4 Nation, state, and democracy in the writings of Zaki al-Arsuzi

*Dalal Arsuzi-Elamir**

Introduction

At a time when America, the world power, has declared its intention to introduce democracy in the Middle East, and to make Iraq the cradle of democracy in the region, it seems important to reconsider the experience that societies in the Middle East have already had with democracy and – closely connected with it – liberalism and nationalism. In Syria Zaki al-Arsuzi (1900–68) was one of the most important leaders in this context. He grew up in Antakya in an eventful period: the development of the Arab national movement; the collapse of the Ottoman Empire; the introduction of the mandatory system; and the fight for national independence. He studied at the Institut Laique in Beirut (1919), worked as a teacher in Antakya (1920–21), as an administrator in Arsuz (1924–25), and studied philosophy at the Sorbonne (1927–30). From 1930 to 1933 al-Arsuzi worked as a high-school teacher in Antakya. According to French reports he "taught as if he was teaching in a French high school, preparing free citizens for a free state in which people enjoy all their rights."[1] This conduct led to his dismissal. His political career reached its peak when he became the leader of the Arab resistance in Antakya against the Turkish takeover.[2]

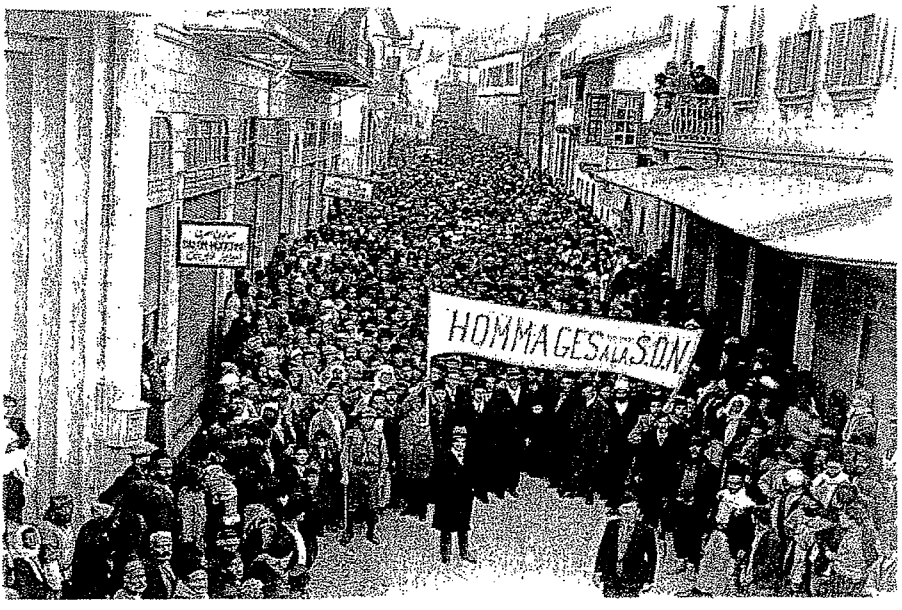
After the Turkish army had occupied the province of Alexandretta in July 1938 he went to Damascus, where he continued the political and social struggle he had started in Antakya against the French mandatory authority, the large landowners, and all those whom he called the "usurpers of politics." He propagated Arabism in cafés, clubs, and private meetings. Soon, however, he realized that the national government in Damascus, in collaboration with the French mandatory authorities, was trying to annihilate him through intellectual and physical isolation.[3]

In sharp contrast to people such as Satiʿ al-Husri, Muhammad Kurd ʿAli, or George Antonius, al-Arsuzi has remained virtually unknown and unresearched in Western scholarship. In the Arab world he is almost an icon, and is famous as *al-faylasūf al-qawmī al-ʿarabī* (the "philosopher of the Arab nation"). But, as is so often the case with icons, critical discussions of his work are lacking, and typically reference is made only to his philosophy of

the Arab language, which succeeded in joining it to the Arab nation, and thus establishing an Arab national identity. The importance of his works did not escape Arab intellectuals. But in so far as they discussed it seriously, they limited themselves to hermeneutics, guided by the inner coherence of his philosophy, as did Khalil Ahmad and Salim Nasir Barakat, or the neglected situation of his works in the context of his political experience in Antakya and Damascus, as is the case with Antoine Audo and Mahir al-Sharif.[4]

This rather superficial treatment of his thought certainly has to do with the complex role he played. Although he led a fierce struggle in Antakya against the Turkish takeover, it ultimately failed (not to a small degree because of the lackluster support of the Damascene political elite for this struggle), and he remained forever associated with one of the worst defeats of Arabism: the loss of Antakya. With his thought on the "rebirth" (*baʿth*) of the nation he contributed indirectly to the foundation of the Baʿth Party, but for reasons of internal party history his role there remained ambivalent – good reason for any Arab historian to touch only lightly on him. Also, the Baʿth Party itself was uncertain in its attitude toward him. He was marginalized, yet his strong criticism was tolerated, as the publication of his writings in many official journals proves. He himself was never persecuted. Apparently the Baʿth Party needed him, especially after it came to power in 1963, for purposes of its own legitimization.

His later works, written in the last dozen years of his life, remain completely unknown and never discussed, even in the Arab world. During this period he revised his thinking drastically. He moved away from the rather essentialist argument that the Arab language in itself had manifested the Arab genius at all times, and would again give strength to the Arab nation. He came to insist that only democracy and social justice could make a national community viable, and that only science and industry could make it part of the modern world. During his political struggle in Antakya, and then during the mandatory years, he had been preoccupied with establishing the identity of the Arab nation through his philosophy of the Arab language. After independence and the first rash of military coups in Syria he realized that possession of a common language did not make a nation function politically in freedom and unity. The "impostors of patriotism and Arabism" (*adʿiyāʾ al-waṭaniyya wa-l-ʿurūba*)[5] and the "collaborators of imperialism" (*aʿwān al-istiʿmār*)[6] continued to control the nation in the form of dictatorship.[7] Personally this meant that just as the French had prevented him from teaching "as if he was teaching in a French high school . . . for free citizens," he was now hindered from teaching by the Syrian minister of education because "Zaki, God bless him, we wished he would not interfere. We regret that he hits us in our face with his rebuke."[8] This was the response to a letter by teachers requesting the employment of al-Arsuzi in Damascus, rather than exiling him to the provinces. The teachers expressed their surprise that "al-Arsuzi is being treated in the time of independence and freedom just as during time colonialism."[9]



Picture 1: January 1937: 30,000 demonstrators of the members and supporters of *'Uṣbat al-'Amal al-Qawmī* in Antakya opposite the residence of the committee of the League of Nations.

He came to the conclusion that the introduction of a wholesome education constituted the foundation for the internal liberation of society from what he called "the condition of misery" (*al-waḍaʿ al-bālī*),[10] i.e. corruption of the ruling elites, reactionary attitudes, confessionalism, social and political exploitation, oppression of women, feudalism, etc. The fight against these abuses was for him a precondition for national liberation. He was also convinced that the primary task was to uproot foreign elements and expose their true nature. He therefore began a career as a writer. He started out in 1942 with studies of language, but later turned his attention to philosophy. Even when writing on the latter, he would usually start with etymological explanations of philosophical terms, and interpret them in this light. From the mid-1950s he wrote many essays dealing with everyday problems of the Arab citizen. He published these articles in a variety of local journals and newspapers, always trying to sensitize the Arab public to existing social and political problems. He also tried to make the public aware of its own foundations – the nation, culture, history – which had been destroyed in the times of decay and colonization. His claim was that these foundations could be rebuilt and would lift the whole nation to new levels of human dignity. These political writings reflected very strongly his preoccupation with linguistic and philosophical topics as a means to establish Arab identity.[11]

In his later works the emphasis shifts toward issues of democracy, which he

increasingly considered the only means for the realization of national unity. What were the reasons for this shift of emphasis? How did the "France of the Revolution" and the "France of colonialism" influence his thinking? In what ways did his model of democracy differ from Western models? All this leads to the central question the present chapter poses: In what way did liberal thought influence al-Arsuzi?

This chapter aims, first and foremost, at presenting al-Arsuzi's thought in the last period of his life and the profound shift it implied from an essentialist nationalist thinking to the recognition that popular democracy and sciences guaranteed the continued existence of a society that could provide its members with the maximum individual freedom. Only unity in democracy promised the lasting existence of such a free society. This, more than language, became for him the basis for national existence, which in itself became only a step on the way to a more all-encompassing society comprising of all of humanity.

Nation, nationalism

For al-Arsuzi rebirth of the nation was the ultimate aim of all action of society. The nation was the sum of all human experience. The community (*al-jamāʿa*) was the manifestation of the totality of interconnected functions which perfected themselves in the *umma*, which had existed before them, while the influence of society (*al-mujtamaʿ*) on the development of its members in their formation and shaping was much larger then imagined.

He explained the concepts of nation (*umma*) and nationalism (*qawmiyya*). The terms *umma* and *umm*, meaning "mother," derived from the same root. The former "is for the members of society what the mother is for her sons."[12] The nation was the fountainhead for the customs, literature, and arts of the society; it ended where its language ended.

As far as nationalism was concerned, al-Arsuzi believed this to be a concept of contemporary politics. It was a bond between people living close together (*dhawū al-qurbā*), and manifested itself in mutual support. That meant that a group of people distinguished itself from others by its language and between private and public by arrangements based on that language. Different theories were associated with the concept of *qawmiyya*. There was a German nationalism, which was based on a genetic superiority of the German race over others; and the French one, based on the principle of territorial proximity (*jiwār*), and common interests; this assumes that the historical conditions of the nation lead to a national sensibility (*wijdān*), hence Renan's definition of "nation" as a communality of remembering and forgetting, which leads to a common will for the future. Concerning Arab nationalism, al-Arsuzi was of the opinion that it reached back into the earliest human history because the Arabs had a myth reaching back to Adam and Eve. The Arabs (erroneously) believed that they were all of one kin, and that this was the basis on which they erected their society. But, in fact, the

foundation of Arab nationalism was brotherhood, their fraternity by nature and the proximity of their descent (*qarāba bi-l-nasab*).[13]

In a remarkable autobiographical note al-Arsuzi described the development of his own thinking on the topic:

> From the preceding we can conclude that the race is an extension of nature, and it is closed and fixed as nature is. Nationalism, on the other hand, is open and is shaped by the human character . . . [Nationalism] is influenced in its development by two factors which lead to this humanity, which is perfecting itself constantly. The first factor is reason and the second his love. We mean by "reason" the connection between results and the principle . . . Reason motivates human beings to collaboration to gain control over the conditions of nature and make them subject to man's will . . . as far as the role of love [in nationalism] is concerned, it brings together the various individuals and communities – an insight which is based on my own experience. When I came back from Paris I had a racial orientation in my feelings and actions.[14] I started my rebellion against French imperialism in order to bring back the rights of the my nation, the Arabs; but rapidly I surmounted the closed limits of nature and reached the feelings of brotherhood for the human race which exists in all human beings . . . When I reached this stage – the stage in which the divisive limits between individuals and communities fall – I became a refuge for all and strived for our highest ideal to establish a state which would guarantee to its citizens freedom and dignity, be they Armenians, Kurds, or Turks etc.[15]

The closeness between an Arab and his brothers did not stop at the construction of mutual compassion, but also encompassed a brotherhood by culture. The Arab nation was not just an extension of the family; it was a general human structure, the essence of which manifested itself in its customs, traditions, laws, language, literature, and arts.[16]

Al-Arsuzi insisted that the best society (*mujtamaʿ*) was one in which the needs of inner closeness and territorial proximity coincided. This led to the creation of common interests between people; it created harmony and the desire to cooperate. He saw French society in modern history as the first to have achieved this condition. Supported by common education, homogeneity of thought and sensibility had been created. He made it clear that this contradicted the German idea of nationalism, and that at the same time the Arab concept of nationalism went beyond the French one because it assumed in the last analysis that all human beings were brothers because they were descendants of Adam and Eve, and not of different races. Here al-Arsuzi's thought began to transcend the confines of nationalism.[17]

Discussing the character of a nation, al-Arsuzi started with the concept of an inner closeness between human beings, a brotherhood that might originally be that of kinship but developed into a cultural and emotional one. This closeness he saw as strengthened by a second concept, that of territorial

Picture 2

proximity. Together these two concepts provided, in his opinion, the greatest possible homogeneity in a nation and the greatest communality of interests and sensibilities. This led to a national identity and a national consciousness, which then determined the ideals and values of this society. At the same time he emphasized the general human character of the national community and perceived the necessity to transcend even the nation and form ever larger human societies, which eventually would lead to the union of all human beings.

Democracy

Writing in the early 1960s, al-Arsuzi recognized three basic ideologies that shaped society and with it the state: these were nationalism, socialism, and democracy. He saw very positive aspects in socialism and nationalism, aspects which he intended to incorporate in his model of an ideal society. But his emphasis had shifted from nationalism toward democracy as the central concept for the good society. He became increasingly preoccupied with the concept of democracy, which he defined as a society that managed its affairs by itself.

As was his habit, he tried to give the Arab term *jumhūriyya* the same meaning as "democracy" by a somewhat daring etymological derivation. He

claimed that it was composed from the words *jamm*, meaning a large group of people, and *jahar*, "publicness" or "publicity," which fused to describe a society that vented its opinions about public affairs publicly.[18] In spite of the dubiousness of this etymology[19] he achieved through this etymological appropriation the legitimacy of the concept "democracy" for Arabic thought and culture.

For him democracy was the human aspect of modern civilization, based on the assumption that man possessed reason to understand the truth and a soul to desire the good. He considered democracy part of human nature, which was returned to humanity the moment the concept of divinely legitimized rule by a monarch over subjects was challenged and abolished by the French Revolution. He insisted that democracy was the more perfect the more completely it expressed the will of the nation (*umma*).[20] The public (*al-jumhūr*) elected representatives and the president of the state (*dawla*). The latter was charged with public tasks, and was answerable to the representatives of the *umma*. The laws represented the will of the public and were developed parallel to the development of the community (*jamāʿa*); they were man-made – not sent from heaven.[21]

In his opinion democracy came closer to perfection the more the legislature succeeded in expressing the will of the public and when the executive branch was subordinated to the legislative. The mechanisms for that were the elected representatives and the parliament. But he left a large space to the initiative of the citizen. The public was obliged to withdraw its confidence from representatives who did not fulfill their task, i.e. representing the will of the public. It could protect itself by other measures – for instance, by the right of each citizen to propose laws directly to the national parliament or to object to laws issued by the parliament, provided that some of the citizens participated in a plebiscite to propose or to object to laws. In other words, the issues were presented to the public, and every citizen was called upon to have his opinion registered.[22] Al-Arsuzi was not opposed to the role of parties and representation in a parliament, but he clearly also wanted to maintain aspects of a plebiscitary democracy with a direct role for the citizen in the decision-making process. He relied here on the constant and spontaneous expression of the *volonté général*. He never aimed only at changing the elite. Rather, he wanted to raise the political consciousness of the public and thus make it the agent and, at the same time, the guarantor of democracy. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that he strongly opposed any one-party system.[23] The plurality of parties did not worry him with regard to the *baʿth* because the *baʿth*, meaning rebirth, was not a party but meant the existence of the Arabs as Arabs, who were reclaiming their place in human history.[24]

The state

According to al-Arsuzi the state was the reflection of an ideal that originated in the soul. It was the manifestation of mutual affection between brothers, the

members of society, and between them and public affairs.[25] The state was not an end in itself, but it was the means to build the nation.

The state represented the inclination of the truth to seek its realization in human beings. The rationale for the state's existence was its task of mediating between the interests of the individual and the rights of others.[26] This was the origin of the importance Arsuzi ascribed to state education, which should be aimed at substantiating the personality of the national society. The state's tasks were the same as those of society. The first task of the state was to lead its citizens to the level of freedom that empowers them to partake consciously in the fate of the nation. Its second task was to organize society in a way that enabled every citizen to reach a complete balance between his own needs and the rights of others. The goal of the state was the creation of an atmosphere in which each citizen could demonstrate his mind and ingenuity within the specific frame of his propensity and talents.[27] Even if the state appeared as the defender of the true essence of the nation, its living space and its value system, its principal task was to furnish the necessary means for the nation to realize its identity, to discover its own genius and to fulfill its mission. The state also had to arrange public affairs according to the conditions of modern civilization – that is to say, to organize the forces of the nation in such a fashion that it could determine the course of world history and to direct its citizens and their talents in such a way as to enable them determine their common fate, because the state was "the shape of the nation in its stage of realization and the shadow of its ideal essence";[28] that is to say, its supervisor,

Picture 3

guide, educator, and the foundation for turning into reality the "rebirth" of the citizens, the society, and the nation.[29] "It is the task of the state to arrange matters in such a way that the good qualities of the people are realized and their will is protected from evil temptations. But the resolve to choose and to create is entrusted to the tasks of the citizen."[30]

The task of the state was to prepare conditions, but not to interfere in the process itself. Thus it should raise its citizens from the levels of instinct to the level of freedom.[31] The business of the state was to make the members of society, who were driven by their instincts, into individuals, each of whom determined his own and the general fate in full freedom. The citizens had to be able to satisfy their needs within limits which protected them from temptations that might lead their will astray.[32]

The talents of those responsible manifested themselves by developing the capabilities of the citizens – within the possibilities of modern civilization – and to make use of the experiences of the fatherland (*waṭan*). The task of the state, therefore, was not only to educate the public to freedom, to create the conditions for this, and to protect its citizens' freedom; rather, its first aim was sovereignty and national greatness.[33]

To summarize: The state, in al-Arsuzi's view, was not an end in itself; it was shaped by the will of the public. Only if expressed would this will be able to last. Hence, the best kind of state was the democratic one. Its task was to realize the ideals of the nation while guaranteeing the self-realization and freedom of the individual. Man was principally good but could be corrupted; he could become lazy and selfish. Here the state had to put down limits, so that man did not indulge his appetites without restraint. It had to promote the altruistic character of man and his will to freedom, and educate its people to be responsible citizens.

The question that has to be raised here is: Who is the state? When al-Arsuzi wrote "the state is the supervisor, guide and educator for the citizen" or "the state has to take the citizen by his hand," whom did he mean? Was the state an abstract "spirit of the time"? Was it the sum of all the people, who kept it going, or did al-Arsuzi mean the Arab intellectuals of his time? Who, in other words, would initiate the "rebirth" of the nation and the individual?

To answer this question it is essential to understand al-Arsuzi's perception of human nature. He started with the assumption that man possessed reason to understand the truth and a soul to desire the good. But man was also weak. Generations of despotism and oppression had alienated man from his own goodness; he had become submissive, greedy, and corrupt. Modern civilization – and in particular the French Revolution – had created the conditions for a "rebirth" of man, the opportunity to return to his true nature. Freedom was the way to self-realization, the freedom to make his own decisions and to participate in political decision making in the state.[34] In freedom and through reason he could find the truth and desire the good. Since freedom of the individual played an essential role for man in regaining his true nature al-Arsuzi concluded that democracy was inseparably linked to

the nature of man and that nature, once freed, gave man self-confidence and the power to determine his own fate. But having suffered from a "denaturalization" of his character over centuries, man needed help to rediscover his true nature. The free man would find himself balanced between self-interests and duties. He needed support in choosing the right way and following it in word and deed.[35] The dominance of duty over self-interest was, according to al-Arsuzi, based on the fact that altruism rather than egoism was a primary aspect of the human character. Duty, therefore, manifests itself in the soul as knowledge and action. On the other hand, al-Arsuzi emphasized repeatedly that the state or society – he seemed to use the terms often as synonyms – had the means to restrain an individual if he went astray. Society would support the truth through education and the law. Without such efforts the individual would not discover his true nature, and would live only for his desires until he became their slave.[36] In fact, al-Arsuzi recognized the ambivalent character of man. "Both the love for work and parasitism are innate aspects of human nature."[37] He also recognized the need to reinforce the positive aspects of man's nature. This led to the question of how the individual could be educated to strive for the truth, to maintain his freedom, and to voluntarily accept his duties toward society. Al-Arsuzi's answer was: It was the task of the state or society.

This still does not answer the question "Who is the state," especially since the institutions of state and society are filled by people who constitute the public, which apparently still needs education. The puzzle can only be solved if we recognize the implicit assumption in al-Arsuzi's writings that some people have already reached, through reason, this stage of "rebirth" – namely, the intellectuals, who should use the institutions of the state and its power to educate and raise the consciousness of the rest of society. Obviously he believed himself to be one of these intellectuals, and understood education as his mission: "I was born [bu'ithtu] to be a teacher."[38]

When al-Arsuzi talked about the state, he always and only meant the nation-state. His personal concern was, of course, with the Arab nation-state, which he envisioned in pan-Arab terms as one state for all Arabs. Here, too, he changed his position in his later years. He observed about himself that he had witnessed how Arabs had been driven out from Cilicia, from Antakya, from Palestine, and from the Golan.[39] His hopes had been high with the foundation of the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria), only to be bitterly disappointed by its break-up. He had supported the revolution of March 8, 1963, and also the revolution of February 23, 1966 – only to conclude that in the end they had failed. He eventually conceded that the public were not yet mentally ready for the fusion of all Arab lands in one state, that the political elites had arranged themselves in accordance with the existence of a plurality of Arab states, and that internationally one huge Arab state from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean might threaten the international balance of power, and would therefore be opposed by the big powers.[40] He therefore moderated his goals, and suggested instead a federated order through which borders could gradually disappear, as was happening in

Picture 4: June 13, 1938: A women's demonstration in Antakya defending the Arab identity of the province of Alexandretta.

Western Europe.[41] He now promoted a decentralization of power in the hope that would lead also to more democracy. Freedom, science, and industrialization were in the last analysis far more important issues than the unitarian character of the state.

Freedom and equality

Al-Arsuzi argued that the basic elements of democracy consisted of freedom and equality. Freedom was the right of the individual to determine his actions according to his own will.[42] It presented the highest human value, and could not be separated from humanity itself. Both were the foundation of all moral and creative values.[43] Free public discussion was anchored in custom and constitution, and provided the main support for democratic government. This free discussion expressed the human dignity of each individual. Freedom was a precondition for democracy and guaranteed its realization, freedom of speech being the best guarantee for guarding human rights. Hence true democracy could never be a system of force or tyranny.

In modern civilization people fought, according to al-Arsuzi, for their freedom against oppression by landowners, the fanaticism of reactionaries, and exploitation by colonialists.[44] People established a link between the freedom of the citizen and the common weal, between social and political

emancipation. Here al-Arsuzi drew upon his studies of the French Revolution while in Paris and his political experience in Antakya, the two events that would inform, to a large degree, his later philosophical and political writings. He analyzed the situation of the Arab world to illustrate the importance of freedom for the rebirth of the nations, and he pointed out the contradiction in the behaviour of the French colonial mandatory authorities, which used all its powers to resist the Arab population's fight in Antakya for freedom, equality, and justice, basic principles of the French Revolution and cornerstones of the French constitution. Al-Arsuzi's fight for freedom directed itself against the French colonial masters and the Arab collaborative elites – mainly the landowners.

Al-Arsuzi was not satisfied with declaring freedom a means of establishing democracy. He understood it as a necessary goal of nationalism and of all human society, whose task it was to guarantee free development of the talents of each individual. Specific political aspects of freedom had to be guaranteed for the citizen. Not surprisingly for a writer and educator, al-Arsuzi considered freedom of speech and of the press as the basis of a functioning society. The press was the "eye of the public," observing the actions of the ruling elites.[45] He considered journalists the "prophets" of contemporary civilization, because they could warn of the dire consequences of the suppression of freedom. The constant task of the journalist was to stimulate people to read, to inform themselves, and to enhance their knowledge. Here we hear the voice of al-Arsuzi the educator and teacher, the public intellectual.

Al-Arsuzi discussed in depth the need for the emancipation of women. Like many nationalists before him, he argued that only educated mothers could raise patriotic feelings in their children. But he went far beyond the conventional argument when he insisted that women should be free to work outside the house in order to become financially independent from their families. Women should also play a public role and manage associations, because excluding them from public life would hamper the development of society. For him, veiling was obviously a part of the seclusion of women, and contradicted the purpose of obligatory education for girls – an essential tool for progress and modernity. He argued that a woman, educated to use her intellect and to think scientifically, could not but perceive the veil as an act of oppression and a sign of distrust toward women by insecure men.[46] The role of women in modern civilization was for him essential. In one of his most direct attacks on religious lore he turned the traditional interpretation of the Fall from Paradise on its head and said: "Today, we the contemporaries owe a debt of gratitude to our first mother Eve for her part in awakening the intellect and thereby causing her children and grandchildren to reinvestigate their natural disposition and to cooperate in determining their own fate. How could civilization possibly have developed, if Eve had not prodded Adam to transgress the prescribed limits?"[47]

Not only did al-Arsuzi view the veil as an item of clothing symbolizing

reaction, he was also keenly aware that cloth did not only clothe its wearer and reflect personal taste, but that it also expressed political positions. He considered, for instance, the *kūfiyya* (the traditional Arabic headwear of men) and the *ʿuqqāl* (the head-rope worn with it) as signs of reactionary attitudes, as they were considered by people as part of the divine order. He himself took great care to wear European clothing – and elegantly so.[48]

Al-Arsuzi also mentioned the right of the citizens to organize themselves in trade unions and parties as essential for a functioning democracy. As secular institutions he considered them both as a means to overcome confessional divisions in society and to liberate it from religious reactionism. Labor unions could promote the interests of the working people; secular parties would emancipate society and show the way to progress.[49] The great emphasis al-Arsuzi put on the politically educated public's active public participation in the political process was the result of his observation that the corrupt politicians, the former "collaborators of imperialism," wanted national unity without freedom. He held against this the claim that national unity in itself was not an aim. Unity was only of value when it was achieved in freedom while guaranteeing it at the same time.

The great emphasis al-Arsuzi put on the individual freedom of men and women to develop and realize their own potential and talents demonstrates the extent to which liberal thought began to influence him in his later years. But he was not in favor of unfettered freedom. It had its limits, to be found mainly in the relations between the individual and society. To what degree did the individual need to be part of society? What should be the measure of his independence from it?[50] He tried to answer these questions when he dealt with the concept of equality and social justice in their relation to the nation. The issue of social justice, in particular, had preoccupied him previously in Antakya. Here he had experienced how the great class differences between large landowners and landless peasantry constituted a stumbling block on the way to forge a united nation. In his last years he started mixing a certain amount of socialism with the idea of democracy and individual freedom. He proposed a sort of "socialist democracy," where the producer had full rights to his product, but where, at the same time, economic life was subordinate to that of the community. For al-Arsuzi this socialism looked at private property from society's point of view, reorganizing the relations between property, morality, and politics. He dismissed the idea that the right to private property was an absolute right which the state should not curtail in any form or shape, or that the economy was subject to its own laws.[51]

Unlimited accumulation of private property would, in his opinion, only lead to a divided society, with a class of the rich exploiting the working members of society. Such a bifurcation contradicted justice and fraternity, and would destroy the well-being of the state. He was equally wary of the notion that the state should take over all the agricultural land. That would only mean that the landlord would be replaced by a multitude of government bureaucrats – the replacement of one tyrant by a multitude of tyrants.[52] Here,

Picture 5: In the *Nādī al-ʿUrūba* (Club of Arabism)/Antakya 1937: al-Arsūzī (x), on the left behind him Ṣubḥī Zaḫūr. They are wearing *Sīdāral Fayṣaliyya* (service caps). With them there is also a group of supporters, among them Odette Naʿūm, on the right-hand side Matūsīyān, Nadīm Ward, Nakhla Ward, Ibrāhīm Fawzī.

as elsewhere, he attributed to the state a mediating role, enabling all to participate, possessing comparable landholdings and thus maintaining a basic harmony between the citizens.[53]

Al-Arsuzi's preoccupation with landownership originated from his experience in Antakya during the 1930s, where he had observed the ruthless exploitation of landless peasants bonded in an almost feudal manner to large landowners. He also was aware of the simple fact that at his time two-thirds of the population lived in rural areas and gained their livelihood from agriculture. For him an adequate piece of privately owned land, sufficient to provide the livelihood of a family, was an essential tool to free people from any bondage and to make them masters of their own lives. This freedom based on limited ownership of land would also give people a stake in the welfare of society and the state and, at the same time, enhance social justice.

To summarize how al-Arsuzi delineated the limits to the freedom of the individual we can observe the following:

(a) Freedom finds its limits where it clashes with the interest of the common weal and where it infringes on the equal right of other individuals to freedom.
(b) The equality of all individual members of society is closely connected with social justice.

(c) In the discussion of social justice he focused – for good reason – on the question of landownership. He favored limited ownership, limited in the sense that it should be large enough to guarantee the livelihood of its owner, but no larger; limited also in the sense that those who did not work the land and make it fertile would lose their right to it – a notion that reflects the traditional Islamic concept of ownership as the right to the usufruct of the land, but not the land itself.[54] He was wary of all radical solutions, proposing the abolition of large landownership but at the same time objecting to the state as the sole owner of the land.
(d) The role of the state is again that of the mediator: avoiding excess, educating the individual, and making space for the individual to participate fully in public decision-making.
(e) Equality and social justice were necessary for the full development of all possible individual freedom, which in itself would strengthen the coherence of society.
(f) In addition to his focus on landownership al-Arsuzi recognized the politicized public as an essential part in creating a modern society. This was the stage where citizens could actively participate in forming a state. But it also was an educational institution where they could learn about public issues, the ways to express their opinions freely, and, through debate, recognize the common weal.

This dialectical process where, on the one hand, the state or the society provided the space for optimal development of individual freedom and, on the other, the educated citizen participated in the politics of the state in order to create this space and realize the common weal was only possible by the interplay of freedom and its limitations, defined by equality and social justice. He called this system a "socialist democracy."[55] But the term should not mislead us. Increasingly he argued that national unity, or any unity for that matter, was not good if it was not a unity in democracy and active participation of the public in the political process. Independence of the nation became, in the best case, a first step toward a stable – and that meant for al-Arsuzi a democratic – society, guaranteeing a maximum of freedom for the individual. Here he differed decisively from his contemporaries such as Michel ʿAflaq, Antun Saʿada, Akram al-Hawrani, and Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir, who all put national unity and independence above any demand for democracy.[56]

Rebirth of society

A key concept in al-Arsuzi's debate about the establishment of a democratic and free society is *al-baʿth*, the "rebirth": rebirth of the nation, rebirth of the rational individual, rebirth of freedom and democracy. Talking about "rebirth" obviously implies that certain conditions had existed in an earlier time. This earlier, ideal period in Arab history he identified clearly with the pre-Islamic time (*jāhiliyya*). The aim was to raise the Arabs' minds again to

the consciousness of their forefathers.[57] But it was a deliberate and selective return to the *jāhiliyya*:

> We understand with the return to the *jāhiliyya* the revival of those aspects of the period which are in harmony with modern civilization. We understand it as a return to the high moral grounds of society during the *jāhiliyya*, to the examples of manliness, generosity, pride, sovereignty, greatness and dignity . . . We also mean the glorification of life and its pleasures which inspired our poets. Nobody is thinking of returning to the camel litter and the bow and arrow or similar dead symbols of that time . . . *baʿth* means for us to rediscover the educational elements of our nature and to act according to that nature.[58]

Even more emphatically: "The national rebirth is a return to the sources of life, a time in which our national character developed, long before Moses, Jesus and Muhammad."[59]

Unlike most other thinkers who project an ideal state of society into the past, al-Arsuzi also dealt explicitly with the reasons that caused this ideal situation to disappear. With a directness and openness rare in the works of modern Arab thinkers he attacked religion as the real "fall from paradise," as the cause of decay of the human situation: "when manliness was replaced by piety and fear, when [religious] orders were substituted for [civil] associations, when heroic poets had to make place for hermits and when Arab wolves changed into dervishes living off the bread crumbs falling from the tables."[60]

Picture 6

He described in detail how Islam changed the meaning of every aspect of *jāhiliyya* to the negative. In the *jāhiliya*, according to al-Arsuzi, *imām* meant "courageous leader," and the *faqīh* opened the soul for the truth; while in Islam *imām* came to mean the leader of the prayer in the mosque and the *faqīh* interpreted the traditions handed down by the forefathers. *Jihād* was the pre-Islamic knighthood and became equivalent to spreading the message of Muhammad ibn ʿAbdallah (*sic*). The essence of the *jāhiliyya* was "the flourishing of life" (*zahū*) and that of Islam was "abstinence or indifference toward life" (*zuhd*), generating a backwardness which was symbolized in the phenomenon of the dervishes.[61] The guiding ideas of the *jāhiliyya* were freedom, the goodness of man, and the individuality of each person. In Islamic education the written word replaced the natural inclinations of man, and happiness ceased to mean that of actions crowned by success, but an inner quietism and satisfaction as companions of obedience.[62] To summarize al-Arsuzi's claims, Islam shifted the interest from this world to the Hereafter and so everything that was of no consequence in the *jāhiliyya* obtained greatest importance in Islam.[63] Islam was the antithesis to the *jāhiliyya* of al-Arsuzi, imagined as an ideal. Al-Arsuzi, forever conscious of the meaning and power of words, used the term *jāhiliyya* judiciously. We have seen above how he called journalists the "prophets" of modern society. In both cases it must be considered a deliberate (and provocative) attempt to secularize terms that were considered part of the sacred language of the religion for use in modern society.

Al-Arsuzi also observed an absolute parallel between the role religions played in the West and in the East during the Middle Ages. In each case the emphasis had been on the Hereafter; morality and political rule were based on the assumption that man in his imperfection could not distinguish between good and evil. Hence, it was the role of revelation to tell people the difference and the need for absolute rule to implement the rules of religion. In other words, reason and scientific thinking were subjugated to a hostile power: the power of faith. The rebellion of reason against any sort of control thus remains a goal of modern civilization.

The break with subservience, obedience, and lack of freedom occurred when "the human intellect rebelled against this rule" and with the development of the natural sciences, which showed man how to rule over his environment. At this point the people "left the teachings of the church and returned to the historical roots of life. This return is the rebirth, the *baʿth*, world wide."[64] Since antiquity had recognized the value of nature and had aimed at a system in which the freedom of each citizen was guaranteed, the pioneers of modern civilization identified themselves with antiquity and talked about a "rebirth." But there was also a second meaning of "rebirth," which was related to the idea of nationalism, and held that every nation had to experience such a "rebirth," i.e. find a way back to its ideal origins where the genius of the nation first manifested itself.[65] Here both the regeneration of the national language and the memory of heroic deeds and the natural

qualities of the nation played a preeminent role. In this way each nation could participate actively in the project of modern civilization. For al-Arsuzi the leading role of the French Revolution in this break with a past dominated by religion was beyond any doubt. It was thinkers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and others, "the prophets of a new time,"[66] who initiated this revolution, which replaced the privileged with the talented and virtuous. The nation became the source of all authority and power, and the class system was replaced by equality for all: Thereby the French Revolution established a value system which produced modern civilization and swept away a decaying society and value system from the stage of world history.[67]

It was up to the "liberal thinkers (*al-aḥrār*)," the "talented," the "social reformers," the "journalists," "the "outstanding personalities," the "avant-garde (*al-ṭalīʿa*)" etc. to initiate and to guide this reawakening of the people to their own freedom and independence and to transform them from subjects to citizens.

In his earlier writings al-Arsuzi claimed that for the Arabs their language was the clearest manifestation of their national genius and the repository of their national heritage. The revival of the language was the first task in preparing the nation for modern civilization, i.e. establishing its identity. By the mid-1950s he had shifted his emphasis toward democracy, science, and industry as the major instruments in the campaign to become part of modern civilization. Probably it was his experience in Antakya that had taught him that only political participation guaranteed the mobilization of the masses. This tendency in his thought, which became even stronger with the downfall of pan-Arabism, was manifest by 1961 with the dissolution of the United Arab Republic. Its end came with the war of 1967. Al-Arsuzi's diminishing dogmatism concerning the Arab nation-state was, as already observed above, now connected – especially since the defeat of 1967 – with the observation that Arab societies had not succeeded in catching up with modern civilization, but had remained in their "backwardness." This perception of "backwardness" led him to demand democratization and industrialization of Arab society – he saw Japan as a great example. He indeed went so far as to demand English – at least in a transitional phase – as the language of instruction in order to catch up more quickly with modernity.[68]

Science, together with industry, was the essential support of democracy; knowledge was the major means for the realization of freedom and democracy since, in the words of al-Arsuzi, knowledge was based on experimentation and natural sciences. But it becomes clear that, in spite of his reference to natural sciences, he does not refer to them alone when he continues that modern science had two aspects to it: a theoretical aspect, which sharpened the perception of life and affirmed the dignity of human beings; and a second aspect, which alerted the intellect, enhanced the inclination to study, and trained the ability for discussion – clearly aspects of philosophy and logic. He believed that these qualities lead man to believe in his potential for freedom, in his ability for self-government, and his self-discipline to obey the

laws.[69] Science would enhance the intellectual capabilities among the members of a nation and their ability to comprehend the nature of different historical phases. Through science man would develop a progressive mentality, accumulating earlier knowledge and connecting it with newly acquired knowledge. This would give society a progressive, scientific, and optimistic perspective. The task of the state was to promote these qualities. Knowledge made the intellect an authority for the recognition of truth.

Thus intellect and reason superseded the mental barriers of religion and nationalism and guaranteed the unity of the human race and the equality of human beings as an absolute value. Science would enhance the inclination of man to individuality and independence just as it enhanced the need for living in harmony with other human beings.[70] The common heritage of man included science, arts, and the exchange of experiences among the nations. Al-Arsuzi here reached a universal understanding of people and societies, since history proved the mutual dependence of nations in the quest for the progress of civilization.[71] The best educational topics to develop this universal consciousness were in his opinion geography and history. They would widen the spatial and temporal horizons of young people. The spread of knowledge in general – and obligatory schooling in particular – were a national task.[72]

Al-Arsuzi did not see the importance of industrialization solely in the

Picture 7

enhancing of the material wealth of society, though he did not underestimate this aspect. He envisioned it, especially in connection with the natural sciences, as the rational way for man to master his environment and to affirm his independence. He also argued that the division of labor would make the exploitation of man by man impossible, and thus guarantee a minimum of inequality.[73]

Conclusion

In the preface to the fourth volume of al-Arsuzi's collected works it is stated that his writings are full of contradictions. He believed in "outstanding personalities" and leaders, and yet declared himself in favor of plebiscitary democracy; he asked for socialism and equality but insisted on individual freedom, which he believed could be guaranteed by a measure of private property; he believed in the need for industrialization but demanded at the same time compassion for creation and life as the foundation of the nation and the state; he elevated the nation to an essentialist – almost transcendental – myth, and yet subordinated it to the needs and goals of mankind itself.[74] A number of these "contradictions" can be solved when his writings are considered as a reflection of the development of his thinking over a historical period and his lifetime.

Al-Arsuzi's faith in the emancipation of the individual shows itself first and foremost in his use of the Arabic language. Someone taking the trouble to peruse the six volumes of his collected works will see how over the years he succeeded in simplifying his written Arabic, leaving out the French terminology, which he had used profusely in his early writings. He increasingly wrote in a simpler and more fluid style, the "language of the public." While in the beginning he used very abstract and general concepts to expound his ideas, he later shifted to examples from daily life – which he called "urgent issues" (*al-qaḍāyā al-ʿājila*) – to bring his ideas closer to the life experience of the public. This method appealed much more to the personal experience and sentiments of the reader. The public was to be the driving force for the rebirth (*al-baʿth*). But it needed to be prepared for this task by a "conscious elite" and "avant-garde" "social reformers," or the "state" which would reawaken the public's altruistic tendencies, its compassion for others, and sense of the common weal, and thus make the public conscious of its principally good characteristics.

Al-Arsuzi investigated various political systems, and took from them what seemed to fit his own concept of an "ideal republic," which he proclaimed as the model for the future Arab society. He saw in the sovereignty of the law the only means for the realization of democracy and its protection from excesses. Freedom was the only way to create mediation between private and public needs. The measure of freedom for the individual was determined by the common weal and the welfare of the nation. Of the latter, the citizens would be aware thanks to free political and social education. The state that was to

guarantee the freedom of the citizens and their equal chances in life would be based on this assumption.

Al-Arsuzi spoke here of "our socialism" (*ishtirākiyyatunā*), which for him equaled the concept of "socialist democracy." A socialist society relied not on kinship ties, but on relationships based on territorial proximity. Private property was then only a means to manifest the singularity of each individual. Thus a "democracy of the public" would come into being in which the public, through its representatives, would decide about laws and their implementation. The "democracy of the public," as propagated by al-Arsuzi, was the democracy of the "producers and workers."

The relationship of the citizens to the public was comparable to that between nations and mankind. On the one hand, each nation possessed its independence and sovereignty and the freedom to manage itself; on the other, there existed relations with other nations, essential for a nation's continued existence. The basis on which these relations were constructed was the "fraternity of human beings" – parallel to the "fraternity within the nation" – since all mankind derived from Adam and Eve. The elaboration of the "national dimension" and the "general human dimension" of relations was one of the most important concepts he developed. When, for instance, he talked about the meaning of science, he linked it to mankind in general, not to an individual nation. He spoke of the importance of the relations between states and people for the accumulation of information, scientific insights, and human experience. For him no nation could develop in isolation.

When al-Arsuzi spoke about rebirth through the French Revolution the imagery and events fuse with his own "Antakya experience," which shows how important both events were for his life and political thinking. For him the two events demonstrated how change and development were possible in any regressive society when the right means were used to create a social and political revolution such as he had initiated on Antakya. His profound admiration for the French Revolution, however, did not stop him bitterly criticizing the "France of colonialism," and blaming it and its collaborators among the ruling Arab elite for the backwardness of Arab society and the blocking of development, as a result of which the public had erred and had lost its confidence in its own capabilities and that of the nation. Like other Arab nationalists, he had to realize that the end of colonial rule and the independence of the state did not necessarily mean the abolition of repressive political elites.

Al-Arsuzi repeated again and again the importance of the separation of religion and politics because their commingling also retarded the development of society. Religion focused attention on the other world, and this was responsible for the existence of dervish orders, superstition, and a return to the past in search of solutions for both today's problems and future ones. This could only happen because the life and action of society were dominated by religion instead of relying on progress. Progress started with the citizen who, having sufficient means to sustain his life, became conscious of being a

human and developed a sense for the common weal and a willingness to sacrifice for his home and nation.

The thought of al-Arsuzi turned around the concept of progress and development on the basis of a civilization, modern in a material and ideal sense and based also on the natural sciences, which to his mind "were used already before Islam and Christianity" and according to which all humans were equal and masters over their own fate by applying their free will and their reason. In his later writings he concentrated increasingly on the aspects of backwardness and its causes. He proposed science and industrial production as a possible solution.

The qualitative change in al-Arsuzi's thinking – from a national dimension to a general human one; from the essence of the Arab language to modern sciences and democracy – occurred 15 years after the events in Antakya, i.e. after the immediate impact of these events had diminished and made place for intellectual maturity and new political insights. Studying his work and analyzing his thought, it is of particular importance to deal with this last phase of his development. Starting with the wide spectrum of meaning that can be attached to the concept "liberal thought," it can be argued that his idea of a "socialist democracy" with its emphasis on the freedom of the individual carried strong elements of liberal thought in it. His progressive method relied on the historical process to which all nations and societies were subject, and which consisted of a constant interplay between local, regional, and international conditions on the political, social, economic, and intellectual level. The result was a concept of what he called a "socialist democracy," which, however, put an ever greater value on the freedom of the individual and in which nationalist essentialism receded into the background. His thought was strongly influenced by the French Revolution and his own "Antakya experience," and enriched through other experiences in societal, cultural, and political aspects which he collected in various phases of his life as an Arab nationalist and a believer in the French Revolution.

Notes

* I would like to thank at this place Thomas Philipp for the many years of kind encouragement and advice for my academic interests in the history of Syria and the Middle East. He supported my efforts to establish academic relations between the Universities of Erlangen and Damascus and remains a teacher and friend in our present collaboration establishing a European studies program at the University of Damascus.

1 Zaki al-Arsuzi, *al-Mu'allafāt al-kāmila*, 6 vols., Damascus: Maṭābiʿ al-Idāra al-Siyāsiyya lil-Jaysh wa-l-Quwwāt al-Musallaḥa 1972–76, vol. I, "Introduction," 27.

2 For details concerning the events mentioned here, see Dalal Arsuzi-Elamir, *Der arabische Nationalismus in Syrien: Zakī al-Arsūzī und die arabische Nationalbewegung an der Peripherie AlexandrettalAntakya 1930–1938*, Münster: Lit Verlag 2003.

3 For his experiences in Damascus see ibid., esp. 219–35.

4 Khalil Ahmad, *Dawr al-lisān fī binā' al-insān ʿinda Zakī al-Arsūzī*, Damascus: Dār

al-Su'āl li-l-Ṭabāʿa wa-l-Nashr 1981; Salim Nasir Barakat, *al-Fikr al-qawmī wa-uṣūluhu al-falsafiyya ʿinda Zakī al-Arsūzī*, Damascus: n.p. 1984; Antoine Audo, *Zakī al-Arsūzī: un arabe face à la modernité*, Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq 1988; Maher al-Charif, "Zakī al-Arsūzī and his Contribution to the Arab Nationalist Ideology," in Hiroyuki Aoyama, Wafiq Khansa, and Maher al-Charif, *Spritual Father of the Baʿth: The Ideological and Political Significance of Zakī al-Arsūzī in Arab Nationalist Movements*, trans. Mujab al-Imam and Malek Salman (Middle East Studies Series, no. 49), Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO 2000, 129–85 (http://www.ide.go.jp/English/ Publish/Mes/49.html, accessed July 8, 2008). Various books detail the history and the ideology of the Baʿth Party, but often they contradict each other at various points: see Itamar Rabinovich, *Syria under the Baʿth 1963–1966: The Army–Party Symbiosis*, Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press 1972; Mustafa al-Dandashli, *Ḥizb al-Baʿt al-ʿArabī al-Ishtirākī*, n.p. 1979; Shibli al-ʿAysami, *Ḥizb al-Baʿth al-ʿArabī al-Ishtirākī: al-Marḥala al-taʾsīsiyya 1940–1949*, Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīʿa 1975; Jalal Faruq al-Sharif, *Ḥizb al-Baʿth al-ʿArabī al-Ishtirākī*, n.p. 1983. Some contradict the testimony – published or unpublished – of al-Arsuzi and his disciples: see e.g. Mutaʿ al-Safadi, *Ḥizb al-Baʿth: maʾsāt al-mawlid, maʾsāt an-nihāya*, Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb 1964; Sami al-Jundi, *al-Baʿth*, Beirut: Dār al-Nahār li-l-Nashr 1969; Wahib al-Ghanim, *al-Judhūr al-wāqiʿiyya wa-l-fikriyya li-mabādiʾ al-Baʿth al-ʿArabī*, Damascus: Maṭbaʿat ʿAkrama 1994. Some people present him as the "spiritual father of the Baʿth Party" as, for instance, Nāfidh Suwayd in his book of the same title: *Zakī al-Arsūzī: al-ab al-rūḥī li-Ḥizb al-Baʿth al-ʿArabī al-Ishtirākī*, Damascus: 1992. Others emphasize, deliberately or not, the religious aspect, as if al-Arsuzi's Alawite descent were the only component of his identity; see Jalal al-Sayyid, *Ḥizb al-Baʿth al-ʿArabī*, Beirut: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-ʿArabiyya 1973.

5 Al-Arsuzi, *Mashākilunā al-qawmiyya wa-mawqif al-aḥzāb minhā*, Damascus: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-ʿArabīya 1956, in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. III, 132–37.

6 Al-Arsuzi, "Īḍāḥ baʿḍ al-muṣṭalaḥāt: al-dīmūqrāṭiyya, al-ishtirākiyya, al-būrjwaziyya," in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 385–91.

7 Al-Arsuzi, *Mashākilunā al-qawmiyya wa-mawqif al-aḥzāb minhā*, 181.

8 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. I, introduction, 20.

9 See also the facsimile of the letter of the teachers, dated July 29, 1951, in ibid., introduction.

10 Al-Arsuzi, *Baʿth al-umma al-ʿarabiyya wa-risālatuhā ila l-ʿālam: al-madaniyya wa-l-thaqāfa*, Damascus: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-ʿArabiyya 1954, in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. II, 15–33.

11 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. III. The most important work he published in this connection was his *Mashākilunā al-qawmiyya wa-mawqif al-aḥzāb minhā*; *Ṣawt al-ʿurūba fī liwāʾ al-Iskandarūna*, Damascus: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-ʿArabiyya 1961, repr. in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. III; *Matā yakūn al-ḥukm dīmūqrāṭiyyan*, Damascus: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-ʿArabiyya 1961, repr. in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. III; *al-Jumhūriyya al-muthlā*, Damascus: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-ʿArabiyya 1965, repr. in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV; essays for a book project "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV. The Ministry of Culture permitted its printing in 1964, but for unknown reasons it was never published. Some topics were treated in essays in newspapers and journals. Some basic discussions of political thought on democracy are collected in the third volume of *al-Muʾallafāt*. In the fourth volume principal questions, such as the foundation of the state and detailed questions of contemporary issues, are discussed. These two volumes constitute the basic material for this chapter.

12 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Qawmiyya al-ʿarabiyya wa-ususuhā," *al-Mawqif al-ʿArabī* (June 9, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 213–17, at 213.

13 Ibid., 213–17, here 215.
14 Al-Arsuzi uses the term *al-ʿirq*. The term "race" is used in a pre-National Socialist understanding and means quite generally the Arab "people."
15 Al-Arsuzi, "Mafhūm al-insāniyya fī ʿalāqatihi bi-mafhūmay al-umma wa-l-qawmiyya," *al-Jundī* (May 18, 1965), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 153–54.
16 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Qawmiyya al-ʿarabiyya wa-ususuhā," 213–17. See also al-Arsuzi, "Maghza shiʿāray al-Ishtirākiyya wa-l-Baʿth," *al-Jundī* (September 16, 1966), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 38, where he rejects any affinity between Arab nationalism and "deviationist movements like Fascism."
17 Al-Arsuzi, "Bi-munāsabat ḥawādith Qubruṣ: qiyām al-mujtamaʿāt ʿalā mabdaʾay al-jiwār wa-l-qarāba," *al-Jundī* (September 1, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 219–24.
18 Al-Arsuzi, *Matā yakūn al-ḥukm dīmūqrāṭiyyan*, 419.
19 See, for instance, B. Lewis, "Djumhūriyya," in *EI*², vol. II, 594–95.
20 Al-Arsuzi, *Baʿth al-umma al-ʿarabiyya wa-risālatuhā ilā l-ʿālam: al-madaniyya wa-l-thaqāfa*, 76f.
21 Al-Arsuzi, *Baʿth al-umma al-ʿarabiyya wa-risālatuhā ilā l-ʿālam: al-umma wa-l-usra*, Damascus 1954, in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. II, 227.
22 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Jumhūriyya al-muthlā*, 165.
23 Al-Arsuzi, *Matā yakūn al-ḥukm dīmūqrāṭiyyan*, 427.
24 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 8.
25 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Jumhūriyya al-muthlā*, 182ff.
26 Ibid., 77.
27 Ibid., 26ff.
28 Ibid., 102f.
29 Ibid., 69.
30 Ibid., 83ff.
31 Ibid., 166f.
32 Ibid., 188.
33 Ibid.
34 Al-Arsuzi, *Matā yakūn al-ḥukm dīmūqrāṭiyyan*, 469.
35 "Deeds" included not only publications but also public demonstrations, which were explicitly non-violent and usually well organized. See Arsuzi-Elamir, *Der arabische Nationalismus in Syrien*, picture 1.
36 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Jumhūriyya al-muthlā*, 13–24.
37 Al-Arsuzi, *Ṣawt al-ʿurūba fī liwāʾ al-Iskandarūna*, 394.
38 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. I, 31. See also pictures 2 and 3 from Markaz al-Maʿlūmāt al-Qawmī (Center of National Information), Damascus.
39 Al-Arsuzi, "Mawqifunā min al-kāritha [[or "kāritha"?]]," in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 183–86, at 184.
40 Al-Arsuzi, "Naḥwa al-islāḥ," *al-Jundī* (July 6, 1965), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 331–337, 335f.
41 Al-Arsuzi, "Thawrat al-thāmin min āzār fī l-mīzān," *al-Jundī* (October 20, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, 247–254, 252.
42 Al-Arsuzi, *Mashākilunā al-qawmiyya wa-mawqif al-aḥzāb minhā*, 237.
43 Ibid., 59f.
44 Ibid., 141.
45 Al-Arsuzi, "Ḥurriyyat al-ṣaḥāfa," *al-Baʿth* (October 6, 1962), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 289–93.
46 Al-Arsuzi, *Baʿth al-umma al-ʿarabiyya wa-risālatuhā ilā l-ʿālam: al-umma wa-l-usra*, 311–15.
47 Al-Arsuzi, *Matā yakūn al-ḥukm dīmūqrāṭiyyan*, 438. For the role of women in his political public action see also from Arsuzi-Elamir, *Der arabische Nationalismus in Syrien*; pictures 4 and 5, showing political activities of women, and picture 6,

concerning the professional life of women, from Markaz al-Maʿlūmāt al-Qawmī, Damascus.

48 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. III, 24–32. See also picture 7 from Markaz al-Maʿlūmāt al-Qawmī, Damascus.

49 Al-Arsuzi, "Infiṣām al-fikr ʿan al-ʿamal āfat ʿaṣrinā," *al-Mawqif al-ʿArabī* (May 19, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 307–12.

50 Al-Arsuzi, *Mashākilunā al-qawmiyya wa-mawqif al-aḥzāb minhā*, 237.

51 Al-Arsuzi, "Ishtirākiyyatunā," *al-Jundī* (January 7, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 363–67.

52 Al-Arsuzi, "Istiqlāl al-muwāṭinīn fī maʿīshatihim ḍamāna li-istiqlāl al-dawla," in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 393–99.

53 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Qawmiyya al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-ishtirākiyya," *al-Jundī* (November 17, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 345–53.

54 For the concept of usufruct (*taṣarruf*), see Gabriel Baer, *A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt 1800–1950*, London: Oxford University Press 1962, 7.

55 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Khurūj min al-maʾziq," *al-Jundī* (July 14, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 267–73, 271; al-Arsuzi, "al-Ishtirākiyya fī l-zirāʿa," *al-Jundī* (March 3, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, 359–62.

56 In this context one also has to read his article of 1966 where he criticized the Baʿth Party, demanding that "this party should be liberated from the remainders of the period of [traditional] leadership (*zuʿamāʾ*)." With that he meant that the center of gravity should be transferred from the party leadership to the base: al-Arsuzi, "Bi-munāsabat yawm al-thāmin min āzār," *al-Jundī* (March 8, 1966), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 30. In an article entitled "Bayna al-dīmūqrāṭiyya wa-l-fāshiyya," in *al-Jundī* (March 1, 1966), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 83–85, he becomes even clearer and identifies this "traditional leadership" as fascism.

57 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Baʿth," *al-Jundī* (December 31, 1963), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 197–203.

58 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Qawmiyya al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-ishtirākiyya," 345–53, 351.

59 Ibid., 350. See also *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. VI, 529, and vol. III, 135, where he attacks those who try to reconcile the concepts of "religious community" and "nation."

60 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Baʿth," 202.

61 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Jāhiliyya wa-l-islām wa-taʾthīruhumā ʿalā l-shiʿr al-ʿarabī," in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. V, 49–77, 69.

62 Ibid., 74f.

63 Al-Arsuzi, "Thawrat al-thāmin min āzār fī l-mīzān," *al-Jundī* (October 20, 1964), in *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, "al-Tarbiyya al-siyāsiyya al-muthlā," 247–54.

64 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Qawmiyya al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-ishtirākiyya," 350. See also the preceding article for many examples to clarify the difference between the time of *jāhiliyya* and the time following it; and how a rebirth came about in Antakya.

65 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Baʿth," 197–203.

66 Ibid.

67 Al-Arsuzi, "Thawrat al-thāmin min āzār fī l-mīzān," 247–60.

68 Al-Arsuzi, "al-Baʿth," 197–211.

69 Al-Arsuzi, *Matā yakūn al-ḥukm dīmūqrāṭiyyan*, 498.

70 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Jumhūriyya al-muthlā*, 125.

71 Ibid., 127.

72 Al-Arsuzi, *Baʿth al-umma al-ʿarabiyya wa-risālatuhā ilā l-ʿālam: al-madaniyya wa-l-thaqāfa*, 42.

73 Al-Arsuzi, *Matā yakūn al-ḥukm dīmūqrāṭiyyan*, 441.

74 Al-Arsuzi, *al-Muʾallafāt*, vol. IV, 15.

References

Ahmad, Khalil, *Dawr al-lisān fī binā' al-insān 'inda Zakī al-Arsūzī*, Damascus: Dār al-Su'āl li-l-Ṭabā'a wa-l-Nashr 1981.

Arsuzi, Zaki al-, *Mashākilunā al-qawmiyya wa-mawqif al-aḥzāb minhā: Ṣawt al-'urūba fī liwā' al-Iskandarūna*, Damascus: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-'Arabiyya 1961.

Arsuzi, Zaki al-, *al-Jumhūriyya al-muthlā*, Damascus: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-'Arabiyya 1965.

Arsuzi, Zaki al-, *al-Mu'allafāt al-kāmila*, 6 vols., Damascus: Maṭābi' al-Idāra al-Siyāsiyya lil-Jaysh wa-l-Quwwāt al-Musallaḥa 1972–76.

Arsuzi-Elamir, Dalal, *Der arabische Nationalismus in Syrien. Zakī al-Arsūzī und die arabische Nationalbewegung an der Peripherie Alexandrettal Antakya 1930–1938*, Münster: Lit Verlag 2003.

Audo, Antoine, *Zakī al-Arsūzī: un arabe face à la modernité*, Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq 1988.

'Aysami, Shibli al-, *Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī al-Ishtirākī: al-Marḥala al-ta'sīsiyya 1940–1949*, Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'a 1975.

Baer, Gabriel, *A History of Landownership in Modern Egypt 1800–1950*, London: Oxford University Press 1962.

Barakat, Salim Nasir, *al-Fikr al-qawmī wa-uṣūluhu al-falsafiyya 'inda Zakī al-Arsūzī*, Damascus: n.p. 1984.

Charif, Maher al-, "Zakī al-Arsūzī and his Contribution to the Arab Nationalist Ideology," in Hiroyuki Aoyama, Wafiq Khansa, and Maher al-Charif, *Spiritual Father of the Ba'th: The Ideological and Political Significance of Zakī al-Arsūzī in Arab Nationalist Movements*, trans. Mujab al-Imam and Malek Salman (Middle East Studies Series, no. 49), Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO 2000, 129–85 (http://www.ide.go.jp/English/ Publish/Mes/49.html, accessed July 8, 2008).

Dandashli, Mustafa al-, *Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī al-Ishtirākī*, n.p. 1979.

Ghanim, Wahib al-, *al-Judhūr al-wāqi'iyya wa-l-fikriyya li-mabādi' al-Ba'th al-'Arabī*, Damascus: Maṭba'at 'Akrama 1994.

Jundi, Sami al-, *al-Ba'th*, Beirut: Dār al-Nahār li-l-Nashr 1969.

Rabinovich, Itamar, *Syria under the Ba'th 1963–1966: The Army–Party Symbiosis*, Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press 1972.

Safadi, Muta' al-, *Ḥizb al-Ba'th: ma'sāt al-mawlid, ma'sāt an-nihāya*, Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb 1964.

Sayyid, Jalal al-, *Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī*, Beirut: Dār al-Yaqẓa al-'Arabiyya 1973.

Sharif, Jalal Faruq al-, *Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī al-Ishtirākī*, n.p. 1983.

Suwayd, Nafidh, *Zakī al-Arsūzī: al-ab al-rūḥī li-Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī al-Ishtirākī*, Damascus: n.p. 1992.

First published 2010
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2010 editorial selection and matter Christoph Schumann, individual chapters the contributors

Typeset in Times by
RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham, Wiltshire

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Nationalism and liberal thought in the Arab East : ideology and practice / edited by Christoph Schumann.
p. cm—(Routledge studies on the Middle East ; 10)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Liberalism—Arab countries. 2. Arab nationalism. 3. Arab countries—Intellectual life. 4. Arab countries—Politics and government. I. Schumann, Christoph.
JC574.2.A6N38 2010
320.510917'4927—dc22 2009033051

ISBN10: 0–415–55410–1 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0–203–85836–0 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978–0–415–55410–7 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978–0–203–85836–3 (ebk)

Contents

List of contributors vii
Acknowledgements ix

Introduction 1
CHRISTOPH SCHUMANN

Part I
Nationalism and liberal thought 13

1 **The role of traditional religious scholars in Iraqi politics from the Young Turk period until 1920: the example of Yusuf al-Suwaydi** 15
THOMAS EICH

2 **Who is "liberal" in 1930s Iraq? Education as a contested terrain in a nascent public sphere** 31
PETER WIEN

3 **Liberal champions of pan-Arabism: Syria's second Ḥizb al-Shaʿb** 48
FRED H. LAWSON

4 **Nation, state, and democracy in the writings of Zaki al-Arsuzi** 66
DALAL ARSUZI-ELAMIR

5 **Nationalism as a cause: Arab nationalism in the writings of Ghassan Kanafani** 92
ORIT BASHKIN

Part II
Arab intellectuals and liberal thought 113

6 **Modernity, romanticism and religion: contradictions in the writings of Farah Antun** 115
ALEXANDER FLORES

7 **Progress and liberal thought in *al-Hilāl*, *al-Manār*, and *al-Muqtaṭaf* before World War I** 132
THOMAS PHILIPP

8 **Liberal democracy versus fascist totalitarianism in Egyptian intellectual discourse: the case of Salama Musa and *al-Majalla al-Jadīda*** 145
ISRAEL GERSHONI

9 **The "failure" of radical nationalism and the "silence" of liberal thought in the Arab world** 173
CHRISTOPH SCHUMANN

Index of institutions, organizations and periodicals 193
Index of personal names 195
Index of political terms 197