



ANATOMY OF THE 1936–39 REVOLT: IMAGES OF THE BODY IN POLITICAL CARTOONS OF MANDATORY PALESTINE

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This article analyzes body images in political cartoons during the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt. By deciphering the visual messages in the political cartoons of two newspapers—the Arabic Filastin and the Hebrew Davar—the article examines how body representations portray stereotypes of rivals and reveal assumptions about and relations between conflicting parties. Visual imagery maintained its impact by illustrating nationalist attitudes, critiques, and goals. In addition to being referents to a period not well documented in images, cartoons are also potent historical sources for reconstructing a sociopolitical history of Palestine.

DURING THE ARAB REVOLT OF 1936–1939, one of the most contentious periods of Britain's Mandate over Palestine, political cartoonists in the country drew upon the tradition of physiognomy to present recognizable images of well-known personalities and groups. By deciphering the use of physiognomy in the political cartoons of two newspapers—the Hebrew *Davar* and the Arabic *Filastin*—this article examines how body images in political cartoons illustrate and portray partisan responses to the events. By offering possible interpretations of the pictorial language supplementing the cartoon's text, the article suggests a subtextual reading of the revolt.

Political cartoons appeared infrequently if at all before and after the revolt, but they appeared regularly while it was in progress. Thus, in addition to being referents to a period not well-documented in images, cartoons are also potent historical sources for reconstructing a sociopolitical history of the period.¹ Cartoonists of both *Davar* and *Filastin* manipulated body features to convey the deviancy of the Other.² I present here only six cartoons, chosen from twenty-six comparable cartoons, because they lend themselves especially well to analysis of the political undercurrents.

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As scholar of political graphics Robert Phillippe has remarked, “Graphic art can be a political weapon. . . . it becomes more intense in tone and simpler in content at moments of crisis.”³ Body images in political cartoons during the Arab Revolt thus acted as ammunition for national struggle, allowing the stark representation of divergent opinions. Bodily representations in the cartoons portray stereotypes of rivals and reveal assumptions about and relations between conflicting parties. Combined, these messages offer a sharp critique of negotiations, political tactics, and economic developments during the revolt.

Depending on the newspaper, political cartoons in Palestine served as a tool of opposition to British, Zionist, and/or Palestinian Arab people and politics. In a satirical twist as much textual as visual, the cartoonists frequently took traditional visual markers of deviancy used against their own group and applied them instead to the adversary. In so doing, they utilized visual markers of the body based in the pseudosciences of physiognomy and phrenology, relics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A wide gulf separated the two competing nationalisms in Palestine, the Zionist and the Palestinian Arab. The Palestinians, whose society was largely agrarian, were numerically far superior, but the Zionist movement, fed by a growing immigration of skilled people from Europe, enjoyed a clear technological and organizational superiority, as well as access to financial support from the Jewish Diaspora, allowing Zionists to buy land, set up schools, and engage in farming and business.⁴

Though Zionist leaders had their frustrations with the British Mandatory government, they were also well aware of its crucial role in facilitating their national project, a central provision of the Mandate being the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.⁵ The Palestinian national movement, on the other hand, rejecting the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration contained within it, engaged in anticolonial resistance both against the Zionist presence in Palestine and British sponsorship of that presence: the 1936–1939 revolt was a major episode of that resistance. Ultimately, the unequal structure of the Mandate’s terms and the Palestinian movement’s rejection of those terms, combined with a disunited national leadership and a very different socioeconomic profile, left the Palestinian Arabs ill-equipped to meet the challenges posed by Mandate politics and the transformations taking place in Palestine.⁶

DEVIANCY AND THE BODY IN POLITICAL CARTOONS

Despite their distinctive styles, the cartoonists of the Arabic *Filastin* and Hebrew *Davar* generally employed the same basic physiognomical and phrenological codes to express difference and deviance. Physiognomy helped form the biological concept of race and criminality and ultimately led to “profiling” an individual’s personality or a nation’s character through physical features.⁷ Physiognomy proposed that one’s essential nature was evident in facial features—the size of the nose and mouth, the color of the eyes, the shape of the skull or jaw, the length of the forehead.⁸ Physiognomists imbued hands, feet, and other

features of the body with symbolic meaning; large palms or hands, for example, might indicate a brute or distrustful type. Size and shape of fingers were markers of intellect;⁹ a small foot signified refinement. According to the tenets of physiognomy, aquiline noses in Caucasians belonged to the elite and professional classes, whereas stubbed (pug) or upturned noses symbolized the degraded working class.¹⁰ Features such as sunken cheeks or prominent cheekbones, small eyes, short noses, prominent lower lips, and poor posture—all attributed to the lower, “less sanitary,” and “criminal” classes—appeared frequently in the cartoons.

Phrenology, a cousin to physiognomy, studied features of the skull and forehead to determine character. Phrenologists believed the capacity for comparison and causality to be located in the upper forehead. Thus, a receding and a projecting forehead both signified lack of intellect; short or receding foreheads were common features in these cartoons. Passion or animal instinct was said to be located in the posterior base of the brain, so a protrusion of the back of the head indicated animal-like qualities such as pugnacity or heightened sexuality. The preferred head shape was one where the forehead and chin formed a perpendicular line (orthognathous). Prothagnathist faces (those with protruding jaws), indicative of stupidity and baseness, were associated with persons phrenologists might consider inferior, savage, or low.¹¹ These cartoonists also substituted animals for humans to convey certain moral qualities and to ridicule a group or person perceived as a threat.¹² Beaks of various birds stood in for noses in order to suggest the relative place of the individual in the hierarchy of nature.¹³ During the revolt, cartoonists often depicted humans as dogs, birds, donkeys, cats, frogs, or owls.

Reproducing Pathology in *Filastin* and *Davar* Cartoons

Both *Davar* and *Filastin* were popular dailies under the Mandate; *Davar*, one of nine Hebrew dailies, was the mouthpiece of the Zionist Labor party (Histadrut), while *Filastin*, one of the four main Arabic dailies and considered one of the most important in Palestine,¹⁴ was aligned with the Hizb al-Difa‘ al-Watani (National Defense party) of the Nashashibi family.¹⁵ Most cartoons in Palestine’s newspapers featured daily events and commentary on the 1936–1939 revolt. Whenever a political cartoon appeared, it always appeared on the first page, and as the conflict intensified, cartoons became more frequent.¹⁶

The cartoonists of *Davar* and *Filastin*, both of whom were Europeans, adhered to the conventions of physiognomy in their work. This is not to say that they studied specific, scientific texts about physiognomy, but they were certainly familiar with the popularized version of physiognomy and its stereotyped correspondences. Indeed, as Europeans, they could not have ignored the increasing currency of worldwide political propaganda in the 1930s, and they were likely exposed at least to the most basic physiognomical depictions common at the time; the famous British satirical journal *Punch*, for example, consistently used physiognomy. In the case of *Davar*’s cartoonist, Arieh Navon,

the exposure is beyond dispute: he studied in Paris at the Institut d'Esthétique Contemporain and at other private, well-known artists' studios in the early 1930s.¹⁷ His work showed the influence of French and German caricaturists, particularly Daumier and Grosz.¹⁸ The Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) appreciated the accuracy, wit, and political criticism of his illustrations.¹⁹ The editors of *Davar* were the first to publish political cartoons, starting in 1933, which, according to Navon, were well received.²⁰

The identity of the cartoonist of *Filastin* remains unknown, but according to Raja al-'Isa, son of *Filastin*'s owner 'Isa Daud al-'Isa, the cartoonist was a Christian woman from Eastern Europe.²¹ Indeed, women were starting in the 1930s to become professional cartoonists in the Middle East,²² where cartoons, as Palmira Brummett has shown, bore the influence of the European press.²³ 'Isa reported that his father thought up the ideas for the cartoons, which were then drawn by the cartoonist. 'Isa al-'Isa was exposed to European caricatures through his reading of European newspapers,²⁴ and it is virtually certain that his cartoonist was as well. In any case, her cartoons deploy the same type of satiric code as those of Navon and other European cartoonists, indicating awareness of the technique of physiognomical coding.

Visual images in political cartoons helped drive a nationalist message for both literate and illiterate Palestinians. A. A. Najjar argues that the daily press significantly influenced which issues were deemed important during the revolt, indirectly helping to set the agenda for the Palestinian Arab national movement.²⁵ Although most newspaper readers probably did not have formal knowledge of the specific pseudoscientific beliefs on which physiognomy was based, many literate, educated people would know its popular form, for physiognomic beliefs were an "international phenomenon during this time."²⁶ Furthermore, an increase in literacy among the Palestinian fellahin, along with the practice of reading aloud and showing pictures and cartoons to illiterate individuals, resulted in a wide audience of Arab newspaper patrons who could absorb its nationalist messages.

The cartoonists of Palestine frequently drew a certain trait to signify an individual or group so that the audience could recognize the characters, the trait usually reflecting the physical stereotypes and prejudices toward a particular group. Without the correspondence between these images and some popular, consensual judgment about what they conveyed, these illustrations would have been meaningless.²⁷ Although gauging the exact impact of audience responses is difficult due to a lack of documentation, readers in Palestine likely became familiar with or at least could identify common physical typologies in illustration.²⁸

Visual imagery maintained its impact by fulfilling the same role as written newspaper articles: the illustration of nationalist attitudes, critique, and goals. H. Can'an points out that all Zionist newspapers adhered to a minimum ideological paradigm of encouraging projects for promoting the interests of the Jewish sector: free Jewish immigration to Palestine; free development of the Yishuv; and the right of Jews to settle and build in every part of the land by using

Jewish enterprise.²⁹ *Filastin's* owner allied himself with Raghīb Nashashibi's Hizb al-Difa' al-Watani during the revolt in its fierce critique not only of Zionism but also of the political platform of Haj Amin al-Husayni, the mufti of Jerusalem and paramount Palestinian leader. In contrast to Husayni's party, the National Defense party took a gradualist approach to achieving nationalist goals and exercised moderation in diplomatic dealings with the British government.³⁰ Rashid Khalidi says that the newspaper "provides one of the best sources available for monitoring the development and utilization of the concepts and terms that are essential for the propagation of the notion of national identity."³¹ Cartoons functioned as vehicles of nationalist concepts and agendas.

Censorship's Effects on Visual Imagery and Physiognomy

As tensions rose between the two communities, British censorship of Arabic and Hebrew newspapers increased. In 1933, the new Press Law gave the high commissioner the right to close papers deemed as endangering public order. The law did not exercise any direct control over the ideas or tone of the paper. During the revolt, strict censorship measures included jailing certain journalists, banning the publication of certain types of information, closing Hebrew or Arabic dailies for "dangerous" articles, and preventing any mention of illegal Jewish immigration.

Once the government enacted strict censorship, Zionist newspapers changed their reporting style, shifting from routine summaries of revolt events to accounts of attacks on Jewish victims or settlements.³² The government occasionally suspended all four Arabic dailies at once for what it considered to be provocative articles. Arabic newspapers were suspended thirty-four times during the revolt's early phase; the Jewish press was suspended thirteen times. In March 1937, the head secretary of the government claimed that *Davar* used provocative language, did not cover the revolt objectively, and did not give the government enough credit for its actions against Arab groups. After the Royal Peel Commission visited Palestine in 1937 to look into the causes of the revolt, the government suspended three of the four Arabic dailies (excluding *Filastin*) for more than a month for publishing what it claimed to be false reports on the commission's work. During this period, *Filastin* welcomed contributions from all parties, even while continuing to support strongly the National Defense party.³³

Censorship increased the usefulness of political cartoons because subversive messages could be shifted out of the text (which then was not evidently objectionable) and into the image. Physiognomy thus became a camouflaged, visual way of conveying critique. Incendiary words could be reincarnated as caricatures, a form more likely to pass censorship regulations.³⁴

DRAWING A DIAGNOSIS OF THE ARAB REVOLT

The Arab Revolt, the first sustained rebellion of the Palestinian Arabs as a unified national movement, is commonly treated in two phases. The first stage

consisted of a general strike aimed at changing British policy (April to October 1936); the second phase was triggered by the Peel Commission's recommendation that Palestine be partitioned into Arab and Jewish states, leading to Arab escalation and military activity (July 1937 to March 1939). Political cartoons published during this time reflect the shift between these phases.

The cartoons of *Filastin* portrayed the British government's unbalanced negotiations. Such negotiations are presented in the cartoon "Jewish Money Talks," appearing on 19 June 1936. This cartoon is a type of caricature called *portrait charge*, which essentializes features of the face and body of a leader to epitomize the nation.

The text of the cartoon reads:

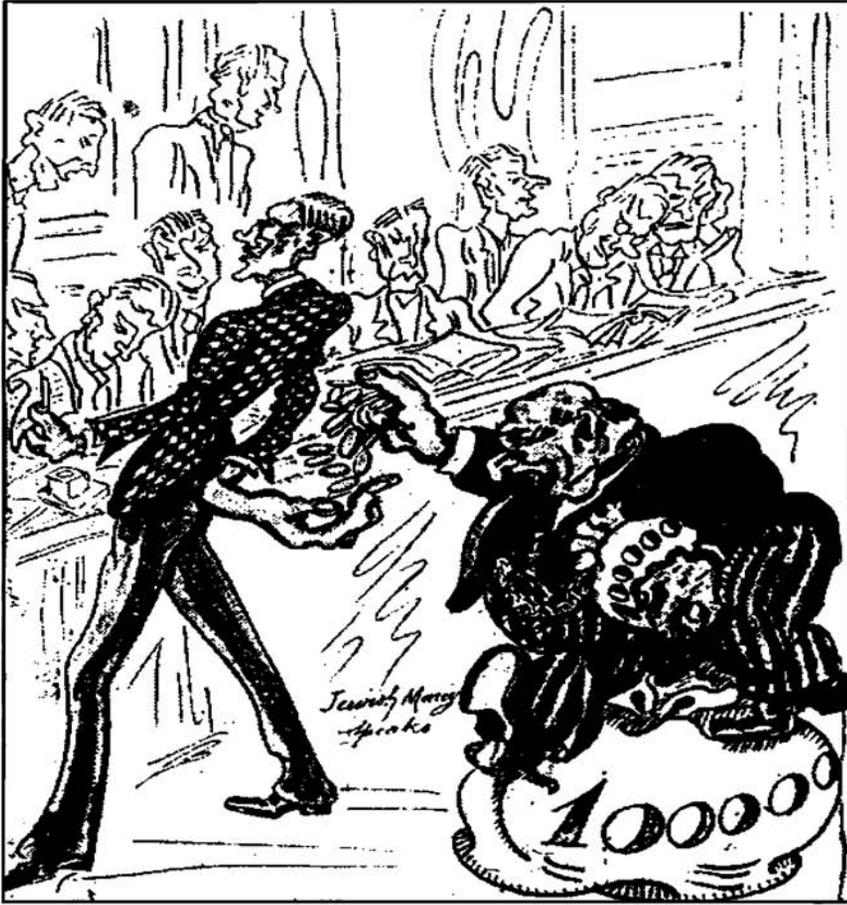
The Honorable Representative: "The government needs to use all types of force with these Arab robbers and scoundrels." Jewish Agency: "Yes . . . once again mister, once again. . . The more you defend [us], the more we will continue to give you a push forward [or] the more we increase your pay. (Kadima) [meaning "forward" in Hebrew; transliterated into Arabic in text] Mr. Representative, well done."

In the ironic interplay between text and illustration, the British representative calls the Arabs thieves, but he takes Jewish bribes behind the government's back. The representative's exaggerated hand conveys British hypocrisy. Like other portrayals of the rulers in this newspaper, the Brit is tall and thin, with a stubbed upturned nose, sharp chin, short forehead, prominent lower lip, and sunken eyes—all signs of criminality and baseness according to physiognomy. The Jew is emblematic of the Jewish Agency; his body exudes deviance and he is the personification of "capitalist greed and exploitation."³⁵ His hooked nose and short forehead, large hands, big feet, bull neck, sinister eyes, and sneer are physiognomic code for greed, ruthlessness, cunning, low intelligence, low development, and evil intentions. He wears a gold waist chain (greed), has a large belly (gluttony), and stands on a huge bag of money (cosmopolitanism, shrewdness, and greed). All the parliamentary members behind the desk have short foreheads and sharp chins, characteristics of stupidity. The British and Zionists here are the thieves, not—as stated in the text—the Arabs.

The physiognomical subtext of the cartoon provides an essential supplement to the written text. Without the deviant body images, the reader may not have recognized from the text alone the cartoon's sarcasm and subversive message. Each body image evokes Zionist manipulation of British policy through bribery and other criminal means, the inherent dishonesty of the Zionist movement, and the British role in actively promoting a corrupt project. To be sure, the cartoon touches upon a history of British parliamentary meetings about Palestine in which "British political issues were manipulated adroitly by the Zionists and the Arab case in question was defeated."³⁶

Jaffa Friday 19 June 1936

طالب لنا الكثيرون إعادة نشر هذه الصورة الكاريكاتورية
بمناسبة مناقشة مجلس العموم البريطاني في قضية فلسطين اليوم



أمال اليهودي يتكلم ...

النائب المحترم: يجب على الحكومة ان تستعمل كل انواع الشدة مع هؤلاء

العرب القصوص الاشقياء

او وكالة اليهودية: ايوه... كان يا سيدي كان...

كلما زدت دفقا كلما زدناك دفقا

(فكاديفا) ايها النائب قد احصنت صنعا

Figure 1. "Jewish Money Talks," *Filastin*, 19 June 1936.

A pressing socioeconomic issue during the revolt was the displacement of Arab farmers through Zionist land purchases and the Zionist policy of “Hebrew labor.” In the early 1930s, fellah debt and default on credit reached critical levels. Legislative measures such as the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance of 1933–1934 (which tried to protect the agricultural tenant from displacement) and the allotment in 1936 of a minimum subsistence area ultimately failed because the fellahin did not have written proof of tithe payment or because the law was not fully implemented.³⁷ Episodes of environmental problems, crop failure, and competition from cheap agricultural imports aggravated fellah displacement. The peasants expressed their frustrations by joining trade unions and political organizations, engaging in civil protest and cultivation disputes, and other forms of resistance directed against the British, Zionists, and Palestinian upper classes, who were charged with aiding the Zionist project by selling land to Jews. Displaced agricultural tenants or small landowners who sold their land moved to the cities and found work in urban development projects or petty trade. Others sought additional income as migrant laborers in neighboring villages or cities while trying to maintain their agricultural livelihood.³⁸

Economic changes and the inadequacy of the police are featured in the 18 June 1936 *Filastin* cartoon titled “The Zionist Crocodile to Palestine Arabs” (in English) and “Zionism’s Crocodile to Palestine Arabs” (in Arabic).

This cartoon portrays a tall, white, uniformed British policeman smoking a pipe, a common image of Englishmen in both Hebrew and Arabic caricatures. The policeman has a stubbed, upturned nose and squinty eyes, markers of low development, vulgarity, and dishonesty. The upturned nose is repeated at the top of the policeman’s hat, extending the trait of baseness to the general group of policemen who wear it. The policeman’s face resembles a bulldog’s, an animal commonly equated with pugnacity and an allusion to John Bull.

The cartoonist inverted the customary physiognomical coding of European newspapers here; whereas cartoonists in British newspapers typically drew the Englishman as orthognathous, in *Filastin*, the cartoonist turned British police and administrators into beastlike and prothognathous types. Frequently *Davar* and *Filastin*’s cartoonists drew Jews and Arabs, respectively, as refined and attractive, counter to European colonial images of them.

The officer is smiling, but this is not an innocent smile; it is more the sneer of a sly, criminal man. Although his hands are not visible, his feet are exaggerated, a sign of criminality. He is wearing heavy, cleated boots that match the black scales and claws of the Zionist crocodile, indicating congruence between the Zionists and the British. The British are complicit in the Zionist project here, but they are not the main target of the revolt. The subtextual culprit is Jewish land purchases as represented by the Zionist crocodile, whose tail emerges from the sea like a ship’s ramp as it devours the citrus groves and fields of the fellahin, astonished, fearful yet scornful victims of the crocodile’s hunger. The crocodile’s “hair” evokes stereotypes of Jews as black and hairy deviants, while its nose is snubbed like the British officer’s. The claws and sharp teeth



Figure 2. “The Zionist Crocodile to Palestine Arabs,” *Filastin*, 18 June 1936.

of the Zionist crocodile contrast with the hypocritically assuring text, “Don’t be afraid! I will swallow you peacefully!” (“in peace” in Arabic). The crocodile portrays Zionist insincerity and British complicity. The fellahin’s fear shows in jutting, enlarged eyes, astonished open mouths, and hands gesturing resistance. The fellahin are small compared to the British officer and the Zionist crocodile, connoting their relative weakness with respect to what was seen as British-Zionist collusion.

The historical backdrop to this cartoon is a surge in Zionist immigration in the 1930s due to global depression and the increased threat of Nazism and European anti-Semitism. In fact, more Jews entered Palestine during the years 1933–1935, legally and illegally, than at any other previous time.³⁹ This phenomenon brought increased Jewish capital into Palestine, which boosted Jewish employment opportunities and encouraged Zionist land purchases for the settlement of immigrants.⁴⁰

The cartoon’s visual background adds to the overall satirical effect. Three different forms of war vehicles are shown: the plane, the tank, and the ship. The ship symbolizes the British ships that were bringing more soldiers and arms to fight against the Arab rebels. It could also refer to the closing of the Jaffa port during the strike, which led the British to approve a Zionist port and jetty at Tel Aviv.⁴¹ The war vehicles are placed around the British officer, who is carrying a club, an instrument of repression. These military images are contrasted with

the citrus groves and peaceful fields of the fellahin. Both agricultural areas look as if wind is blowing through them, signifying change or upheaval. By showing the three main characters in the conflict (the British, Zionist, and Arab fellahin), the cartoonist is commenting on three major issues of the revolt: increasing British armament, Jewish land purchase, and the displacement of the fellahin.

Cities were the focal point of resistance in the beginning stage of the revolt. Local Palestinian committees in all major cities were formed soon after the killing of two Palestinians near Petah Tikva (16 April) by Jewish assailants in retaliation for the robbery and killing of three Jews the previous day. Four days later, Arab protests erupted under the umbrella of the Supreme Arab Council (later the Arab Higher Committee) led by Haj Amin al-Husayni.⁴² On 25 April 1936, the Supreme Arab Council officially declared a unified general strike.⁴³ The strike quickly shifted to the countryside and remained anchored there through the revolt's second phase.

"Two Arab Heads [Two Leaders]" (12 July 1936) addresses the issues of rural frustration, class division, and internal Arab politics in the characters of the two party leaders—Husayni and Raghیب Bey Nashashibi—and the rural leader, Shaykh Izzeddine al-Qassam, with Chaim Weizmann, head of the World Zionist Organization, watching in the background. Qassam, who had organized peasants into guerrilla bands to fight the British in the countryside, had been killed in action the year before, instantly becoming a national martyr and hero.⁴⁴ In the cartoon, Nashashibi says, "We will fight [the Zionists] to the end!" to which Haj Amin replies, "To the end!" Weizmann, looking on, says, "Is it possible? I wasn't expecting it!" Qassam is the shining angel, the symbol of the revolt, floating above the two notables. The notables are pictured here as allies, but in fact internal fighting between Husayni's Arab party and Nashashibi's National Defense party was rife.⁴⁵ Intensified conflict exposed the jockeying for ultimate leadership of the Palestinian national movement and the different strategies for achieving Palestinian Arab goals.

The cartoon's physiognomical code reveals the tension between the two notables. Both Qassam and Nashashibi have aquiline noses, full cheeks and long foreheads, indicating honesty and high development. Qassam's fingers are long and his palms face down, symbolizing his intelligence and protective care. These representations signify real figures, but they also reflect the Arab view about the integrity and legitimacy of the Palestinian nationalist movement and its purpose.

In contrast to Nashashibi and Qassam, the mufti is portrayed with a long, sharp nose and occipital protrusion that are the marks of a degenerate man possessing lower capacities, pugnacity, and a strong will. His legs are short, bent, and apart, but he leans forward in the posture of a schemer. His sinister smile and glazed expression seem to suggest secret plotting while he shakes Nashashibi's hand. Physiognomical similarities between the mufti and Zionists in other cartoons of *Filastin*—including posture (one foot off the ground), gazing eyes, large hands—suggest a similarity in character.⁴⁶



Two Arab Heads

زعيان

Ragheb Bey Nashashibi : We shall fight to the end...

زأغب بك النشأشبي : سنوأسل الحرب إلى البأية...

Haj Amin Husayni : We shall not give up ...

أأأج أمين أأسبني : سنأ إلى البأية...

Weizmann ; Is it possible??? I never expected that!!

وأيمن : هل أأهأ ممكن؟. أأني لم أكن أأأرأهأ.

Figure 3. "Two Arab Heads," *Filastin*, 12 July 1936.

Such a portrayal of Husayni is not surprising given *Filastin's* affiliation with the Nashashibi party.⁴⁷ The differences between Nashashibi and Husayni are reflected not only in their bodily image but also in their attire. Husayni wears traditional Islamic robes and a tarbush, whereas Nashashibi wears a Western-style

suit with no hat, a signifier of modernity among urban, educated Palestinians at the time.⁴⁸ Distinctions in dress were particularly relevant during the 1936–1939 revolt, especially when the *kuffiya* headdress shifted from signifying low, rural status to becoming a symbol of Arab national resistance.⁴⁹

Weizmann's presence rounds out the picture of duplicity. Leaning out the window, he is portrayed with a fleshy lower lip, hooked nose, prominent hands, beard, and stern expression.⁵⁰ Weizmann's shock at the two notables' handshake and vow for persistent resistance is conveyed by his blank stare and curved eyebrows.

The text of the cartoon alludes to the ultimate failure of the Zionists to understand the weight of Arab frustration and their assumption that the Palestinian Arab national movement was not genuine. Zionist leadership initially debated whether the events of 1936 were an actual revolt (*mered*) or just a set of disturbances (*meoraot*). This initial misreading was accompanied by a belief within the Yishuv that the revolt was the plan of a small group of urban activists, not a popular rebellion.⁵¹ Weizmann's state of shock in the cartoon's text reflects this misinterpretation.⁵²

The *Davar* cartoon "The Writer that Sows His Seeds with Pens Will Cut [his yield] in Blood" (24 December 1936) takes to task the relationship between Palestinian intellectuals and the fellahin. The caption of this cartoon plays on the lyrics of a Zionist pioneer song: "The farmer who sows his seeds with tears will cut [the crop] with song." Navon exchanges the word "tears" (*bedim'a*) for "pens" (*be'atim*) and "song" (*rina*) for "blood" (*damim*).⁵³ Navon introduces two themes through his play on words: the ongoing discussion within the Zionist movement about "negative" Palestinian nationalism versus "constructive" Zionist nationalism and the use of print media to incite violence. Using a song that, in its original form, depicts the Jew as strong and defiant, he changes the words to depict the Palestinian Arab as violent and destructive.⁵⁴

Navon's caption is reinforced by the visual presentation of the journalist with a pen behind his ear, dripping ink (and perhaps blood as the text notes). The Arab journalist is carrying the Arabic newspaper *al-Difa'* with seeds of incitement spilling as he runs away from the rebels, who are killing each other in his wake. Navon sharply criticizes the Arabic newspapers for printing provocative articles, a common claim in Zionist circles during the 1929 disturbances and the revolt and one that led to stricter censorship measures.

The urbanite journalist wears a fez, has clawlike hands, a broad nose, sunken eyes, and bared teeth. The journalist's flight from the rebels points to the tension between the urban intellectual class and the rural fellahin. This crop of rebels is at various stages of growth: those in the foreground are virtually buried whereas in the background, full figures fight one another with knives, guns, or clubs held in clawlike hands like the journalist's. However, all of them are fully armed from "birth." Their flailing limbs convey rage in a gesture typical of the violently insane.⁵⁵ Two rebels also rob a car, an allusion to the incident that initially set off the revolt.



הזורעים בעטים בדמים יקצורו

Figure 4. “The Writer that Sows His Seeds with Pens Will Cut in Blood,” *Davar*, 24 December 1936.

The representation of the rebels as primitive peasants with beastlike claws resembles the physiognomic image of the Irish Paddy in Victorian caricature. According to L. Perry Curtis, images of this kind justified the “harsh measures against the agents of aggressive nationalism and agrarian outrage but [dismissed] the political aspirations underlying those acts.”⁵⁶ In these deviant portrayals, Navon presents a bitter critique of Palestinian Arab nationalism and the Arab’s relation to the land. The rebels are bound to the land, but only insofar as that relationship produces violent, destructive people and actions. The implied contrast (emphasized by the play on the original pioneer song) is to the Zionist relationship to the land—one of supposed productivity, hard work, and spirituality.



Figure 5. "Education in Palestine," *Davar*, 10 December 1936.

In a cartoon entitled "Education in Palestine" (10 December 1936), Navon extended his stinging appraisal of Palestinian Arab nationalism to "the people." Instead of portraying a public figure, this kind of social caricature targets the masses and their relationship to the revolt. These cartoons commonly questioned the legitimacy of the other group's movement. Caricatures like the one below suggest the mass appeal of the revolt and the concomitant strengthening and crystallization of each nationalist movement during this time.

Here a fellah mother teaches her newborn son about the revolt. She gets her information from the newspaper, demonstrating the mass appeal of newspapers and cartoons during the revolt. The headline in the newspaper (which is a mishmash of Arabic letters but seems to resemble *al-Difa'*) reads "The Great Disappearance," referring to a leader who has disappeared, possibly Fawzi al-Qawuqji, who left Palestine quickly in November 1936 after the mufti negotiated a truce with the British.⁵⁷ The headline is in Hebrew but the newspaper's

name is in Arabic. The newspaper page's bilingualism allows the Hebrew reader to understand the contents of the Arabic nationalist press while acknowledging the press' import in spreading the Palestinian Arab movement's message. The mother's *kufiyya* makes her appropriately androgynous and modest (while telegraphing her possible affiliation with the rebels and the fellahin), but her jewelry and facial features confirm that she is a woman, one of the nurturers and educators of future generations. Her sharp tooth and the long, sharp nails of her feet and hands suggest that she is primitive and evil. Her broad nose is a sign of baseness and low development. These features, in less developed form, are mirrored in the baby, whose snubbed nose, in physiognomy, corresponds to stupidity. Navon thus equates Palestinian Arab nationalism with criminality and deviancy and tries to relay an intergenerational message where the mother's politics are passed onto her child. Most Zionist leaders held such views during this time, especially Weizmann, who described Arab nationalism as regressive and identified Arab youth with political violence.⁵⁸

The first phase of the revolt ended shortly before "Education in Palestine" appeared. On 11 October 1936, the Arab Higher Committee, following a decision by the local national committees, accepted a collective appeal from Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Transjordan to call off the strike. Other factors contributing to its cessation included the harvest season and economic pressures straining the Palestinian Arab community.

While violent confrontations never came to a complete stop in the period between the two phases, the revolt did not officially resume until the summer of 1937, when the Royal Peel Commission, which had been formed by the British government in May 1936 to study the causes of and solutions to the revolt, published its report recommending the partition of Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state. After the Arab Higher Committee rejected the proposal in July, the rebellion reached new heights.⁵⁹ On 1 October 1937, following the assassination of district commissioner L. Y. Andrews in September, the British declared martial law, outlawed the Arab Higher Committee, and arrested or exiled most of its leaders to the Seychelles. Husayni escaped to Lebanon and continued to direct the revolt from there, while others in Damascus set up the Central Committee of the National Jihad in Palestine, functioning somewhat as a government in exile.⁶⁰

Several weeks after the dramatic events surrounding the crackdown, *Davar* featured a cartoon entitled "A Mufti's Escape" (20 October 1937), which shows a flight of birds escaping from a birdcage held by a British soldier ignorant of the transgression. The caption plays on the Hebrew word *mofet/mofi(t)*, meaning "exemplary," and Husayni's title of mufti, thus referring both to the actors involved and to the success of the escape: the mufti's to Lebanon and that of members of his entourage to Syria. (The birds are flying over the "Syrian border.")

During the first phase of the revolt, in June 1936, *Davar* ran a similar cartoon depicting the escape of Arab leaders from prison: both cartoons suggest deviancy and criminality by using black birds and a birdcage to signify the arrested



Figure 6. “A Mufti’s Escape,” *Davar*, 20 October 1937.

Arabs. (In contrast, *Filastin* cartoons—for example, on 25 July 1936—depicted Arabs as white birds.) Their blackness signifies aggression and craftiness. Black birds, especially ravens, symbolize death and corruption in traditional iconography. Here, their wings resemble bat wings. The British officer, with a protruding jaw, is unaware of their escape or perhaps is ignoring it. His boots resemble those in *Filastin*’s crocodile cartoon with their sharp, brutal cleats, yet Navon shows that the officer’s actions do not fulfill his physical characteristics. Although he carries the key to the cage, the birds escape through the back. Both cartoons featuring birds in *Davar* imply British collusion with the Arabs.

Following the exile of the Palestinian leadership, the revolt became politically disorganized, resulting in intensified, intracommunal Palestinian violence. Fighters became divided between those who saw their main enemies as the British and Zionists and those who saw Arab collaborators or traitors as their primary target. Although most scholarship discusses internal Arab violence as characteristic of the second phase of the revolt, British reports from as early as autumn of 1936 report assassinations of informers and leaders’ loss of control of the revolt.⁶¹

The White Paper of 1939, by calling for an “independent Palestine State” after ten years, restricting Jewish immigration, and protecting Palestinian land rights, attempted to address Palestinian demands. This was partly an effort to gain Arab support on the eve of World War II, but the Palestinian Arab leadership and rebels rejected the White Paper because it neither invalidated the Balfour Declaration nor recognized Arab majority rule.⁶² The Zionists also vehemently protested the White Paper limitations and began their own violent campaign against the British. Despite rejections from both parties, the White Paper was

put into effect. The official end to the revolt came with the outbreak of World War II.⁶³

CONCLUSION

Cartoons, with their manipulation of body images, gave newspapers a creative way to get around censors, to critique certain policies, and to examine the political agendas of all parties. Cartoonists' images, especially physiognomic representations of the strengths, weaknesses, limitations, or powers of political leaders, offer the historian an idea about contemporary attitudes of different groups and constraints on the media.

Physiognomy in political cartoons reflects political and social relations between actors in Palestine, illustrating the relative empowerment or disempowerment of the Zionists and Arabs in relation to the British authorities and to each other. Among other things, the cartoonists tried to dehumanize their enemies by portraying them in animal form, inviting the audience to distance themselves from the enemy while confirming their own political and moral superiority. The cartoons also intensified in their political zeal as the revolt proceeded. All cartoon portrayals extended nationalist ideas and reinforced the general prejudices of the newspaper's readership.

Cartoonists of Hebrew and Arabic newspapers used the same stylistic language to promote the opposite political/nationalist direction.⁶⁴ Images in the Palestinian Arab newspaper reflected a strong anticolonial sentiment directed toward both the Zionist movement and British rule. *Filastin's* European cartoonist utilized European images, turning them on their head, and projected them onto the Zionists, while the Zionist cartoonist, Navon, used those same European notions in caricature and projected them onto those who resisted Zionist claims. Although their underlying reasons and motivations differed and certainly derived from distinct positions of power and relations with Europe itself, the two cartoonists in their images of the British often converged in a shared critique not often captured in official political documents of the period.

NOTES

1. I examined issues of *Filastin* and *al-Difa'* from the years 1929, 1938, 1939, and 1941 and editions of *Davar* from the 1920s and 1930s.

2. Linda Nochlin, "Starting with the Self: Jewish Identity and Its Presentation" in Tamar Garb and Linda Nochlin, eds., *Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), pp. 18–19; Tamar Garb, "Modernity, Identity, Textuality" in Garb and Nochlin, eds., *Jew in the Text*, pp. 20–30.

3. Robert Phillipe, *Political Graphics: Art as a Weapon* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1980), p. 278.

4. Uri Ram, "The Colonization Perspective in Israeli Sociology: Internal and External Comparisons," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 6, no. 3 (Sept. 1993), pp. 326–50; Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*,

1882-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (Henry Holt: New York, 1999); Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 9-22.

5. Taking a slightly different perspective, scholar Scott Atran has argued that the Zionist movement was a surrogate in the British colonization of Palestine. See Scott Atran, "The Surrogate Colonization of Palestine: 1917-1939," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (Nov. 1989), pp. 719-44.

6. Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, pp. xxii, 7, 31-48.

7. Cartoon figures' clothes and accessories fit the alleged "national characters" of these figures in order to make them more recognizable. L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), pp. xvii, xix-xxv.

8. Sander Gilman, *Picturing Health and Illness* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 13-22; and J. Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), pp. 178-82, endnotes 12 and 17. I use the term *physiognomy* broadly, encompassing the "sciences" of phrenology and pathognomy. Where important to distinguish between these practices, I use the specific term.

9. Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Framed: The Deaf in the Harem" in J. Terry and J. Urla, eds., *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 52, 55, 59-61, 65.

10. For a gendered analysis of snubbed noses in physiognomy, see Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist*, pp. 81, 150.

11. Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist*, pp. 40-59; Wechsler, *A Human Comedy*, pp. 142-43.

12. Theriomorphism is the tool of comparing and transforming humans to animals. See Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, pp. xi, xii, xviii.

13. The closer a person was to an animal in this artistic scheme, the less human he was considered; see Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist*, p. 80.

14. On *Davar*, see H. Can'an, *Milchamata sbel Ha'Itonut: Ma'avak ba'Itonut Halvrit beEretz Israel neged baSbilton HaBriti* [The War of the Press: The Struggle of the Hebrew Press in Eretz Israel against British Rule] (Jerusalem: Tsiyon Press, 1969), pp. 20-21. On *Filastin*, see Qustandi Shumali, *al-Sibafa al-'arabiyya fi Filastin: Jaridat Filastin, 1911-1967* [The Arab Press in Palestine: *Filastin* Newspaper, 1911-1967] (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Research Center, 1992), pp. 10, 13, 21-36; A. A. Najjar, "The Arabic Press and Nationalism in Palestine, 1920-1948" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1976), pp. 121-27, 136-39. *Al-Difa'*, associated with the Istiqlal party, was another important Arab nationalist paper, and Najjar notes that the Arabic newspapers competed to express their patriotism. Najjar, "Arabic Press," p. 105.

15. 'Isa al-'Isa owned *Filastin*; Yusuf Hanna, an Egyptian journalist who moved to Palestine to work for *Filastin* from 1932 to 1948, was its editor. In 1939, 'Isa broke with the National Defense party. See Ann Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 110; Najjar, "Arabic Press," pp. 122 note 2, 167; Rashid Khalidi, "Anti-Zionism, Arabism, and the Palestinian Identity: 'Isa al-'Isa and *Filastin*," in Samir Seikaly, ed., *Political Identity in the Arab East in the 20th Century* (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, forthcoming), p. 16 note 39.

16. These cartoons were likely intended for readers serving the British administration in Palestine as well, as can be deduced from their bilingual translations.

17. Navon continued to send cartoons to *Davar* from Paris. Arie Navon, *BeKav wikbetav: Pirke hayim, risbumim, ukarikaturot taf'urab u-deyookna'ut* [In Lines and in Writing: Chapters in Life, Drawings, and Caricatures of Scenery and Portraiture] (Am Oved: Tel Aviv, 1996), pp. 68-69.

18. Daumier, an eminent political caricaturist, used physiognomy to draw leaders and the masses. See Yaakov Fichman, "Foreword," in Arie Navon,

Schor al gavei lavan [Black on White Backs] (n.p.: n.p., 1938), p. 3; Werner Hoffman, *Caricature: From Leonardo to Picasso* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1957), pp. 36, 41, 44, 145, 147; Wechsler, *A Human Comedy*, chapter 5.

19. Fichman, "Foreword," p. 3.

20. Navon, *BeKav uwikbetav*, pp. 118–20, 130.

21. Raja al-'Isa, e-mail message to author, January 2001.

22. A. Akman, "From Cultural Schizophrenia to Modernist Binaries: Cartoons and Identities in Turkey (1930–1975)," in Muge Gocek, ed., *Political Cartoons in the Middle East* (Princeton: Markus Weiner Publishing, 1998), p. 86.

23. This fact strengthens the case for the influence of physiognomy in Palestinian cartoons. Palmira Brummett, "New Woman and the Old Nag: Images of Women in the Ottoman Cartoon Space," in Gocek, ed., *Political Cartoons in the Middle East*, p. 15.

24. Shumali notes that *Filastin* also published translated articles from French newspapers, especially those relating to Palestine, and had a particularly European flavor. Shumali, *Sibafa al-'arabiyya fi Filastin*, pp. 22, 27, 28. Also, Raja al-'Isa, e-mail message to author, January 2001; Khalidi, "Anti-Zionism, Arabism, and the Palestinian Identity."

25. Najjar, "Arabic Press," pp. 135, 140, 146, 157, 191–92.

26. For widespread belief of physiognomy among the public; see Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, pp. 5, 13.

27. Art played a large part in perpetuating physiognomical beliefs. See Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist*, p. 6; and Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, p. 2.

28. On historians' difficulty gauging audience responses, see Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, pp. xviii, 14.

29. Can'an, *Milchamata shel Ha'Itonut*, p. 17.

30. Nasser Eddin Nashashibi, *Jerusalem's Other Voice: Ragheb Nasbashibi and Moderation in Palestinian Politics, 1920–1948* (Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990), p. 96; Khalidi, "Anti-Zionism, Arabism, and the Palestinian Identity," p. 5.

31. Khalidi, "Anti-Zionism, Arabism, and the Palestinian Identity," p. 7.

32. Can'an, *Milchamata shel Ha'Itonut*, pp. 30–45, 56–76. Najjar, "Arabic Press," pp. 115–20, 135, 201–8.

33. Najjar, "Arabic Press," pp. 154, 161–62.

34. Navon describes one incident where his cartoon was rejected; see *BeKav uwikbetav*, p. 123.

35. Gale Murray, "Toulouse Lautrec's Illustrations for Victor Jozé and George Clemenceau and their Relationship to French Anti-Semitism of the 1890s," in Nochlin and Garb, eds., *Jew in the Text*, p. 62.

36. Richard N. Verdery, "Arab 'Disturbances' and the Commissions of Inquiry," in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 296.

37. Kenneth Stein, "Palestine's Rural Economy," *Studies in Zionism* 8, no. 1 (1987), p. 32.

38. Stein, "Palestine's Rural Economy," p. 42; Ted Swedenburg, "The Role of the Palestinian Peasantry in the Great Revolt (1936–1939)," in Edmund Burke III and Ira Lapidus, eds., *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 182.

39. J. Jankowski, "The Palestinian Arab Revolt of 1936–1939," *Muslim World*, no. 63 (1973), pp. 220.

40. For views among the Zionist leadership about the Palestinian Arab movement, see Ian Black, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1936–1939* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), pp. 15, 22, 205; G. Sheffer, "The Images of Arabs and Jews as a Factor in British Policy towards Palestine," *Zionism* 1, no. 1 (1980), p. 123; Y. Haim, *Abandonment of Illusions: Zionist Political Attitudes toward the Palestinian Arab Nationalism, 1936–1939* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983); Letter from Consul-General Heathcote-Smith to Sir M. Lampson, point four, 18 April 1938, India Office L/P&S/12/3350.

41. Y. Nimrod, "Reflections on Palestinian History," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 25 (Fall 1982), p. 43.

42. Phillip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), chap. 5 and 6.

43. One month later the Arabs resolved to withhold taxes from the British administration.
44. See I. Gershoni, "The Muslim Brothers and the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-1939," *Middle Eastern Studies*, no. 22 (July 1986), pp. 367-97.
45. S. W. Abboushi, "Road to Rebellion: Arab Palestine in the 1930s," *JPS* 6, no. 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 26-27; Swedenburg, "Palestinian Peasantry," pp. 171, 186; Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, pp. 65-67, 69-71.
46. Najjar, "Arabic Press," pp. 133-34.
47. By July 1937, Nashashibi had resigned from the Arab Higher Committee, leaving the mufti to become the principal player in Palestinian Arab nationalist politics. Nashashibi, *Jerusalem's Other Voice*, pp. 97-99.
48. Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. 31.
49. Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt*, pp. 30-32.
50. The same image of Weizmann is featured in another *Filastin* cartoon of 10 July 1936 titled "Another Sharp Weapon."
51. Black, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1936-1939*, p. 25.
52. The British also failed to recognize a unified Palestinian national movement before the revolt and during its initial stages. Sheffer, "The Images of Arabs and Jews as a Factor in British Policy towards Palestine," pp. 111, 114, 116-17, 128.
53. This phrase is also found in Psalm 126, *Shir HaMa'alot*, usually said before the Jewish blessing after meals.
54. Sandy Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation: Malaria and the Zionist Project in Palestine, 1920-1947* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), chap. 1 and 5; John Efron, *Defenders of the Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
55. Sander Gilman, *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 11.
56. Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, pp. xi-xii.
57. Thanks to Laila Parsons for her input on Qawukji. E-mail message to author, 4 July 2007.
58. Black, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1936-1939*, pp. 254-55.
59. Verdery, "Arab 'Disturbances' and the Commissions of Inquiry," pp. 298-300; Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem*, p. 80; Navon, *BeKav uvikhetav*, p. 81.
60. Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem*, p. 83.
61. Summary 29 September 1936, India Office, L/P&S/12/3345.
62. Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917-1939*, p. 228; Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem*, p. 84.
63. Y. Gelber, "The Defense of Palestine in World War II," *Studies in Zionism* 8, no. 1 (1987), p. 54.
64. Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 242.