [intellectual] nourishment.[13]

Despite this rich mixture of contributors and the diversity of their backgrounds, there is a noticeable absence of female voices. Of course, there were exceptions, but the publication was by and large dominated by Egyptian men.

Beyond al-Thaqafa: Teacher contributions to the broader press

Egyptian teachers' contributions to the press obviously went beyond the pages of *al-Thaqafa*. If we revisit the initial list of prominent psychologist-educators explored in Chapter 1 and look for the traces these individuals left behind in the press between 1922 and 1956, it quickly becomes evident that they were actively shaping public discourse through their articles.

With his connections to the *Lajna,* it is not surprising that Amin Mursi Qandil often contributed to *al-Thaqafa* especially in its early phase starting 1939. But he also contributed to *al-Majalla al-Jadida* (The New Journal) on a regular basis.

Similarly, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahid Khallaf's *Lajna* ties meant that his most frequent contributions were to *al-Thaqafa* but he wrote a few articles for *al-Risala* (The Message) from the early 1930s to the late 1950s. Throughout this time, Khallaf authored over fifty

[13] Ahmad Amin, "Al-Thaqafa fi 'Amiha al-Thalith," *Al-Thaqafa* 3, no. 106 (January 1941): 1–2.

articles in total on an eclectic set of topics ranging from current affairs to the secrets of a happy marriage, and of course on pedagogy.

As for Isma'il al-Qabbani, he often produced articles in *al-Thaqafa, Sahifat al-Mu'allimin, Sahifat al-Tarbiya* and *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* and was also featured regularly in newspapers. Expectedly, his work was focused on education.

Muhammad 'Attiya al-Ibrashi contributed over eighteen articles in *al-Risala* and *al-Hilal* (The Crescent). While 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi frequently wrote articles for *al-Thaqafa,* however, it is perhaps as the editor of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* beginning in the 1950s that his imprint was most felt.

Muhammad Husayn al-Makhzanji's journal of choice was *al-Majalla al-Jadida* in which he often wrote about progressive education. One of the most prolific of the group was certainly Muhammad Khalafallah, author of *Al-Tifl min al-Mahd 'ila al-Rushd*, whose interest in 'Middle Ground Psychology' prompted him to regularly contribute to *al-Thaqafa* on an almost monthly basis.

But the title of most prolific undoubtedly goes to Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid, who authored approximately 200 articles between 1929 and 1959—certainly in *al-Thaqafa*, as mentioned above, but equally in journals such as *Al-Risala, Al-'Usur* (The Ages) , *al-Majalla al-Jadida, al-Riwaya* (The Novel), *al-Hilal and al-'Arabi* (The Arab). The majority of these were historical, but a great number of them centred around literature, the arts, politics and, of course, education.

Child-Art pioneers Habib Jurji and Yusuf al-'Afifi's articles were featured in *Majallat al-Tarbiya*. Teachers affiliated with them, such as surrealist artist and member of anarchist Art et Liberté group, Ramsis Yunan were also quite active. Between 1939 and 1959, Yunan produced countless articles in *al-Risala*, *al-Katib al-Misri* (The Egyptian writer), and *al-Majalla* (The magazine). But it is his contribution to the radical short lived al-

Tatawwur (The Development) magazine, founded by the Art et Liberté group, that is most remembered. Published only from January to June 1940, *al-Tatawwur*, tackled taboo topics including prostitution and women's sexual revolution.

Finally, the female members of the progressive camp also contributed to the press, and frequently so. Asma' Fahmi, for example authored over fifteen articles between the early 1930s and the early 1950s choosing to publish them in magazines such as *al-Hilal* and al-*Risala.* By contributing to such publications, Egyptian psychologist-educators ensured that their voices, ideas and thoughts were printed in Egypt's most coveted and most prestigious publications, thereby facilitating the transmission of progressive ideas beyond the narrow networks of teachers and the stifling walls of their schools.

But to suggest that the art of publishing was only reserved for the higher echelons of the teaching profession, would be a misrepresentation. As has been shown in previous chapters, practicing teachers were also interested in publishing their experiences, but they were more likely to do so in teachers' magazines and the specialized pedagogy press.

From Plurality to Centralization

In the previous chapter, I demonstrate how different teachers' associations believed it to be necessary to produce magazines in order to reach their base and advocate for their cause. Indeed, it is in such magazines that we find the experiences of practicing teachers and their voices—in addition to the traces one finds scattered between the pages of the pedagogy magazines such as *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* and *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*.

By comparing both 'genres', one is struck by the fact that one of them—the teachers' magazines—gradually loses its allure as of the mid 1950s. The specialized pedagogy press, by contrast, manages to retain its relevance and survives the political storms of the post-

1952 coup. Magazines such as *al-'Ulum*, became a rare commodity while *Sahifat al-Ta'lim* and *Majallat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* survived until the 1970s.

Historians of modern Egypt have shown that—unlike what is often portrayed in popular culture—regime change happened more gradually than previously suggested. In *Nasser's Blessed Movement*, Joel Gordon demonstrates that it actually took two years for the regime's contours to crystalize.[14] Ehaab Abdou and I have come to similar conclusions about the nature of textbook development in the period immediately following the 1952 coup arguing that: "textbook content did not instantly mirror changes in political discourse. Rather, bureaucratic and pedagogical considerations such as continuities in authorship, bureaucratic inertia, or school system restructuring were often far more instrumental in either maintaining a consistent message or offering opportunities to introduce novel ideas."[15] Much like the trajectory of textbook development, and that of regime formation more broadly, the 'industry' of the interwar teachers press was only gradually transformed. Such publications either disappeared into oblivion, or newer, more powerful and more widely distributed state-sponsored publications came to coop and re-invent their most iconic features thereby rendering them obsolete.

There are two plausible reasons for this development: First, there is a structural and bureaucratic context that explains the gradual loss of relevance of such publications as the 1950s progressed. The efforts to unify Egypt's two-tier primary schooling system which were born out of the debate between the *'kamm'* and the *'kayf'* camps in the 1940s, had ramifications not just on the lives of school children and their parents, but it also meant that all teachers would be paid equally, at least in theory. That is, because education policies between 1944 and 1951 eventually led to both the removal of primary school fees

[14]Gordon, *Nasser's Blessed Movement: Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution*.
[15] Makar and Abdou, "Egyptian Textbooks in Times of Change, 1952-1980."

and the unification of primary and compulsory/elementary schools under one system, all teachers at the primary level would have to be treated the same way. However, differences in rank and file persisted even when a new Law No. 219 of 1951 established the Syndicate of Teaching Professions during Taha Husayn's tenure as Minister of Public Instruction. As its name suggests, the syndicate saw itself as a collective made up of different members of the teaching profession but preferential treatment of its members on the basis of academic degree and institutional affiliation persisted. Such divisions were enshrined in the law itself as Article 3 clearly stated that members of the syndicate were to be divided into three categories: A, B, and C. Teachers with university-level qualifications who had completed the necessary teacher training requirements were classified under category A, whereas those with medium level qualifications and five years of teaching experience were classified under category B. Category C was reserved for teachers with no such qualifications but who nevertheless had a minimum of ten years of teaching experience. The law did not give each category equal rights. Article 9 of the Law suggested that the general assembly of 2000 members had to include 1200 teachers from Category A, 600 from category B, and only 200 from category C. This meant that B and C teachers had less of chance to steer the syndicate in the directions that they wanted given the disproportionate presence of category A teachers. To add insult to injury, Article 10 stipulated that quorum at general assembly meetings was met when a minimum of 300 syndicate members were in attendance, half of them at least from category A.[16]

By the mid 1950s, this marked differentiation between teachers based on their academic qualifications was finally on its way out in large part due to a revision to Law No. 129 of 1951 through Ministerial Decree No. 300 of 1956 issued under Nasser, which blurred the lines between the three categories of teachers by reducing them to only two. Category A

[16] See Law No. 219 of 1951.

now included all teachers with advanced teacher training qualifications. Whereas category B comprised those with middle-ranged teacher training qualifications, those with an academic equivalent and with five years of teaching experience, and those with no such training or academic background but with at least ten years of teaching experience. By reducing the number of categories and allowing groups of teachers without the necessary formal training to ascend to Category B, the 1956 revisions contributed to the alleviation of some of their financial and syndicate problems thereby allowing them almost equal opportunities to participate in syndicate life and ensuring that all factions were equally financially compensated by the Ministry.

Given this context, it is easy to see how and why the multitude of teachers' magazines which were operating during the interwar period, or shortly after it, ceased to exist as the 1950s progressed. With the gradual unification of the system of education and the centralisation of its teachers under one syndicate, there was scarcely anything left to advocate for. This new reality represented *the* triumphant victory for all the teachers' groups operating from the margins that were introduced in the previous chapter who relentlessly fought for equal rights, adequate representation, and fair financial compensation. Beginning in the 1950s, there were fewer reasons for the continued pursuit of such endeavours or for the publication of magazines dedicated to the rights of one or the other group.

Having said this, there is also a graver and more insidious reason for the gradual disappearance of such publications: The changing political climate under the New Free Officer Regime, which notoriously tolerated no opposition and worked very hard, particularly after 1954, to clamp down on dissent, especially union-based dissent. Take *Sahifat al-Mu'allim al-Awwal*, for example, the magazine which was first published in the early 1950s as the successor to *Sahifatl al-Ta'lim al-'Ilzami* by the former union of

compulsory schoolteachers. In its first issues between 1951 and up until 1952, the magazine operated 'normally' in that it continued to publish content that was relevant to primary schoolteachers and to its broader base. With the 1952 coup and the establishment of the Revolutionary Command Council of Free Officers at the head of the country, the magazine quickly adopted the language of the new regime due to in large part to the enthusiasm about the promising future that the new reality offered. In this respect, one could say that it was much easier for teachers' magazines which were presided over by editorial boards to quickly alter their content, unlike textbooks and their textbook development committees which took a longer time to adopt the discourses of the day. In the September 1954 issue of *al- Mu'allim al 'Awwal*, following the ascension of Free Officer Kamal al-Din Husayn 'Abd al-Rahman to the post of Minister of Education, the editorial team of the journal decided to publish the speech Kamal al-Din Husayn delivered following his appointment as Minister of Education. The magazine proclaimed that it was "pleased to launch the first issue of its fourth year with the valuable message by Major General Kamal al-Din Husayn to Egyptian teachers so that it may become a covenant between them."[17] In the following issue, al-*Mu'allim al-'Awwal* published an account of the teacher's conference which took place in November of 1954 to celebrate the British Evacuation Agreement. Some of the country's leading progressive pedagogues enthusiastically spoke at the conference, including Taha Husayn and Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid.[18] As historian Barack Salmoni has noted, many Egyptian teachers:

> displayed a sustained interest in the socio-economic difficulties afflicting rural and urban Egyptians, and viewed the school as a major device for alleviating these problems. When one adds to this (…) their conviction that education should cultivate in emerging citizens an understanding and respect for freedom, democracy, and national duty, it appears that pedagogic discourse in Egypt far outpaced the mainstream of general political thought, and was attuned to those very

[17] "Kalimat al-Sayyid al-Wazir li Rijal al-Ta'lim," *Al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal* 4, no. 1 (September 1954): 2–3.
[18] "Mu'tamar al-Mu'allimin al-'Am li Munasabat Tawqi' Ittifaqiyyat al-Jala'," *Al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal* 4, no. 2 (October 1955): 9–21.

> issues determining Egypt's future. (….) Whatever the case, focused examination of socio-economic and developmental problems on the part of mid- to senior level educators during these years permits us to speculate that they would be inclined to view the change of political order in 1952 as a true opportunity to implement socio-political reform through the schools.[19]

In other words, the initial years following regime change were particularly hopeful, especially for a large group of Egyptian teachers whose commitment to progressive education had led them to believe in the importance of this movement for the construction of a fair future.

Magazines such *al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal* represent the perfect example of a publication which came to embrace some of the new regime's discourse with open arms, precisely because it encompassed the major elements of progressive pedagogy, freedom and a fair political future. Kamal al-Din Husayn's speech for example, repeatedly spoke about freedom and the need for education to reflect it. It is therefore no wonder that *al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal* quickly aligned itself with the political messaging of the day.

But things soon began to change especially between the years 1954 and 1956, the period during which Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser consolidated his power, removed Muhammad Naguib from office, and laid the groundwork for what we today know as the Nasser regime. It is during this period that the teachers' press may have struggled to find ways to meaningfully engage with the changing regime's discourse, often opting to follow the tide or risk discontinuation.

One of the main reasons behind this development was the election, in 1955, of a new board for the Teachers' Syndicate. From 1951 to 1955, the syndicate originally established in 1951 with the help of Husayn, remained largely inefficient without a functioning board or a real mandate—at least according to the accounts published in *al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal*.[20]

[19] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 548–49.
[20] "Niqabat al-Mihan al-Ta'limiyya," *Al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal* 4, no. 5 (January 1955): 3–5.

The situation changed significantly with the 1955 board elections, (the degree to which they were free and fair is debatable) which were won by free officer turned Minister of Education Kamal al-Din Husayn, whose knowledge of—and relationship to—the teaching profession was almost nonexistent.

The press refers to this new board as the first 'functioning' syndicate after initial years of inefficacy since its establishment 1951.[21] The new board marked a new era for the relationship between the teaching profession and the state. In the words of historian Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali: "The makeup of the syndicate since its establishment in 1955 was such that it primarily supported certain factions within the regime and safeguarded their interests. It ensured the regime's continued control over teachers and used such powers to abort the advancement of teacher's interests."[22] Following the 1955 elections, the government-controlled syndicate began to publish the more competitive, better distributed and far more powerful *Al-Ra'id* (The Pioneer) magazine, which became the official mouthpiece of the Teachers' Syndicate for the next thirty years. Al *Ra'id* differed from previous magazines in that it published the Ministry's official line. It often featured a segment by the Minister of Education himself and awarded a new generation of teachers the opportunity to contribute to the press. Interestingly, it continued to include articles on the merits of progressive education much like many of its predecessors.

Under the new circumstances, teachers' magazines such as *al-'Ulum*, or *al-Mu'allim al-'Awwal* could not compete against this new hegemon—even if some of them survived well into the 1960s and 1970s.

[21] Ibid.
[22] Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali, *Mihnat al-Ta'lim fi Misr* (Cairo: Kitab al-Ahali, 1984), 363.

Tools for Survival: The Malleability of Progressive Education

Educators who were previously very vocal in their publications usually had a few options to manoeuvre under this new post-1955 moment. One could either retreat from the limelight, adopt the regime's new discourse, or opt to reproduce a 'neutral' academic and professional discourse centred around the 'science' of pedagogy, a strategy akin to—but far more extreme than—that adopted by teachers' associations in the pre-1952 period to negotiate their demands. Progressive pedagogy had its imprint on all three paths.

One possible scenario was of course to retreat from public life and refrain from engaging with the new circumstances. Isma'il al-Qabbani represents the perfect example for this path. To understand how one of Egypt's most vocal and most prolific writers on matters of pedagogy was eventually silenced, we must first explore the events taking place in the first few years after 1952.

As mentioned in previous chapters, al-Qabbani actually became Minister of Education in September 1952. He was the second Minister of Education to be appointed after the 1952 coup following the short-lived tenure of Sa'd al-Labban who only served as Minister from 24 July 1952 (the day after the coup) to 6 September 1952.

Isma'il al-Qabbani's ascension to the post of Minister of Education can be considered the triumphant culmination of the progressive movement's efforts over thirty years—at least initially. In some sense, al-Qabbani's rise to power validated the movement and what it stood for and gave new hope to teachers across the board. During the year and a half that he remained in power, between September 1952 to January 1954, al-Qabbani was adamant on implementing many of the policies he thought necessary in order to create a robust progressive education system for the country taking advantage of the new order and its promise to bring about freedom, prosperity and a new dawn for Egypt. Progressivism's inherent message of hope for a better future was now enmeshed with the new order's

promise of freedom and prosperity. Between September 1952 and January 1954, al-Qabbani issued Ministerial decrees to construct thirty new kindergartens in line with 'Middle Ground' Psychology's belief in early childhood education and to address their existing shortage in the country.[23] He also issued laws to increase levels of decentralization as per progressivism's core principles such as Law No. 210 of 1953 which gave regional governments more power to oversee primary schools.

One of al-Qabbani's most important undertakings, was, as mentioned previously, the establishment through Law No. 343 of 1952 of the State School Premises State Foundation (SPSF) to tackle the issue of school shortages which progressives like al-Qabbani saw as detrimental to the implementation of progressive practices.

Al-Qabbani's tenure was extremely active compared to other Ministers as he embarked on a variety of reform projects to tackle questions of adult illiteracy, teacher training improvements, private education reform, and agricultural and technical education.[24]

In short, during the brief period that al-Qabbani came to power, he sought to address some of the major problems discussed in previous chapters which progressives believed to be hindering the implementation of progressivism in the classroom. Yet, the honeymoon phase between him and the new regime did not last very long and in early January 1954, he submitted his resignation letter to the Revolutionary Command Council which at that point was still headed by President Muhammad Naguib whose dwindling power within the council was becoming evident.

The power struggle between Naguib and the rest of the much younger Free Officers headed by Nasser would a month later result in Naguib's forced resignation on February 25, 1954. While Naguib was quickly reinstated after popular protests erupted to

[23] For a comprehensive list of al-Qabbani's policies as Minister of Education see Tawfiq, *Wuzara' al-Ta'lim fi Misr wa Abraz Injazatihim 1837-1979*, 133.
[24] Ibid., 133-138.

support him, the rest of the Free Officers increasingly saw him as a mere figurehead and eventually deposed him in November 1954 and placed him under house arrest for the next 29 years. Against this political backdrop, we find al-Qabbani's resignation which came a mere month prior to Naguib's.

When al-Qabbani became Minister of Education, his position as editor in chief of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* was, understandably taken up by 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi. But when al-Qabbani resigned as Minister of Education, he did not return to *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*. In fact, in the years to follow, al-Qabbani contributed very little to the pedagogy press and to the press more generally. He shifted his attention to the nascent public school education system in multiple Arab and Gulf States and began a brief career as a technical advisor and consultant to multiple Arab governments until his death in 1963.[25] What led al-Qabbani to resign from his post as Minister of Education, retreat from public life in Egypt, and to refrain from returning to *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*, the magazine he had helped found?

There are multiple contradictory accounts detailing the reasons behind al-Qabbani's resignation and they have all been documented by historian of Education Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali.[26]

[25] I owe much of this information to conversations with Dr. Talal al-Rashoud whose work on the history of the Kuwaiti education system features references to Isma'il al-Qabbani and his important legacy.
[26] Muhammad Husayn Abu-l-Husn, "Al-Duktur Sai'd Isma'il 'Ali Yujib 'an al-Su'al al-Harij: Man Yastahiq 'an Yakun Waziran li-l-Ta'lim," *Al-Ahram*, May 13, 2015.

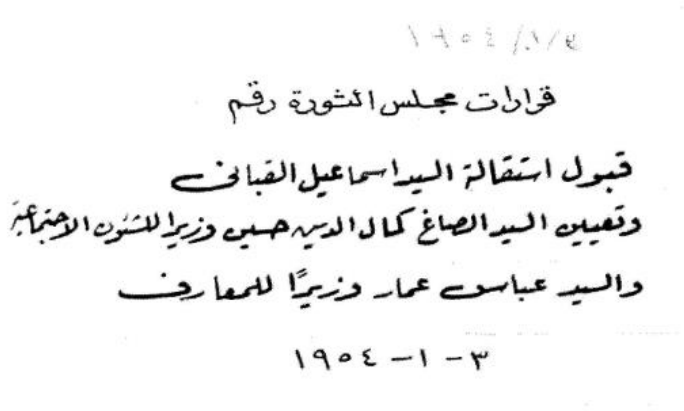

قرارات مجلس الثورة رقم
قبول استقالة السيد اسماعيل القبانى
وتعيين السيد الصاغ كمال الدين حسين وزيرا للشئون الاجتماعية
والسيد عباس عمار وزيرا للمعارف
٣ - ١ - ١٩٥٤

Figure 6: Copy the Revolutionary Command Council's Decree accepting Isma'il al-Qabbani's resignation in January 1954[27]

One account in particular stands out because it has been confirmed by two different sources: Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal—former editor in chief of *al-Ahram* newspaper and Nasser's ghostwriter—and public intellectual Luis 'Awad who, as we have previously seen, was critical of al-Qabbani. In this account, al-Qabbani was asked to prepare a list of government employees who were to be laid off in late 1953. The list included the name of playwright and novelist Tawfiq al-Hakim who, at the time, was occupying the position of Director of the National Library (*Dar al-Kutub*). The account maintains that al-Qabbani thought al-Hakim to be a lazy employee who rarely showed up to work during office hours and who therefore deserved an early retirement package.[28] However, the decision to sack al-Hakim was rejected by Nasser, who maintained that it was not possible for the revolution to oust Hakim, a prominent novelist who did not have ties to the old regime. Nasser is said to have called the entire maneuver unnecessarily 'bureaucratic', a term that al-Qabbani deemed offensive and which led him to submit his resignation letter.

[27]Revolutionary Command Council Decree 3 January 1954. Muhammad Naguib Archive. Bibliotheca Alexandria http://naguib.bibalex.org/DocumentForm.aspx?Page=4).
[28] Sa'id Al-Shahhat, "Dhat Yawm 3 Yanayir 1954," *Youm7*, January 3, 2021. Yusuf Al-Qa'id, *'Abd al-Nasir wa-l-Muthaqqafun wa-l-Thaqafa* (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2002); Muhammad Sa'd 'Abd al-Hafiz, "Tawfiq Al-Hakim wa 'Abd al-Nasir wa 'Awdat al-Wa'i al-Mafqud," *Aswatonline*, July 24, 2019, https://aswatonline.com/2019/07/24/توفيق-الحكيم-وعبد-الناصر-وعودة-الوعي/; Luis 'Awad, *Al-Hurriyya wa Naqd al-Hurriyya* (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-Misriyya al-'Amma li-l-Kitab, 1971).

The second account comes from Shaykh Hasan al-Baquri, Minister of Endowments in 1953/1954, who famously broke away from the Muslim Brotherhood when its leadership tried to force him to resign from his post. According to this account, al-Qabbani was dissatisfied with the RCC's decision to place a military representative in each ministry to oversee the work of the Minister. The account suggests that al-Qabbani declared such sentiments in a closed meeting in the presence of members of the RCC using the following language: "It is unfathomable that a little piece of an officer (*Hittit Dhabit*) would try to control me, the Minister, especially given my long career in education."[29] The response which allegedly came from Jamal Salim, a member of the RCC, was simple: "It is *this* little piece of an officer who made you Minister." Al-Qabbani is alleged to have resigned immediately following this conversation.

For historian Sa'id Isma'il 'Ali the first account, while supported by two sources, Haykal and 'Awad, is unlikely to have occurred as they claim. It is an account which is meant to do nothing more than to embarrass al-Qabbani and taint his reputation by pinning him against renowned novelist Tawfiq al-Hakim. This is why 'Ali believes the second account to be much more credible and plausible.[30]

While it remains impossible to know for certain what really transpired during the last few weeks of December 1953 between al-Qabbani and the Free Officers, one can nevertheless safely say that tensions must have arisen between them. This is because in both accounts (no matter how petty they make him out to be), al-Qabbani was actually objecting to the gradual military interference in his own affairs as Minister of Education. Even if the first account is true, the decision to fire al-Hakim, would have been within the limits of his powers and his being unable to carry it out would have been an infringement

[29] Muhammad Abu-l-Husn, "Al-Duktur Sai'd Isma'il 'Ali Yujib 'an al-Su'al".
[30] It is worth noting that some members of al-Qabbani's family have confirmed to me in private conversation that Shaykh al-Baquri's narrative is the one that still circulates in the family today.

on his own decision making and a sign of his shrinking prerogatives as Minister of Education. Considering the broader political context in which the pro-Nasser factions of the RCC were moving to limit political freedoms and assert their control over the government in late 1953/early 1954, it is not surprising that democratic-minded bureaucrats like al-Qabbani, who were opposed to the regime's increasingly apparent military authoritarianism would have come to find such new realities stifling. In other words, tensions between them were not just likely, they were unavoidable.
It is therefore not surprising that al-Qabbani stopped writing altogether, he must have found the new political realities unbearable and perhaps unsafe.

But not all progressive pedagogues took the same position or chose to withdraw from the limelight as Qabbani did. Pedagogues such as Abu-l-Futuh Radwan and Muhammad Wasif Hums, went from being some of progressive pedagogy's most vocal proponents in the pre-1952 era to becoming two lead authors of the Nasser era's most ubiquitous and ideologically charged history textbooks. Hums, whom we encountered previously as the headmaster of one of the country's leading model schools —the 'Urman Model School—and as an expert on the Project Method, joined a set of history textbook development committees which gave us textbooks such as *Suwar min al-Tarikh al-Misri* (Images of Egyptian History), retitled *Suwar min al-Tarikh al-Qawmi* (Images of National History) *in 1959,* and *al-Tarikh al-Hadith li-l-Jumhuriyya al-'Arabiyya al-Muttahida wa-l-Watan al-'Arabi* (The Modern History of the United Arab Republic and the Arab Nation) in 1960. Radwan, was one of the lead organizers of two of the country's most important progressive conferences in the 1940s, and served on the board of *Rabitat Khariji Ma'had al-Tarbiya.* He was also a graduate of Columbia Teachers College. But as of 1956, he became the lead author of the ideologically charged textbook titled *Tarikh al-'Alam al-*

'Arabi fi al-'Asr al-Hadith (The History of the Arab World in the Modern Period).[31] The most surprising facet of Radwan's post-1954 trajectory, however, —and the ultimate symbol of his acquiescence to the new regime—is that he actually became the editor in chief of *al-Ra'id* magazine in 1956.

This apparent U-turn should not be considered paradoxical or contradictory. In fact, progressive education's malleability was such that it allowed its proponents to pick and choose features which were more in line with the new political discourse while silencing many of the movement's now 'undesirable' tenets. In the November 1957 issue of *al-Ra'id*, for example, a teacher by the name of 'Adil Murad enumerates the multiple benefits of using the Project Method in his classrooms, the same method which was espoused by Hums himself in his writings in *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* in the early 1950s.
But 'Adil Murad lists 'social cohesiveness', 'sharing' and 'increased student participation 'as a group' as the most important qualities of the method, rather than free expression, critical thinking and independence. In other words, Murad emphasizes the role that the Project Method can play in the creation of a *collective*.
In this post-1955 moment, much like Hums and Radwan whose textbooks advertised the good of the Arab community as a whole, the pedagogy press began to focus on aspects of progressive pedagogy which best fit the mood of the day such as community, manual labour and, increasingly, Arab nationalism.

Even prominent educators like 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi participated in the new trend. Al-Qusi took over the post of editor in chief of *Sahifat al-Tarbiya* from al-Qabbani when the latter became Minister in 1952 and retained the position until 1960. To 'adapt' to the changing narrative, al-Qusi relied on the 'professional' 'scientific' and 'academic' aspects

[31] For a more detailed account of the content of these textbooks see Makar and Abdou, "Egyptian Textbooks in Times of Change, 1952-1980."

of progressivism, rather than the aspects pertaining to the larger democratic project the movement was attached to. The articles authored by al-Qusi in *Sahifat al-Tarbiya*—especially those published after 1955—oscillated between the adoption of the regime's new central themes, on one hand, and the emphasis on scientific best practices, psychological advancement and the 'neutral' academic engagement with pedagogy, on the other. For example, in the March 1958 issue of the magazine, al-Qusi published an article on the 'intellectual unity' of the Arab peoples and two years later, in March 1960, he published an article on the Pedagogical Foundations of Arab Nationalism.

In this sense, progressive ideas could be used to advance different agendas. Child-centred learning could be used to either promote individual critical thinking, as was the case during the interwar period, or group solidarity. Similarly, manual labour could either be instrumentalized to advance free expression—or productivity.[32] Herein lies the malleability of the progressive movement—a kind of toolbox which housed a long list of methods, ideas and convictions that could be used in all different sorts of ways. This also sheds light, perhaps, on why pedagogy manuals were far more likely to survive the militarisation of the new regime, if compared to teachers' magazines: they were by design more concerned with the technical, day-to-day applications of progressive education, and could therefore mold this content and instrumentalize it in a multitude of 'neutral' ways. As such, it is possible to speculate that as of the mid-1950s, Egyptian progressive thinkers did not have to go out of their way in order to "get with the times". The toolbox offered to them by progressive education allowed them to select frameworks and ideas that were suited to the *esprit du jour*. In lieu of individuality and critical thinking, manual labour, productivity and social collaboration were key. And this is precisely how certain

[32] Randall Law makes similar observations about progressive education in Soviet Russia, whereas of the late 1920s, the movement begins to place more emphasis on manual labour and a learning by doing ethos that is congruent with the developing Soviet principles. See Law, "Humanity's Workshops: Progressive Education in Russia and the Soviet Union, 1856–1927."

progressive pedagogues were able to reinvent themselves as regime supporters thereby creating continuities in educational policy and in the surviving pedagogy press.

In fact, the majority of progressive educators retained their posts as lecturers of pedagogy, teachers, headmasters and advisers even moving up the Ministerial ladder. In so doing, they ensured a certain level of continuity in education policy and maintained the on-going interest in progressive pedagogy in its most acquiescent-and regressive-forms.

One should note that the Nasser regime never came for the higher echelons of the educational establishment as they did with the university. *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* was never really subjected to the kinds of political purges that are emblematic of the era. Though we cannot be certain, it is possible to speculate that the educational establishment was considered harmless if compared to *the* site of political agitation: the university. In other words, one of the reasons progressive pedagogy was alive and well during the early Nasser years, is precisely because its gatekeepers, facilitators, and enthusiasts came out unscathed.

Conclusions

Egyptian teachers and senior pedagogues had an intimate relationship with the press. Between 1922 and until the early years following the 1952 Free Officer Coup, many of them used the press as a vehicle not only to advance the progressive agenda, but also to bring to light their own problems and comment on political, social and economic circumstances.

From teachers' magazines to pedagogy journals, to newspapers and magazines, teachers used various mediums to express themselves and shape the pedagogical debate in Egypt. After 1954, the relationship became more strained, as teachers found themselves at a crossroads between acquiescence to the regime's new discourses, adaptation or withdrawal from public life. While some of them withdrew from the public eye, the majority were able

to carve a path for themselves throughout the early Nasser years. This is partly due to the fact that progressive education offers—ipso facto—a sea of possibilities for its supporters, and a diverse set of pedagogical tools. Its supporters were able to find angles, activities, and positions within the toolbox of progressivism that allowed them to align themselves with the new regime in a multitude of creative ways. Such an alignment was at first, and in the first two years after the coup, the natural position to take given progressive convictions in principles of justice and democracy. But even when the tides changed, the continued presence of a core group of educators as teacher trainers cemented a level of continuity in educational discourse and in the pedagogy press.

Conclusion

What do you remember about your school?

H. A: I remember my (female) teachers. They were really qualified, and they are the ones who planted the love of history in me because they were avid readers (…) Mrs. Asma' Fahmi was our history teacher. She had just returned from England and was very patriotic. She had this ability to instill in our souls a love for the subject matter, to make us taste knowledge and make it the focus of our lives. It was an exhilarating process.

- *A.H. Interview by Rania Abdel Rahman. Transcript 23 August 2004. Women Pioneers Collection, Archive of Women's Oral History. The Women and Memory Forum*

The interview conducted by Rania 'Abd al-Rahman with H.A. in 2004 was one of the first accounts I read which featured a first-hand encounter between one of my primary historical interlocuters, Asma' Fahmi, and a student of hers—*from the perspective of the student*. In her account, H.A. recounts the time she spent at the Hilwan Secondary School for Girls, with much nostalgia and admiration for her Egyptian teachers, in particular Fahmi and Ihsan al-Qusi, two of the most prominent members of *Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha* and leaders of the Egyptian progressive movement as discussed in previous chapters of this dissertation. H.A. suggests that many of her teachers were "trained in psychology" and that they 'encouraged' the students when they participated in anti-colonial protests, despite their school's prohibition of student protests.

Asma' Fahmi had spent her professional career between public schools such as the Hilwan Secondary school for girls and the Teacher Training Institute for Female Teachers (*Ma'had al-Tarbiya li-l-Mu'allimat*) where she served as Undersecretary later on in her career. She was a prolific writer in the pedagogy press and was one of the main organizers of some of the country's most important pedagogical conferences in the 1940s.

Yet, despite her status and the legacy she has left behind, Fahmi has rarely been remembered by historians of education. Her name scarcely appears in the most important works on the history of pedagogy and education, including those of Iman Farag and Sa'id

Isma'il 'Ali. One notable exception to this rule is Barack Salmoni's *Pedagogies of Patriotism* which features Fahmi on two separate occasions. First, Salmoni cites one of Fahmi's articles published in *al-Thaqafa* in the late 1940s, and titled: *Muslims' Democratic Education* (*Dimuqratiyyat al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta'lim 'ind al-Muslimin*). As Salmoni notes, the article made the case for the inherent progressivism in Islamic pedagogy.[1] In so doing, it echoed countless other pedagogues who viewed progressive education as integral to traditional Islamic education, a position that was quite widespread among psychologist-educators as discussed in Chapter 4 of the dissertation. Salmoni goes as far as to compare Fahmi to modernist late 19th century Islamic reformer, Muhammad 'Abduh, suggesting that she uses terms reminiscent of 'Abduh in her assertion of the inherently democratic nature of Islam.

The second instance in which Salmoni mentions Fahmi is in relation to another article she wrote titled *Al-Taliba al-Misriyya bayn al-Madrasa wa-l-Mujtama'* (The Female Egyptian Student between the School and Society). The article features in a segment of Salmoni's PhD dissertation in which he discusses pedagogues' perceptions of girls' education, 'Educating Girls for What kind of Future?' In it, Salmoni suggests that: "By far the most unequivocal advocate of women's activity in the public sphere was Asma'Fahmi.[2] Salmoni highlights that for Fahmi, "one of the first purposes of modern education" was to grant the girl "a total social preparation" thereby exploring her legacy within the larger context of gender and women's rights. In fact, in both instances, Fahmi's voice is valuable insofar as it can convey a perspective on larger issues, in this case Islam and gender, that are related to the nation-building process.

[1] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 590–91.
[2] Salmoni, "Pedagogies of Patriotism," 621.

By contrast, in H.A.'s memories, we find a much more direct, humane and personal encounter with Fahmi. It is an account in which she is neither necessarily a 1940s female version of Muhammad 'Abduh nor a feminist Duriyya Shafiq. She is a committed, loving, and above all, excellent teacher. Asma' Fahmi is remembered by her students as a teacher. The account perfectly symbolises the intent and methodology of this dissertation which has tried to shed light on the daily experiences of practicing and more senior teachers from their own perspectives and on their own terms—to the extent that this is possible. This is not to suggest that teachers had no role to play in the larger nation-building project, or that they were not engaged in it. As demonstrated in H.A.'s account for example, we hear of her incessant participation as a secondary school student in the anti-colonial struggle against the British and we understand that some of her own teachers encouraged such actions. Nor does the focus on teachers' perspectives assume no unconscious participation on their part in the process of nation-building which is so intimately intertwined with modern schooling. However, this dissertation is an invitation to step back and to centre teachers' views and their own experiences precisely for the purpose of unearthing a more complex understanding of this incessantly assumed participation.

In the footsteps of more recent scholarship on the intellectual and social history of Egypt, the dissertation tries to reconstruct the story of teachers and to follow them from the classroom to the syndicate. It is far more interested in their intricate day-to day thoughts and practices as they set foot in their classroom: How do we keep children engaged? How to convey information easily? How to obtain the best pedagogical results? How to curate learning experiences that are meaningful? The dissertation thus operates on the assumption that teachers stepping into a classroom are—on average—far more interested in how to make their own job easier and more meaningful and much less fixated on how to best indoctrinate students. For Egyptian teachers of the early 20th century, the answer to such

practical dilemmas was loud and clear: it was through progressive education that the best and most impactful learning experiences could be created. Progressive education's appeal lay in its promise to engage students, based on the latest scientific research in the field of child psychology and to create lasting learning experiences for them.

But progressive education was more than a pedagogical tool fit for classroom settings. In Part I of the dissertation, we followed senior pedagogues within their training institutions to understand how progressive education was at the heart of teacher training in the country. In fact, one of Egypt's most important teacher training institutions, *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* was established in 1929 with progressive education in mind. By taking an institutionally informed approach which looks at the networks of teacher trainers, the curriculum offered at these institutions, the background of the trainers and the topics that they were most likely to publish, a new image of teacher training emerges, one in which psychology played an integral role in the training of teachers. Pedagogues employed by *Ma'had al-Tarbiya*, were themselves trained in either pedagogy studies or psychology. In this respect, their training reflected the progressive ethos: the focus on psychology as constituting the most important cornerstone of education. The psychologist-educators who were employed at Egyptian teacher training institutions became some of the most influential pedagogues impacting the next generation of teachers.

Moreover, this institutional approach allows us to view the multiplicity of actors involved in the process of knowledge production in the field of pedagogy studies during the first half of the 20th century. It allows us to understand the multi-directionality of intellectual exchanges between these institutions and other centers of knowledge production around the world and to understand the Egyptian actors (and their institutions) as active contributors to an international academic tradition of progressive pedagogy while taking into account the murky territory of Egypt's semi-colonial context and the power of

Western intellectual centers. It also allows for a kind of intellectual freedom which gave birth to a creative process in the field of progressive education and to 'push back' by producing its own 'brand' of progressivism. This 'brand' dubbed 'Middle Ground Psychology' was an attempt to bring into conversation the principles of psychoanalysis, on the one hand, and developmental psychology, on the other, while treading a fine line between them. The approach sought to instrumentalize both schools using certain aspects of each to cater to children of all ages and inclinations. Educators resorted to psychoanalysis especially when it came to 'problem' children while developmental psychology was believed to be the perfect blueprint for 'normal' children.

Beyond the simple mapping exercise which locates the main actors, institutions and publications that set the scene for the emergence of a field of progressive teacher training, the dissertation has also been preoccupied with the reasons why pedagogues would have supported this pedagogical movement in the first place. Embedded within progressive education were attributes which made for a thrilling and intellectually compelling academic pursuit, allowing its proponents to engage on par in a global and transnational pedagogical debate. The fact that progressive education relied on pedagogical experiments, that it allowed for a certain level of freedom for its practitioners and that it was a flexible field which was continuously changing, was academically enticing. It was a powerful academic tradition which was both challenging but also rewarding, and which facilitated the pursuit of ideas for their own sake.

We know that senior pedagogues at Egypt's leading teacher training institutions were enamoured of these ideas, but how did the average teacher view them? By moving from the realm of teacher training to actual public schools we can observe one more facet of teachers' professional lives, at yet another one of their institutions. As it turns out, practicing teachers were just as thrilled about progressivism as their trainers as they

attempted to put these ideas into practice despite the multiple challenges they faced and the monumental impediments which stood in their way. Most of these impediments were in fact institutional and tied to budgetary problems.

While the post 1922 moment saw a significant rise in the country's education budget after limitations once placed by the British occupation were lifted, the resources necessary for a full implementation of progressivism in Egyptian classrooms were never really available. Progressive education necessitated specialized facilities and highly trained personnel. For example, it was necessary for the number of schools to be sufficient that only a limited number of students could be grouped in one classroom. Small numbers were in turn necessary for the tailored learning experience that progressives across the board were interested in. Similarly, in order to let children freely express themselves in art and drawing classes, teachers needed arts and crafts materials. It was also important that teachers be trained in 'Middle Ground Psychology' so that they could understand children and best curate their learning journeys. But teacher training was notoriously costly. Thus, the resources needed for such a project far surpassed even the entirety of the government budget.

Moreover, the Egyptian system of education was plagued by high levels of centralisation. This meant that textbooks, lesson plans, curricula and examinations were dictated by the Ministry of Public Instruction. Deviations from the directives of the Ministry could result in major professional setbacks for teachers who were kept in check through a rigid system of inspection. Interestingly, many of these restraining features were perceived by teachers to have originated with the British occupation, and more specifically the policies of Douglas Dunlop, whose tenure over the educational establishment in the late 19th and early 20th centuries became a rallying cry against the occupation before 1922.

With the continued presence of these restrictions beyond 1922, it was extremely difficult for teachers to implement progressive practices in their classrooms.

Despite such impediments however, we find countless examples of teachers, from across the country, who were able to introduce progressive methods to their students. Teachers often published accounts of their own pedagogical 'experiments' in their classrooms, i.e., the trial-and-error activities through which they could test out progressive ideas and put them into practice. From the introduction of specific progressive tools such as the so-called Dalton Plan or the Project Method to the introduction of theatre, scientific experiments and free drawing classes, teachers were active participants in the concretisation of progressive ideas in real life settings.

Beyond such individual attempts, however, there were institutional and structural adoptions of progressive practices. For example, progressive conversations had an important role to play in a set of curricular reforms which were carried out in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. It was also thanks to such conversations that subjects and activities that we today deem a 'normal' part of any schooling system, such as school trips or sports classes or even music, were introduced into the official school curriculum. Moreover, institutions such as *Ma'had al-Tarbiya* created 'experimental' classrooms that were attached to the institute and in which teachers were free to 'test' out different pedagogical tools and invent new teaching practices with their students. Progressive pedagogues also developed the initial idea for the model village schools which was later adopted by the Cairo School for Social Work. Thus, progressive education and its experimental ethos were at the heart of many of the country's major educational reforms.

If many senior pedagogues at the training institutions were in favour of progressive pedagogy because it was an intellectually and academically interesting field of study, practicing teachers were also committed to progressivism because of its inherent promise

to bring about a democratic society. Because of the movement's embedded ideals of freedom in the classroom, critical thinking and its promise to help each and every student take informed decisions, progressive education was a way to model democracy within the school and eventually trickle down to the entire society. It thereby created a language of possibility for a better and brighter future.

While it remains virtually impossible to verify the opinions of thousands of Egyptian teachers from the interwar period vis-à-vis the progressive movement, it is nevertheless possible to claim that most teachers most likely supported these practices for these reasons: It was a relatively uncharted territory and therefore retained an untainted reputation as a solid, scientifically proven and pedagogically sound and functioning approach. As suggested in the accounts that many teachers left behind in the education press, progressive methods were trusted because they believed them to be effective. Progressive education may not have been adopted by a vast majority of teachers, but the reasons for this had more to do with the limited resources available to them as well as the built-in structures of the education system which were historically introduced by the British occupation. Despite such impediments, teachers sympathized with them and thought them to be necessary to safeguard and bolster Egypt's nascent democracy.

Even beyond their classrooms, practicing teachers pursued a commitment to progressive education within their syndicates and associations. As it turns out, many teachers had a rich and active life outside their schools as they congregated within different professional alliances to safeguard their profession. Teacher activism was thus as vibrant, as much as it was productive. During the first half of the 20th century, teachers' associations were formed with members from diverse backgrounds and oftentimes different aims.

Some organizations centred employment-focused questions of rights and salaries, while others seem to have been more interested in academic, research or policy-oriented pursuits. However, even though such divergent aims may seem, at first, to stem from diametrically opposing philosophical and political commitments, all these groups shared a common interest in progressive education as it became a glue which created a shared professional identity among teachers despite their differences in economic status, geographic origin or institutional background. In fact, the dissertation calls into question the very notion that the academic pursuit of progressive education is somehow antithetical to the pursuit of socio-economic rights. This is because progressive education was a vehicle to demand the amelioration of teaching conditions and salaries, even if the groups advancing this agenda cannot be neatly classified as radical leftists or anti-establishment revolutionaries. The adoption of progressive methods requires pedagogical know-how, substantial specialised training, technical knowledge, and the mastery of a wide-ranging skill set. By advocating for the adoption of progressive education, teachers were making the case for the betterment of their social standing. In parallel, thanks to their specialized training and their advanced knowledge of child psychology and pedagogy, teachers could now also put forward demands for increased participation in the decision-making process within the Ministry of Education itself. Teachers' right to participate in curriculum design, lesson planning, educational policy—even the right to creatively tailor lessons as they saw fit—were all part of what the progressive ethos sought to establish. As such, even less confrontational teacher alliances could happily endorse the progressive agenda as it gave them a vehicle to articulate demands in a conciliatory manner.

In this sense, progressive education gave teachers mechanisms to expresses an aspiration to become part of a more prestigious profession. Teachers' activism was also channelled in the press as many became active contributors to Egyptian magazines,

newspapers and journals. One of the country's most prestigious publishers, *Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr* originated within a group of progressive pedagogues who used their platforms to promote progressive principles, translate important works into Arabic and provide opportunities for local teachers to publish their ideas and thoughts. By looking at these three diverse modes of being a teacher: training, teaching and activism, we see the reasons for teachers' support of progressive education. Whether it was to engage in interesting academic debates, to uphold a democratic agenda or to ameliorate their own economic conditions, teachers were consistently attracted by the allure of progressive education and the promises it made for a better future. It goes without saying that different groups of teachers, whether practicing or more senior, saw all three reasons for the adoption of progressive education as valid and meaningful.

From the beginning, this dissertation has proposed to look at teachers as the main interlocutors when it comes to the history of pedagogical thought. It proposes a reverse-angle shot which, rather than look at teachers as mere vehicles for the nation-building process or as instruments in the creation of modern subjectivities, tries to understand their thoughts, practices and the reasons for their adoption of progressive ideas. It thereby proposes new and more complex ways for understanding what it meant to be a teacher during the first half of the 20th century. Progressive education was central to this story since it made the most sense for teachers of the period. By centring teachers and respecting the seriousness of their pedagogical views and endeavours, the dissertation almost accidentally opens the door to previously neglected angles of modern subjectivity, blind spots that have long been absent from our understanding of the history of education in Egypt. These include 'larger' questions of democracy, the role of academic teacher training centres, democratic activism, the press, and questions of socio-economic rights—all of which are central tenets of the modern state building project. Coming full circle, and

although it sets out *not* to adopt this 'big picture' approach, the thesis has ended up uncovering and commenting on such so-called 'larger' issues, almost inadvertently through this very focused approach on teachers and their pedagogies.

Because of the British exit from the realm of education in 1922, Egyptians took charge of all matters pertaining to the education system and were able to theorize and implement progressivism which in their eyes was tied to a project of democratisation and aimed to cement what they believed to be a post-colonial era. This was an anomaly if compared to neighbouring countries of the region, which largely fell prey to colonial control *after* World War I. In this sense, it was a locally informed 'brand' of progressivism that was not tarnished by direct colonial control thereby providing an important example of progressive education. Egypt was neither a country of the Global North, trying to experiment with progressivism, nor was it a militarized society such as the Soviet Union. It thereby serves as an example of how progressivism travelled and was experienced in such a unique context and serves to deepen our understanding of the history of this movement. Finally, the dissertation contributes to our understanding of the transnational nature of progressive education, and of education more generally. As demonstrated in several chapters, Egyptians' awareness of developments in other countries, including those of the Global South, their admiration for the teachers' movement in countries such as Mexico, the development of education systems in Asia and their exchanges with some of their neighbouring countries such as Iraq, can help enrich current debates in the literature on the transnationality of the movement.

However, in some sense, the dissertation has done little more than scratch the surface of the Egyptian pedagogical landscape of the first half of the 20th century. Further research should be directed at providing a comprehensive analysis of the Egyptian teacher training institutions mentioned in Part I of this dissertation and the role they played

in shaping an impactful generation of teachers whose professional career was launched with the rise of the Nasser regime and the ensuing expansion of the Egyptian education system. The history of modern Egyptian education also lacks extensive profiles of certain schools and the ways in which they contributed to the making of an Egyptian middle class.[3] The role of progressive model schools such as *al-'Urman,* in educating an entire (Cairo-based) generation of doctors, engineers and lawyers has been largely understudied.

In order to obtain further insights about the rise of the teaching profession in 20th century Egypt, future studies should be carried out to track the professional development of individual teachers over time. Rather than focus on key psychologist-educators (such as 'Abd al-Salam Shawqi Dayf's profile of Isma'il al-Qabbani) further sources about practicing teachers could be obtained by looking at the records of state bureaucracy located at the *Dar al-Mahfuzat al-'Umumiyya* (Public Records Office).[4] Such insights would provide more information on the hundreds and thousands of unknown teachers whose professional cycle left a lasting imprint on a whole generation of Egyptians.

It would also be noteworthy to build on the existing WMF's archive of female teachers to enrich our understanding of the role of women in the teaching profession. In similar fashion, while the thesis has tried to shed light on the role played by teachers' syndicates and associations in the development of pedagogical thought and practice, further research could be directed at uncovering their role in the larger workers', professional syndicates' and anti-colonial movements. How present were these associations during times of protest and unrest and were they in communication with like-minded organizations belonging to other professional groups?

[3] There are very few histories of Egyptian public school in general; the few existing school biographies are of missionary and foreign schools. See for example, Sahar Hammuda and Colin Clement, *Victoria College: A History Revealed* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2002).
[4] Dayf, "Fikr Ismaʿil Mahmoud Al-Qabbani wa Atharihi ʿala Tatawwur al-Tarbiya wa-l-Taʿlim fi Jumhuriyyat Misr al-ʿArabiyya." For more on Dar al-Mahfuzat see Adam Mestyan, "Dar al-Mahfuzat al-ʿUmumiyya" in *Hazine.* https://hazine.info/daralmahfuzat/ https://hazine.info/daralmahfuzat/

Similarly, while the dissertation has shown the degree to which Egyptian teachers were in fact pre-occupied with pedagogical developments in other countries, both in the Global North and the Global South, comparative and more transnational approaches are needed to understand the nature of these international connections. In what ways did the common interest in progressive education shape the relationship between Egyptian and Iraqi teachers, for example? Some of the sources consulted in this dissertation are also worth further exploration. These include for example public school magazines which are housed at the Egyptian National Library. While historians like Barack Salmoni have briefly discussed their impact, they remain a largely understudied source despite their potential to contribute to our understanding of the history of Egyptian childhood, everyday school practices, teacher-student relationships and on assessment of schooling experience as a whole. Because Egyptian public schools (and their archives) are off limits to researchers and to the press, school magazines represent the only available source to reconstruct an image of our educational past.

While I have tried not to limit my scope to Cairo, the traditional centre, unfortunately, but of necessity, the dissertation has remained very Cairo-centric. As such, school magazines, especially those which were published by public schools across Egypt might prove an excellent way to further understand both every-day school dynamics and pedagogical practices. Comparative studies between school magazines produced during the interwar period and those produced under the Nasser regime would also be interesting to understand shifting dynamics within the school.

Finally, there exists extensive research potential in the exploration of pedagogical thought beyond 1956. While the dissertation has tried to show how the malleability of progressive education allowed its supporters to select aspects of the movement's philosophies and practices which were suitable to the discourses of the new regime, at

least during the early Nasser years, there remains a gap in understanding exactly how this was orchestrated and how this would have translated in ministerial policies and within school life. In other words, how did progressive education evolve with the Nasser regime and did it necessarily survive beyond the 1970s? Further research should therefore explore the Sadat years and the impact of dwindling public investment in education on the progressive movement, or at least what remained of it in terms of school activities and manual labour. Such research would be crucial in understanding how pedagogical thought evolved during the second half of the 20th century and in the lead up to the January 25 uprising in Egypt and would contribute to more global understandings of how it developed beyond its interwar iteration.

In 2011, a new generation of informal/alternative progressive education enthusiasts emerged after the fall of the Mubarak regime. Empowered by revolutionary events, numerous alliances of teachers, parents and young educationalists came together to discuss ideas, host workshops and found new educational initiatives with progressive principles in mind.[5] Drawing inspiration from a host of sources, these new groups engaged with a range of regional and international pedagogical experts ranging from famed Palestinian educator Munir Fasha to international progressive thinkers like Ken Robinson.[6] With differences in their outlook, style of operation and geographic location, they nevertheless all shared an interest in providing an alternative to the Egyptian public schooling system which by then had become an underfunded, violent and poorly attended institution that was, to use Hania

[5] Jason Nunzio Dorio, Ehaab D. Abdou, and Nashwa Moheyeldine, *The Struggle for Citizenship Education in Egypt : (Re)Imagining Subjects and Citizens*, 1st ed., Routledge, 2018.
[6] "Munir Fasha, "Hal Tudamir al-Madaris 'Uqul Atfaluna?," *Al-Jazeera*, October 18, 2020, https://1-a1072.azureedge.net/midan/intellect/sociology/2020/10/28/%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B4%D9%87-%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AA%D9%81%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89.

Sobhy's brilliant phrase, 'de facto privatized.'[7] In some sense, this desperation to find alternatives to Egypt's crumbling system has shielded progressivism's post-2011 supporters from critically examining the movement's limitations and from engaging with some of the more recent critical literature on the subject. Even the Egyptian Ministry of Education launched its own 'Education Reform' project in 2018, under former Minister Tariq Shawqi using progressive language, although it was never seriously funded by the state.[8]

Above all, such developments demonstrated that progressivism—in its millennial iteration—was alive and well. The few times I managed to share my findings within some of these progressive spaces, whether these were NGOs, alliances or alternative learning institutes, I was met with the same reaction: a complete lack of awareness about the rich history of Egyptian progressive education prior to 1952 and utter disbelief that this history could have ever possibly originated at the hands of public schoolteachers, *muwwazafin hukuma* (civil servants). This work is therefore dedicated to all those trying to teach in creative and meaningful ways—especially under current conditions of repression and economic collapse—so that they may perhaps find some fleeting solace in the knowledge that they were never alone: They are part of a rich and colourful history of progressive teaching and belong to a long line of passionate progressive educators in Egypt.

[7] Hania Sobhy, "The De-Facto Privatization of Secondary Education in Egypt: A Study of Private Tutoring in Technical and General Schools," *Compare* 42, no. 1 (2012): 47–67; Hania Sobhy, *Schooling the Nation: Education and Everyday Politics in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).
[8] Jana Bou Matar, "Egyptian Educational System to End by 2026: Minister of Education," *Egyptian Streets*, May 31, 2018.

Appendix 1: List of Teacher Training Manuals and Pedagogy Texts from 1903-1955

1. **Author**	Manual/Text	**Year of Publication**
2. ‘Ali al-Jarim and Mustafa Amin	‘Ilm al-Nafs wa-Atharuhu fi-l-Tabriya wa-l-Ta‘lim (Psychology and its Impact on Education	1915
3. ‘Ali ‘Umar	Hadayatu-l-Mudaris li-l-Nizam al-Madrasi wa Turuq al-Tadris (The Guidance of the Teacher to the Schooling System and Teaching Methods)	8th edition 1924
4. ‘Abd al ‘Aziz Jawish	Ghunyat al-Mu’addibin fi-l-Turuq al-Haditha li-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta‘lim (The Educator’s Riches in the New Methods of Education)	1903
5. Dr. Hasan ‘Umar	Miqyas al-Dhaka’ (Intelligence Testing)	1928
6. Hasan Tawfiq	Hadayatu-l-Atfal (The Guidance for Children)	1927
7. Miss Terry	Al-Al‘ab al-Madrasiyya (School Games)	1923 (Ministry of Public Instruction)
8. Amin Mursi Qandil Former Professor of Psychology at MMU and, Head of the European Committee at the Ministry of Public Instruction)	’Usual al-Tarbiya wa Fann al-Tadris (The Foundation of Education and the Art of Teaching)	1928
9. Amin Mursi Qandil	’Usul al-Tarbiya Part 2 (The Foundations of Education Part 2)	1930/1931
10. Amin Mursi Qandil	’Usul ‘Ilm al-Nafs (The Foundations of Psychology)	1925
11. Amin Mursi Qandil	’Usul ‘Ilm al-Nafs Part 2 (The Foundations of Psychology Part 2)	1925 and 1929 published on its own
12. ‘Abd al-Karim Ahmad al-Sukkari (intended for elementary schoolteachers)	Al-Mabadi’ al-Awwaliyya fi ’Usul al-Tarbiya wa-l- Ta‘lim Al-Juz’ al-’Awwal (Muqarrar al-Sanna al ’Ula li Madaris al-Mu‘allimin al-Awwaliyya) (The Foundational Principles of Education)	1926

13. Insaf Sirri (Headmaster of the Amiriyya Secondary School for Girls in Shubra)	Rawdat al-Atfal li-l-Madaris al-Awwaliyya (Kindergarten/Pre-School)	1930
14. Munira Sabry	Kitab al-Al‘ab al-Rifiyya al-Musiqiyya (Musical Rural Games)	1928
15. Munir Marzuk	Dalil al-Al‘ab (Games)	1936
16. Muhammad ‘Ali Mustapah, Mansur Sulayman	Al-Tadris ’Usuluhu wa Tara’iquhu (Teaching: Its Foundations and Methods)	1933
17. Amir Buktur	Kayf Nata‘allam li Na‘ish (How we learn to Live)	1930
18. Isma‘il al-Qabbani	Qiyas al-Dhaka’ (Intelligence Testing)	1938, lectures delivered in 1934
19. Isma‘il al-Qabbani	Ikhtibar al-Dhaka’ al-’Ibtida’i Kurasat al-Ta‘limat (Testing Intelligence at the Primary Level-An Instructions Manual)	1939 (2nd edition)
20. Ya‘kub Famm	Al-Tarbiya wa-l-Akhlaq (Education and Morals/Ethics)	1930
21. Muhammad ‘Ali Mustafa and others	Mabadi’ al-Tarbiya Part 2 (The Principles of Education Part 2)	1938
22. Ahmad ‘Abduh Khayruldin	’Usul al-Tarbiya wa-l-Ta‘lim (The Foundations of Rearing and Education)	1933 4th edition
23. Muhammad Khalaf allAh	Al-Tifl min al-Mahd ’ila al-Rushd (The Child from the Crib to Adulthood)	1939
24. George Henry Green, Muhammad Khairy Harby	’I ‘dad al-durus (Lesson planning)	1949
25. Muhammad ‘Attiyya al-Ibrashi	Al-Shakhsiyya (The Personality)	Third edition 1938
26. Percy Nunn (translated by Salih ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Shihata)	Al-Tarbiya Madatuha wa Mabadi’uha al-Awwaliyya (Education its Data and First Principles)	first published 1945, edition used for dissertation 1961 and
27. Henry Green and Muhammad Husayn al-Makhzanji	Risalat al-Mu‘allim (The Teacher’s Message)	first published in 1948, edition used for dissertation 1953

28. Susann Isaacs	Al-Hadana: Nafsiyyat al-Tifl fi-l-Sanawat al-Khams al-'Ula (Kindergarten: Children's Psychology in the First Five Years)	1946 translated by Sumayya Fahmi
29. Arthur Rex Knight	Al-Dhaka' wa Maqayisahu (Intelligence and Intelligence Testing)	Translated by 'Attiya Mahmud Hana (First published in Arabic in 1949)
30. Ahmad Zaki Salih	'Ilm al-Nafs al-Tarbawi (Educational Psychology)	1950 first edition, edition used for dissertation 1953
31. George Freeland (?)	Asalib al-Tarbiya al-Haditha fi-l-Madaris al-'Ibtida'iyya (The Methods of New Education in Primary Schools)	1953 translated by 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Majid and 'Izzat Rajih Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr
32. Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz	Al-Tarbiya wa Turuq al-Tadris al Juz' al-Thani (Education and Teaching Methods Part II)	1951 probably
33. Salih 'Abd al-'Aziz and 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd al-Majid	Al-Tarbiya wa Turuq al-Tadris al Juz' al-'Awwal(Education and Teaching Methods Part I)	
34. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qusi	'Usus 'Ilm al-Nafs (The Principles of Psychology)	Published in 1950 but based on lectures he gave starting 1934
35. Hamid 'Abd al-Qadir, Muhammad 'Attiya al-Ibrashi and Muhammad Mazhar Sa'id	Fi 'Ilm al-Nafs al-Juz' al-'Awwal(On Psychology, Part 1)	1936 first edition 1932 (explores psychoanalysis, widely used at Dar al-'Ulum)
36. Hamid 'Abd al-Qadir, Muhammad 'Attiya al-Ibrashi	Fi 'Ilm al-Nafs al-Juz' al-Thani (On Psychology, Part II)	1933
37. Muhammad Fu'ad Jalal (Professor MTM)	Mabadi' al-Tahlil al-Nafsi (The Principles of Psychoanalysis)	1946
38. Riyad Muhammad 'Askar	Al-Tarbiya wa Atharuha fi-l-Fard wa-l-Mujtama'	1948

PhD Columbia, Professor of Education at MTM		
39. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi (Professor of Psychology MTM)	Usus al-Sihha al-Nafsiyya (The Principles of Psychological Health)	1952
40. Sa‘d ‘Abd Allah Habib	Usus al-Tarbiya al-Haditha (The Principles of New Education)	1952
41. Susan Isaacs	Al-Tifl fi-l-Madrasa al-ʾIbtidaʾiyya (Children in Primary Schools)	1945
42. Muhammad Khalifa Barakat	Tahlil al-Shakhsiyya (Analysing Personality)	1954
43. Muhammad Khattab Husayn and ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibrahim	Al-Hadith fi Turuq al-Tadris li Mudarisi al-Ta‘lim al-’Ilzami (Teaching Methods for Compulsory Schoolteachers)	1934
44. Isma‘il al-Qabbani et. al	Mabadi’ al-Tarbiya (The Principles of Education)	1937
45. Muhammad Husayn al-Makhzanji (Lecturer at Ma‘had al-tarbiya)	Turuq al-Tarbiya al-Haditha (The New Methods of Education	1933
46. Muhammad ‘Attiya al-Ibrashi (Inspector at Ministry of Public Instruction and lecturer at Dar al-‘Ulum	Al-Tarbiya al-Inkiliziyya (English Education)	1936
47. ‘Abd al-Hamid Fahmi Matar	Al-Ta‘lim wa-l-Muta‘attilun fi Misr (Education and the Unemployed in Egypt)	1939
48. Muhammad Khalifa Barakat	Al-Ikhtibarat wa-l-Maqayis al-‘Aqliya (Experiments and Measurements of the Intellect/Mind)	1954
49. Mustafa Fahmi (Professor of Psychology at MTM)	Al-Dawafi‘ al-Nafsiyya (Psychological Drives)	1951

50. ‘Ali Muhammad Shaltut (Lecturer of Pedagogy and Psychology at Ma‘had al-Mu‘alliminn al-’Ibtida’i in Alexandria)	Muhadarat fi-l-Tarbiya wa ‘Ilm al-Nafs (Lectures in Education and Psychology)	1948
51. Ismai‘il al-Qabbani	Siyasat al-Ta‘lim fi Misr (Education Policy in Egypt)	1944
52. Muhammad ‘Attiya al-Ibrashi	Al-Ittijahat al-Haditha fi-l-Tarbiya (The New Orientations in Education)	1943
53. Emily ‘Abd al-Mesih et. al	Tarbiyat al-Tifl wa Mabadi’ ‘Ilm al-Nafs (Child Education and the Principles of Psychology)	1938
54. Habib Jurji	Al-Tarbiya al-Fanniyya (Art Education)	1934
55. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Abd al-Majid	Al-Qissa fi-l-Tarbiya (Stories in Education)	third edition published in 1956
56. Isma‘il Mahmud al-Qabbani	Dirasat fi Masa’il al-Tarbiya (Studies on Matters of Education)	1958
57. ‘Abd al-Mun‘im ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Miliji (Assistant Professor of Psychology at Ma‘had al-Tarbiya Ibrahim University)	Al-Numuwu al-Nafsi (Psychological Development)	1951

Appendix 2: List of Members Rabitat al-Tarbiya al-Haditha in 1942

Ibrahim Mustafa

Ihsan al-‘Abid

Ihsan al-Qusi

Ahmad Khaki

Ahmad Zaki Muhammad

Ahmad Shafiq Zahir

Ahmad ‘Abd al-Salam al-Kirdani

Ahmad ‘Ali

Ahmad Muhammad

Ahmad Hammam

Ahmad Najib Hashim

Asma’ Fahmi

Isma‘il al-Qabbani

Isma‘il Haqqi

Al-Sayyid Rawha

Al-Sayyid Mahmud Zaki

Al-Sayyid Yusuf

Emily ‘Abd al-Mesih

Amir Buqtur

Hamid Bashir

Hamid ‘Abd al-Qadir

Hamid Nabih

Habib Jurji

Radwan Radi

Riad ‘Askar

Zaki al-Rashidi

Zaki al-Muhandis

Zaynab ‘Abd al-Hafiz Sulayman

Zaynab Fahmi

Sumayya Fahmi

Sayyid Basha

Sayyida Mabruk

Salih Shihata

Salah al-Din Qutb

‘Ai’isha al-Kashif

‘Abd al-Hamid Hasan

‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Qusi

‘Abd al-‘Aziz Ibrahim

‘Abd al-‘Aziz ‘Abd al-Majid

‘Abd al-‘Aziz Salama

‘Abd al-Qadir Ghali

‘Uthman al-Digwi

‘Idalat Kamal

‘Aziza Radwan

‘Attiya al-Ibrashi

‘Ali Ibrahim Bahrawi

‘Ali Khalil

‘Inayat al-Hakim

Fatma Nu‘man

Fathiyya Hasan Sulayman

Constance Bloor

Muhammad Banuta

Muhammad Thabit

Muhammad Khalafallah

Muhammad Khalifa Barakat

Muhammad Sa‘id Qadri

Muhammad Shafiq al-Junaydi

Muhammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Hafiz

Muhammad ‘Abd al-Hadi

Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahid Khallaf

Muhammad ‘Ali Mustafa

Muhammad Farid Abu Hadid

Muhammad Fu’ad Jalal

Muhammad Kamil al-Nahhas

Muhammad Yusuf Hammam

Mahmud Ahmad al-Murshidi

Mahmud Zaki

Mahmud ‘Ali Fadli

Ni‘mat Rif ‘at

Wahba Amin al-Hanajri

Ya‘qub Famm

Yusuf al-‘Afifi

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Ministerial Decree No. 5028 of 1939 on the establishment of Seven Educational Regions

Ministerial Decree No. 39 of 1939 on the Transfer of Primary School Certificate Exams to the Educational Regions

Ministerial Decree 10316 of 1951 on the construction of school buildings

Revolutionary Command Council Decree 3 January 1954 on the Acceptance of Al-Qabbani's Resignation

Ministerial Decree No. 458 of 1956 on the Organization of Experimental Model Schools

Ministerial Decree No. 300 of 1956 on the Revisions to Law No. 219 of 1951