DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION AGAINST THE ARABS IN ISRAEL

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FOREWORD

This is a case-study in discrimination — in one country, against one community, and in one field of national life. It is a study of some aspects of the discrimination practiced by Israel against the Arabs in the field of education.

It is a study of the situation which obtains now, close to two decades after the onset of Zionist rule in Palestine. (The data on which the present analysis is based refer to the school-year 1964/1965, except in a few instances in which the latest available official statistics refer to the preceding school-year). The restricted access of Arabs to educational institutions ("primary schools" and, more markedly, "post-primary schools" and "academic institutions" of higher learning) is therefore a continuing phenomenon reflecting persistent state-policy, not a passing phase of the initial years of Zionist settlers' rule.

The material on which this study is based is drawn, in its entirety, from official publications of the Government of Israel. The sources used in this study are:

2. *Israel Government Year Book, 5725 (1964/65)*, Jerusalem, The Government Printer, 1964 (particularly the chapter contributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, pp. 103 - 123); and


In the footnotes to the text, the *Israel Government Year Book* is abbreviated IGYB, and the *Statistical Abstract of Israel* is abbreviated SAI. References to IGYB indicate page numbers; references to tables in SAI indicate the number of the table (represented by an alphabetical prefix followed by a number) as well as the page number. As for the Laws, where extracts are quoted, the Section and sub-Section of the Law are indicated in the text and no further reference is made in the footnotes.
I. DISCRIMINATORY ENFORCEMENT
OF THE "COMPULSORY
EDUCATION LAW"

A. Relevant Provisions of the Law:

1. The "Compulsory Education Law, 5709 - 1949", as amended, stipulates *inter alia* that:

   (a) "Compulsory Education shall comprise all children of the ages from 5 to 13 years inclusive and all adolescents who have not completed their elementary education" (Section 2-a);

   (b) Parents of a child (or an adolescent, as defined above) shall be under a double duty: first, "to effect" the registration of the child or adolescent with the appropriate "local education authority" (Section 3-a); and, secondly, "to ensure that such child or adolescent regularly attends a recognized educational institution" (Section 4-a);

   (c) Similarly, the State is under a double duty: to provide education to the child or adolescent
concerned, and to provide it free of charge. (Section 6-a of the Law declares: “Every child of compulsory education age, and every adolescent of compulsory education age who has not completed his elementary education, shall be entitled to free elementary education at an official educational institution”. And Section 7-a of the Law proclaims: “The State is responsible for the provision of free elementary education under this Law”).

Under the Law, then, both the responsibility for ensuring parents’ compliance with the provisions relating to registration and attendance, and the responsibility for providing free educational opportunities for children or adolescents of compulsory education age, rest upon the State. If school attendance by Arab children of compulsory education age is found to be less than universal (or, at any rate, less extensive than attendance by Jewish children of the same age), it is the State itself that must be held responsible for that situation — whether it be caused by indifference (or by other forms of voluntary non-compliance) on the part of the parents, or by lack of public educational facilities in the Arab areas.

B. Unequal Ratios of Primary School Attendance by Arabs and Jews:

2. On 31 December 1964, Arab children aged 5 to
14 years\(^{(1)}\) numbered 81,315,\(^{(2)}\) and constituted 28.4 percent of the total Arab population of the country, whereas Jewish children of the same age-group, who numbered 501,855,\(^{(3)}\) constituted 22.4 percent of the total Jewish population. Arab children of compulsory education age, then, represented 14 percent of all children of compulsory education age in the Israeli-occupied territories of Palestine.

3. At the same time, Arab children attending state-run primary schools during the school-year 1964/1965 numbered 46,230, while Jewish pupils numbered 413,353.\(^{(4)}\) In other words, whereas Arab children of compulsory education age constituted 14 percent of the total number of children of that age, Arab pupils at state-

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1) The *Compulsory Education Law* defines a "child" as "a person below the age of 14 years", and "elementary education" as "generally designed for children of the ages from 5 to 13 years inclusive" (Section 1). But the population statistics in SAI provide no information on age-groups on a year-by-year basis, except for the first four years of life; from the fifth year onwards, the relevant information is provided with respect to age-groups 5 to 9 years, 10 to 14 years, 15 to 19 years, etc. For comparisons of the educational opportunities open to children and adolescents of the Arab and the Jewish communities, we have therefore taken as our standards the numbers of children aged 5 to 14 years (for primary education) and adolescents aged 15 to 19 years (for post-primary education).

2) Based on SAI: B/16, p. 41.
3) Based on SAI: B/15, p. 40.
4) Based on SAI: T/3 and T/10, pp. 575 and 581 respectively.
run primary schools constituted only 10 percent of all pupils attending state-run primary schools in the country.

4. The figures cited in the two foregoing paragraphs reveal also that the proportion of Arab pupils enrolled in state-run primary schools, to the total number of Arab children aged 5 to 14 years, is 57 percent, whereas Jewish pupils attending state-run primary schools constitute 82 percent of all Jewish children of the same age-group.

5. Some children, both Arab and Jewish, attend "other institutions" which are not a part of the state-run system of educational institutions. However, the statistics published in the Statistical Abstract of Israel, 1965 fail to provide information on two questions which are vital for ascertaining the comparative percentages we are seeking, namely:

(a) How many of the pupils attending the schools designated as "other institutions" receive primary education; and

(b) How many of the pupils attending those "other institutions" are Arabs, and how many are Jews. Concerning this second question, it must be emphasized that the institutions which are designated as "Other Arabic Educational Institutions" (5) and subsumed under the category, "Arab Educa-

5) SAI: "Introduction to the Tables", p. lxxviii.
tion";\(^6\) are authoritatively described as "comprising Jewish pupils;"\(^7\) whereas, on the other hand, those designated as "Other Hebrew Educational Institutions"\(^8\) and subsumed under the category, "Jewish Education"\(^9\), are unlikely—because of their specific nature\(^10\)—to have any significant Arab attendance.

In the absence of exact information on these two questions, precise statements on the comparative degrees of enforcement of the Compulsory Education Law, with respect to Arabs and Jews, cannot be made. Nevertheless, two conclusions can be reached with a fair degree of certainty:

(a) The percentages cited in paragraphs 3 and 4 above are somewhat lower than the real percentages of enforcement, among both Arabs and Jews, of the Compulsory Education Law.

(b) Even if we assumed that all pupils attending "Other Arab Educational Institutions" were

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6) SAI : T/3, p. 575.
7) SAI : p. lxxviii.
8) SAI : p. lxxviii.
9) SAI : T/3, p. 575.
10) See SAI : p. lxxviii.
Arab (which we know is not the case\textsuperscript{(11)}), and if we assumed further that they were all receiving primary education, we would still find that the degree of enforcement of, and facilitation of compliance with, the Compulsory Education Law is lower in the case of Arab children than it is in the case of Jewish children.

During the school-year 1964/1965, total attendance at “Other Arabic Educational Institutions” was 11,968\textsuperscript{(12)}. On the basis of the two hypothetical assumptions indicated in the preceding paragraph, this figure would raise the total number of “Arab pupils” attending “primary schools” to 58,198. On the other hand, Jewish attendance at “Other Hebrew Educational Institutions” (26,218 pupils\textsuperscript{(13)}) brings the total of Jewish enrollment in primary schools to 439,571. From these figures, two sets of conclusions can be derived:

(i) Whereas Arab children aged 5 to 14 years constitute 14 percent of all children of the same age-group, “Arab pupils” attending “primary schools” (notwithstanding the inflation in their numbers) constitute only 11.7 percent of all pupils attending primary schools in the country; and

\textsuperscript{11) ibid.}\textsuperscript{12) SAI T/3, p. 575.}\textsuperscript{13) Ibid.}
(ii) "Arab pupils" attending "primary schools" (even in their inflated numbers) constitute 71.5 percent of all Arab children aged 5 to 14 years; whereas Jewish pupils in primary schools constitute 87.6 percent of all Jewish children of the same age-group.

6. A special feature of this unequal enforcement and facilitation of compulsory primary education pertains to the education of Arab girls.

On 31 December 1964, Arab girls aged 5 to 14 years numbered 38,904,\(^{14}\) while Jewish girls of the same age-group numbered 243,778.\(^{15}\) Arab girls of compulsory education age, then, constituted 13.8 percent of all girls of that age-group.

During the school-year 1964/1965, Arab girls attending state-run primary schools numbered 19,088, while Jewish girls numbered 202,930.\(^{16}\) (Figures for attendance at "Other Arabic Educational Institutions", classified according to sex, are not available).

From these figures, the following conclusions can be derived:

\(^{14}\) Based on SAI : B/16, p. 41.
\(^{15}\) Based on SAI : B/15, p. 40.
\(^{16}\) Based on SAI : T/10, p. 581.
(a) Whereas Arab girls, aged 5 to 14 years, constitute 13.8 percent of all girls of that age-group, Arab girl-pupils at state-run primary schools constitute only 8.6 percent of all girl-pupils at those schools.

(b) Of Arab girls of compulsory education age, only 49.06 percent actually attend state-run primary schools; but, of Jewish girls of the same age-group, 83.24 percent attend those schools.

7. Thus far, our analysis has been confined to primary education (mainly in the state-run system), and our attention has been focused on the degree to which the State has discharged, with respect to Arabs and Jews, its dual responsibility: (a) to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Compulsory Education Law, and (b) to provide such educational opportunities as would make compliance with the Law possible.

The figures and percentages cited in the preceding paragraphs show that Arab children in general, and Arab girls in particular, have enjoyed less than equal access to educational opportunities, in comparison with Jewish children, at the primary education level.

This inequality is much more marked, however, at other levels of education, which are not covered by the Compulsory Education Law. In the following chapter, therefore, we shall examine the available comparative in-
formation on attendance, by Arabs and Jews, at "post-
primary institutions" (including secondary schools, vo-
cational schools, agricultural schools, and teachers' train-
ing colleges) and "academic institutions" (i.e., universi-
ties and other institutions of higher learning).
II. ATTENDANCE AT "POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS" & "ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS"

A. "Post-Primary Schools" In General:

8. On 31 December 1964, there were 25,271 Arabs\(^{(17)}\) and 229,866 Jews\(^{(18)}\) aged 15 to 19 years; Arabs, therefore, constituted 10 percent of this age-group, which roughly represents young men and women of post-primary education age.

During the school-year 1964/1965, the total number of Arabs enrolled in post-primary schools was 1,721, while the total number of Jews in post-primary schools was 97,837.\(^{(19)}\) (These figures include post-primary schools and classes of all types, except "preparatory classes for teachers' training colleges", which will be discussed in paragraph 14 below).

\(\)\(^{(17)}\) Based on SAI: B/16, p. 41.
\(\)\(^{(18)}\) Based on SAI: B/15, p. 40.
\(\)\(^{(19)}\) Based on SAI: T/3, p. 575.
From these figures, two conclusions can be derived:

(a) While Arabs aged 15 to 19 years constituted 10 percent of their age-group, Arab enrollment in post-primary schools of all types represented only 1.72 percent of the total enrollment.

(b) Arab students attending post-primary schools of all types represented 6.81 percent of all Arabs aged 15 to 19 years; but Jewish students attending such schools represented 42.56 percent of all Jews of the same age-group.

10. The breakdown of figures for enrollment in post-primary schools into grades would show that the percentage of Arab representation is highest in the lowest grade (Grade IX of the system), but falls to a lower level in the higher grades (Grades X to XII of the system), as follows:

Grade IX: Arabs represent 2 percent;
Grade X: Arabs represent 1.5 percent;
Grade XI: Arabs represent 1.5 percent;
Grade XII: Arabs represent 1.5 percent.

B. Secondary Schools:

11. The total number of students attending secondary schools during the school-year 1964/1965 was
48,066; of these, 1,405 were Arabs and 46,661 were Jews.\(^{20}\)

Two conclusions follow:

(a) Arab students represented only 2.9 percent of all students attending secondary schools, while Arabs aged 15 to 19 years constituted 10 percent of that age-group.

(b) Arab students attending secondary schools represented 5.5 percent of all Arabs aged 15 to 19, while Jewish students enrolled in secondary schools constituted 20.3 percent of Jews in that age-group.

C. Vocational Schools:

12. During the school-year 1964/1965, 25,816 students were enrolled in vocational schools. Of these, 215 were Arabs and 25,601 were Jews.\(^{21}\)

It follows, therefore, that:

(a) Arabs, who represented 10 percent of the population aged 15 to 19 years, constituted less

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20) Based on SAI : T/3, p. 575.
21) Ibid.
than one percent (0.84 % only) of students attending vocational schools.

(b) Less than one percent (0.85 % only) of Arabs aged 15 to 19 years attended vocational schools; the corresponding ratio for Jews was 11 percent.

D. Agricultural Schools:

13. During the school-year 1964/1965, 7,749 students were enrolled in agricultural schools; of these, 65 were Arabs and 7,684 were Jews.\(^{22}\)

Hence:

(a) Arabs represented less than one percent (0.85 % only) of the students attending agricultural schools, although Arabs aged 15 to 19 years constituted 10 percent of that age-group.

(b) Arab attendance at agricultural schools represented one-quarter of one percent (0.25 % only) of Arabs aged 15 to 19 years, while the corresponding ratio for Jews was 3.34 percent.

\(^{22}\) Ibid.
E. Teachers' Training Classes and Colleges:

14. During the school-year 1964/1965, the number of Arabs and Jews attending "preparatory classes to teachers' training colleges" and "teachers' training colleges" was 9,246; of these, 118 were Arabs and 9,128 were Jews. (Of the latter, 5,048 were attending the preparatory classes and 4,080 were enrolled in the colleges).{(23)}

Thus:

(a) Arabs enrolled in "preparatory classes to teachers' training colleges" constituted 1.27 percent of the total number of students attending those classes and colleges, whereas Arabs represented 10 percent of the 15-to-19-year age-group.

(b) Arabs enrolled in "preparatory classes to teachers' training colleges" represented less than one-half of one percent (0.46 % only) of all Arabs aged 15 to 19 years, while the corresponding percentage for Jews was about four (3.97 %).

F. Arab Girls' Share of "Post-Primary Education":

15. In Paragraph 6 above, we compared the degree of enforcement of, and facilitation of compliance with,

23) Based on SAI: T/3 and T/10, pp. 575 and 581 respectively.
the provisions of the Compulsory Education Law with respect to Arab girls and Jewish girls, as a specific instance of unequal enforcement and facilitation as regards Arabs and Jews in general.

In the present section, we shall examine the rate of access of Arab girls to educational facilities at the post-primary level.

16. On 31 December 1964, Arab girls aged 15 to 19 years numbered 11,860, while Arab boys numbered 13,411.\(^{(24)}\) Jews in the same age-group numbered 110,566 girls and 119,300 boys.\(^{(25)}\)

During the school-year 1964/1965, Arab girls enrolled in post-primary schools and classes of all types numbered 268; of these, 57 attended "preparatory classes to teachers' training colleges."\(^{(26)}\) At the same time, 54,387 Jewish girls were enrolled in post-primary schools and classes in general, including 4,150 in "preparatory classes to teachers' training colleges."\(^{(27)}\)

Arab boys enrolled in post-primary schools of all

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24) Based on SAI : B/16, p. 41.
26) SAI : T/10, p. 581
27) Baeed on SAI : T/10, p. 581
types numbered 1,571, including 61 in the "preparatory classes to teachers' training colleges"; while the corresponding figures for Jewish boys were 48,498 and 898 respectively.  

17. On the basis of these figures, we can make the following comparisons:

(a) Only 2.25 percent of Arab girls aged 15 to 19 years were receiving post-primary education during the school-year 1964/1965, while 49.19 percent of Jewish girls of the same age-group had access to post-primary schools and classes.

(b) Arab girls aged 15 to 19 years constituted 46.5 percent of all Arabs of that age-group; but Arab girls receiving post-primary education constituted only 14.5 percent of all Arabs attending post-primary schools or classes.

By contrast, Jewish girls aged 15 to 19 years constituted 48.1 percent of all Jews of that age-group; but Jewish girls represented 52.9 percent of all Jews attending post-primary schools or classes.

(c) Arab girls, aged 15 to 19 years, constituted 9.7 percent of all girls in that age-group; but Arab

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28) Ibid.
girls attending post-primary schools or classes represented less than one-half of one percent (0.49 % only) of all girls attending those schools or classes.

(d) Arab girls, aged 15 to 19 years, constituted 4.64 percent of all members of that age-group of the population; but Arab girls attending post-primary schools or classes represented only one-quarter of one percent (0.25 %) of total attendance.

By contrast, Jewish girls, aged 15 to 19 years, constituted 43.34 percent of all members of that age-group of the population; but Jewish girls attending post-primary schools or classes represented more than half (51.93 percent) of total attendance.

G. Higher Education:

18. Higher education is almost entirely reserved for Jewish students.

There are six institutions of higher learning in Israeli-controlled Palestine, of which one (viz., the Hebrew University) has two campuses.

The total number of students enrolled at these “academic institutions”, during the school-year 1964/1965, was 18,368.\(^{29}\)

\(^{29}\) Based on SAI: T/3, p. 575.
(It appears that only one of these "academic institutions" admits Arabs — namely, the Hebrew University. During the school-year 1963/1964, the total enrollment of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students at the Hebrew University was 9,266; only 135 of these were Arab.\(^{30}\))

It would appear, then, that Arabs represent less than one percent (0.74 % only) of the total enrollment in universities and other institutions of higher learning — although they represent 11.33 percent of the total population of the Israeli-occupied territories of Palestine.\(^{31}\)

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30) IGYB, p. 117.

III. UNEQUAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

19. Comparative statistics on school attendance do not tell the whole story: perhaps equally important is comparative information on the facilities provided to students in the Arab and the Jewish educational systems. Such indices as ratio of students to teachers, degree of qualification of teachers, and size of classes, are of vital importance to our study.

A. Student-Teacher Ratio:

20. During the school-year 1963/1964, the Jewish educational system comprised 599,123 students\(^{(32)}\) and 26,533 teachers,\(^{(33)}\) providing a student-teacher ratio of 22-to-1, whereas the corresponding ratio for the Arab

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32) SAI: T/3, p. 575.
33) SAI: T/7, p. 578.
system — comprising 51,585 students\textsuperscript{(34)} and 1,611 teachers\textsuperscript{(35)} — was 32-to-1.

21. It is worth noting that women teachers constituted 65.35 percent of all teachers in the Jewish system,\textsuperscript{(36)} but only 30.47 percent of teachers in the Arab system.\textsuperscript{(37)}

B. Proportion of Teachers Declared "Unqualified":

22. Of the 1,611 teachers employed in the Arab educational system in the school-year 1963/1964, no less than 869 were described by the Israeli Government as "unqualified"\textsuperscript{(38)}: thus more than half of the whole teaching force in Arab primary schools and kindergartens (53.94 \%) was "unqualified".

In Jewish educational institutions, on the other hand, 5,969 teachers employed in the school-year 1963/1964 were described as "non-qualified" (5,420 in primary schools and 549 in kindergartens); they constituted less

\begin{itemize}
\item[34)] SAI: T/3, p. 575.
\item[35)] SAI: T/8, p. 579.
\item[36)] Based on SAI: T/7, p. 578.
\item[37)] Based on SAI: T/8, p. 579.
\item[38)] SAI: T/8, p. 579.
\end{itemize}
than a quarter (22.49 %) of the total teaching force of 26,533.\(^{(39)}\)

23. It is worth noting also that approximately one-tenth — and perhaps more — of the teachers in Arab schools during the school-year 1963/1964 were non-Arab. Of the 1,611 teachers employed in that school-year in Arab schools, 119 were Jews (7.38 percent) and 31 belonged to unspecified "other" population groups; it is probable also that some of the 592 teachers classified as "Christian" were non-Arab Christians.\(^{(40)}\)

C. Size of Classes:

24. During the school-year 1964/1965, there were 1,465 classes in Arab primary schools and 13,279 classes in Jewish primary schools; 87 classes contained 50 or more pupils each; 44 of these overcrowded classes were in the Arab schools, and 43 in the Jewish schools.\(^{(41)}\)

Thus, 3 percent of all Arab primary classes contained 50 or more pupils each, while only about one-quarter of one percent (0.28 %) of Jewish primary classes were crowded to that degree.

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39) SAI : T7, p. 578.
40) SAI : T8, p. 579.
41) Based on SAI : T9, p. 580.
Furthermore, 7.23 percent of Arab classes, as compared with 2.53 percent of Jewish classes, contained 45 or more pupils each.\(^{42}\)

Finally, more than one-quarter (26.13%) of all primary classes of the Arab education system held 40 or more pupils each, while the corresponding percentage in Jewish schools was about half that high (13.71%).\(^{43}\)

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42) Based on SAI: T/9, p. 580.
43) Based on SAI: T/9, p. 580.
IV. THE OBJECT AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

25. Nothing has been said thus far about the quality of the education provided the two population groups. Such qualitative evaluation would require *inter alia* a study of the curriculum prescribed (in accordance with the *State Education Law, 5713 - 1953*) by the Minister of Education for the official educational institutions, an examination of the textbooks in use, and an analysis of teaching practices.

26. Even without benefit of such content-analysis, however, much can be gauged about the spirit of the official educational system of the Israeli Government from the statutory definition of the "object of state education" contained in Section 2 of the *State Education Law*, which runs as follows:

"The object of State education is to base elementary education in the State on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the State and the Jewish people..."
A more explicitly religio-nationalistic definition of this purpose is enunciated by the Ministry of Education and Culture in its contribution to the *Israel Government Year Book, 5725 (1964/65).* The Ministry proclaims:

"It is a particular concern of the Ministry, *everywhere in the educational system,* to impart a broader knowledge of Jewish cultural heritages, customs and traditions and a deeper interest in the Diaspora. *This is to be clearly reflected in school syllabuses and teacher-training curricula, and in handbooks for teachers.*"(44)

The bearing of such a Jewish-centered concept of State education upon the national and cultural rights of the Arab student requires no elaboration.

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44) IGYB, p. 112. (Emphasis added).
1. Palestine chronology 1965:
   1 - 1 Jan - 15 Feb. (Arabic)
   2 - 16 Feb. - 31 March (Arabic)
   3 - 1 April - 15 May (Arabic)
   4 - 16 May - 30 June (Arabic)
   5 - 1 July - 15 Aug. (Arabic)

2. Facts & Figures:
   1 - Do you know? Twenty Basic Facts About the Palestine Problem (Arabic, English, French, & Spanish).
   2 - The United Nations & The Palestine Question (English, French, & Spanish).
   3 - Discrimination in Education Against the Arabs in Israel (English).
   4 - Israel in the International Field (Arabic).

3. Palestine Essays:
   1 - The Concepts & Slogans of Bourguibism (Arabic).
   2 - Zionism & Racism (English).

4. Palestine Monographs:
   1 - Zionist Colonialism in Palestine (Arabic, English & French)
   2 - The Armistice in International Law (English).
   3 - Zionist Expansionist Policy (Arabic).
   4 - Kibbutz (Arabic).

5. Palestine Books:
   1 - The Israeli Economy (Arabic).
   2 - The Arabs & the Vatican & Israel (Arabic).
   3 - Liberation - Not Negotiation (English).

6. Six - Color Map of Palestine (100 x 40 cms.)

7. Special Publications:
   1 - The Afro - Asian Institute - Tel - Aviv. (Arabic).