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EL ZAÍM: YOUTH, AUTHORITY, AND SYRIAN NATIONALISM IN THE *MAHJAR*, 1938–1944

Abstract
This article explores Antun Saʿadeh's campaign to establish the Syrian Social Nationalist Party among Syrian and Lebanese migrants in the Americas. Diasporic press sources from Argentina and Brazil indicate that the Syrian Nationalists continued to foreground Saʿadeh as a figure whose authority derived in part from a youthful following. The support of the young distinguished him from other leaders, or *zuʿamāʾ*, and in particular from the late-Ottoman notables whose command over anti-imperial politics was increasingly contested in the 1930s and 1940s. Syrian Nationalist recruitment in South America, and subsequent polemics with local public figures that it inspired, revealed ambivalences in this narrative of a transformative youth politics. The relationship between young nationalists and the leaders who claimed to galvanize them was both celebrated and called into question. These anxieties coincided with doubts about the contributions of *mahjar* print culture and associational life to nationalist mass movements. In this way, youth rhetoric reflected a transnational middle-class reckoning with interwar popular politics. In tracing the mobility of a political imaginary that pitted youthful nationalists against incumbent elites, the paper proposes a new reading of the politics of notables framework itself as one among several forms of interwar middle-class worldmaking.

خلاصة
يستكشف هذا المقال حملة أنطون سعادة لتأسيس الحزب السوري القومي الاجتماعي بين المهاجرين السوريين واللبنانيين في الأمريكتين. تشير مصادر من صحافة المهجر في الأرجنتين والبرازيل إلى أن القوميين السوريين دأبوا على إبراز سعادة كشخصية استمدت سلطتها جزئياً من أتباعهم الشباب. وميزّه دعم الشباب عن غيره من القادة، أو الزعماء، ولا سيما من الأعيان في أواخر العهد العثماني الذين كانت زعامتهم في السياسة المعادية للإمبريالية موضع نزاع متزايد في ثلاثينيات واربعينيات القرن العشرين. أظهر تجنيد القوميين السوريين في أمريكا الجنوبية، وما تلاه من الجدالات مع شخصيات عامة محلية، تناقضات في سردية سياسة الشباب التحويلية هذه. ففي نفس الوقت كان هناك احتفال وتشكيك بالعلاقة بين القوميين الشباب والقادة الذين ادعوا تحفيزهم. تزامنت هذه المخاوف مع شكوك حول إسهامات ثقافة المهجر الأدبية والحياة النقابية في الحركات الجماهيرية القومية. وبهذه الطريقة، عكس خطاب الشباب

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حساب الطبقة الوسطى العابرة للحدود الوطنية للسياسات الشعبية في فترة ما بين الحربين العالميتين. في تتبع تنقل الخيال السياسي الذي حرض القوميين الشباب ضد النخب المتحكمة، يقترح هذا المقال قراءة جديدة لنظرية سياسات الأعيان كواحدة من بين عدة أشكال محاولات .الطبقة الوسطى على تصور وخلق عالم في فترة ما بين الحربين

INTRODUCTION

> This great organization, according to the reactionaries who toss dust into people's eyes, is nothing but . . . a group of crazy young men. . . As for us, we say that the Syrian Nationalist Party is . . . the determination of youth who put "the interest of Syria above all else."[2]

Not long after Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) founder Antun Saʿadeh arrived in Buenos Aires in 1939, the SSNP-affiliated Syrian Cultural Association performed a play about a young prince who must kill his treasonous father to save his country from invasion.[3] The production set the tone for a Syrian Nationalist appeal to migrant communities that pitted youth against foreign rule and collaborating elites and reaffirmed the party's mission, as Saʿadeh put it in a 1935 speech, "to unite the forces of youth."[4] This drama of national heroism, however, soon devolved into local controversy. Another group, the Lebanese Patriotic Association, had planned to show the same play and claimed sabotage in the local press.[5] The local pan-Arabist *La Bandera Árabe* endorsed this latter group's eventual performance for its portrayal of "sacrifice . . . for freedom and the homeland."[6] Across ideological boundaries, youthful patriotism suffused the nationalist political imaginary. The SSNP was, indeed, one of many nationalist political organizations in the interwar Middle East and its diasporas that identified with youth, including leftist, fascist, and Islamist tendencies in addition to the youth branches of elite nationalist parties.[7] These middle-class youth groups, recent works have argued, defied elite nationalist leaderships by enacting their own forms of anti-imperialism.[8] In Lebanon, these "youth popular organizations," according to Dylan Baun, emerged from schools, sports clubs, and

scouting troops, gradually embracing street and parliamentary politics.[9] These histories can be situated within a wider historiography of popular, peripheral, and diasporic nationalisms in dialogue with the nationalist politics of urban elites.[10]

The significance of the interwar youth zeitgeist, however, lies not only in asserting middle-class young people's agency alongside other nonhegemonic historical actors but also in the rhetoric of youth and its role in constructing the discursive difference between insurgent nationalists and incumbent notables. Youth implied, in other words, a language of political (il)legitimacy. On the one hand, as the theatrical choice suggests, association with youth contrasted patriotic devotion with arbitrarily inherited patriarchal authority. In this way, it constituted a form of populism which, according to Ernesto Laclau, entails "the formation of an internal antagonistic frontier separating the 'people' from power."[11] On the other hand, as implied in the epigraph, youth could also be an unruly force in need of discipline. While the "determination of youth" could not be easily ignored, a political party of "crazy young men" could be easily dismissed. Youth's political resonance in this era derived from this ambivalent entanglement with authority as a symbol of popular legitimacy that invited both sympathy and skepticism. Antagonism between middle-class nationalists, like that which attended the rival performances in Buenos Aires, prompted references to both sides of this rhetoric.

Saʿadeh's years in South America in the late 1930s and early 1940s afford a unique vantage on the mutual imbrication of youth and authority in the interwar global Middle East. Rather than a mere echo of homeland politics, the case of Syrian Nationalism in the diaspora indicates that youth's dualistic relation to authority emerged from within a transnational middle-class political imaginary. Saʿadeh's own biography reflected the long-standing circulation of political ideas between the Eastern Mediterranean and the *mahjar*. Born in Mount Lebanon, he had spent much of the 1920s in São Paulo, working alongside his publisher father, before returning to Beirut and establishing the SSNP in 1932 with an initial base among university students. Landing in Argentina after arrests in Lebanon and Brazil on suspicion of Axis sympathies, Saʿadeh and his fellow Syrian Nationalists continued to struggle for middle-class loyalties in the diaspora by foregrounding their self-proclaimed following among youth.[12] That this imagery equally preoccupied diasporic populations confirms that youth's ambivalent populism resonated broadly among a transnational middle class that, regardless of geographical location,

was debating its relationship to nationalist mass politics and the figures who were purported to be its flagbearers.

This article explores the reception of Syrian Nationalism in the transnational *mahjar* public sphere primarily through the migrant press. Print circulation between *mahjar* publishing centers in urban Argentina, Brazil, and the United States provided a platform for the Syrian Nationalists to promote their party to Arabic readers and, because *mahjar* publications often included articles in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, broader audiences in North and South America that included members of migrant and host communities. The notion that the Syrian Nationalists had a unique claim on youth political loyalties, and that this support distinguished Saʿadeh's leadership from his competitors, was widely disseminated in this transnational public sphere as a textual and visual trope that was used to characterize Saʿadeh and the SSNP for the *mahjar*'s multiple and overlapping audiences. As the first section below details, the Syrian Nationalists cultivated an image of the party as a youthful force for renewal in migrant public life in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Assertions of nationalist youth as a reviving force for the *mahjar* took shape in a context of concern about the coherence and rigor of diasporic nationalism. Mounting critiques of Saʿadeh and the Syrian Nationalists, detailed in the second section, culminated in bitter published polemics that witnessed Saʿadeh and his opponents engage in prolonged debates about national identity and religion. Mentions of youth in this context arose as a gauge of political legitimacy in *mahjar* print culture. Throughout, the appeal to a following among youth shadowed anxieties about middle-class cultural and political practices under the scrutiny of nationalist imperatives. Syrian Nationalist recruitment and polemics in the early 1940s reveal a *mahjar* that grappled with nationalist mass politics in part by indexing the legitimacy of conceits to leadership to representations of youth.

RECRUITING A NATIONALIST YOUTH IN THE *MAHJAR*

The Syrian Nationalists established a foothold in the *mahjar* in the late 1930s and early 1940s, with a particular presence in Brazil and Argentina, but also in Mexico, Chile, and the United States. The party actively promoted its youthful character in South American and *mahjar* public fora. Among the first printed notices of Saʿadeh's arrival in Brazil was a 1938 notice in *O Estado de São Paulo* that described a visit from "the professor Antonio Saʿadeh, ex-reader of the [American] University of Beirut, author of countless works of sociology and head

[*chefe*] of the Syrian Nationalist Party."[13] It added that he had "always [been] at the head of the educated youth [*mocidade*] of his country." This young bloc of support conveyed both academic prestige and political credibility. Saʿadeh's visit to the offices of *O Estado* attested to his transnational experience with print publicity while linking his leadership to youth. Syrian Nationalists in Argentina and Brazil would continue to map their political project onto the figure of youth in the coming years, portraying youthfulness as a means of reviving *mahjar* society and consolidating its weakened national identity.

References to youth support reinforced Saʿadeh's academic and political credentials in the months following his arrival in Argentina in the summer of 1939. After landing in Buenos Aires, Saʿadeh issued a call to local "Syrian journalists" detailing the party's key stances.[14] He was soon feted at banquets by the "sons of Tripoli" and the women's charitable society Nur al-Huda.[15] Early trips to Tucumán also earned Saʿadeh support among prominent figures there.[16] *El Diario Siriolibanés*, founded in 1929 by José Moisés Azize, a banker and prominent figure in *mahjar* associational life in Argentina, profiled Saʿadeh in December of 1939 as a young autodidact, literary and sociological prodigy, and committed idealist.[17] The article also affirmed his following among youth, both in Brazil, where Saʿadeh had once founded "an important youth group" (un importante conglomerado juvenil), and in Lebanon, where Saʿadeh "enjoyed the fondness and sympathy of the young students" at the American University of Beirut.[18] Saʿadeh continued to feature prominently in *El Diario Siriolibanés* into the spring of 1940. After the profile, *El Diario Siriolibanés* published the SSNP's official principles.[19] Saʿadeh then lectured at the Azize-affiliated Club Honor Y Patria on "the influence of the Syrians in America," although the editors of *El Diario Siriolibanés* assured that his presentation would not be of a "political nature."[20] Announcements in *El Diario Siriolibanés* and *Assalam* soon heralded preparations for a commemorative banquet (*maʾdaba takrīmīyya*) to coincide with Saʿadeh's birthday on 1 March with recent recruits Husni ʿAbd al-Malik and Catalina Massuh (née al-Mir) heading the organizing committee. These notices occasionally referred to Saʿadeh, in Spanish, as a "*jefe*" (chief) or "*líder*" (leader) and, in Arabic, a *zaʿīm* (leader, pl. *zuʿamāʾ*), but also foregrounded his knowledge credentials by celebrating him as a sociologist.[21]

Underlying this initial moment of public acclaim for Saʿadeh were networks of family, friendship, and hometown forged in both the *mashriq* and *mahjar* that furnished the party's earliest supporters in South America. Migrants from Tripoli and Homs, for example, formed

a significant share of early recruits for the SSNP. As mentioned previously, one of the first banquets organized in Saʿadeh's honor was held by migrants from Tripoli. Meanwhile, two of the nine migrant Bunduki (Bunduqi) brothers from Homs, Tawfiq and Fuʾad, initially edited and printed the party's journal *Suriya al-Jadida* in São Paulo. Their younger brother Emil pledged his membership in Buenos Aires alongside fellow migrants from Homs, and even persuaded others from the city to join during a trip to Chile.[22] These networks allowed Saʿadeh and his supporters to convene soirées (or *sahrāt*) in private homes in Brazil and Argentina that allowed the Syrian Nationalists to reach new potential recruits.[23]

Formal party structures and print publications followed as Saʿadeh, his aides, and their initial recruits began to consolidate the Syrian Nationalists' *mahjar* campaign. The urban settings of São Paulo and Buenos Aires witnessed the first official party meetings and the establishment of party branches, including a women's directorate headed by Mariana Fakhury in Buenos Aires.[24] Migrant recruits, however, also broadened the party's reach into provincial spaces like the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, where Ibrahim Tannus and Walim Bahlis organized party activities.[25] Syrian Nationalists press outlets in the *mahjar*—the aforementioned weekly *Suriya al-Jadida* and bimonthly *al-Zawbaʿa* in Buenos Aires—document an early 1940s recruitment campaign that reached both urban centers and rural outposts. In Argentina, for example, Saʿadeh visited the cities of Buenos Aires, Tucumán, Santiago del Estero, and Córdoba, but also found his way to provincial towns like Pergamino.[26] Print contributors wrote from remote areas like Caucete in Argentina's San Juan province or Vila do Rio Novo in the Brazilian state of Espírito Santo.[27] The geographical scope of the new adherents reflected the rural-urban mobilities of a South American *mahjar* shaped by rail infrastructure.[28]

As the institutions of the party formalized, the Syrian Nationalists took pains to distinguish their place in *mahjar* associational life. As in Lebanon, the party in diaspora arranged and participated in social events such as banquets, speeches, and performances, which its publications announced and retrospectively celebrated with summaries, letters, and photographs.[29] *Al-Zawbaʿa* devoted special issues to both Saʿadeh's birthday and the anniversary of the party's foundation that described celebrations held throughout the *mahjar*. The party's *mahjar* press also featured much the same question and answer segments, reports on local social happenings, and advertisements that characterized those of their peers. However, the *mahjar* Syrian

Nationalists contrasted their gatherings with what they considered to be the hollow and formulaic ones of their *mahjar* counterparts. In a 1941 speech in Córdoba, for example, Saʿadeh praised an event he considered "free of the hypocrisy and favoritism which adorned almost every party [*ḥafla*] of the past non-Nationalist era."[30] Syrian Nationalism, it was argued, would imbue public affairs in the *mahjar* with a hitherto absent authenticity.

In this context, youth signaled the gap between Syrian Nationalist and other *mahjar* social practices. Juliette Elmir (al-Mir) Saʿadeh, a Tripoli-born nurse and Saʿadeh's then soon-to-be wife, exemplified this view. She shared with Saʿadeh a distaste for the "materialistic atmosphere and demands" of "immigrant-community life in Argentina," which, she added, "created very strange social committees."[31] "The overabundance of clubs in our community," Elmir added, "was in fact a symptom of fragmentation, and the seemingly diverse institutions served to widen the gap between religious sects and sociopolitical regions in the homeland."[32] Of Syrian Nationalist party meetings, Elmir proclaimed in contrast that she "had not witnessed such order and seriousness in any of the previous meetings of the community. Many of the attendees were determined and faithful youths, and their numbers exceeded sixty." She sketched a similar tableau of a banquet in Saʿadeh's honor in a Buenos Aires hotel:

> Orderly conduct in public functions was a new development for the immigrant community. The nationalist youths welcomed the guests and ushered each invitee to an assigned seat. There was no crowding at the doorway and no stampede to speak to the leader when he arrived. Instead, a company of the nationalist youths received the leader and announced his presence in the hall. The guests stood up together and clapped enthusiastically. The youths chanted for the life of Syria and the leader.[33]

Nationalist youth, according to Elmir, imparted a newfound order on *mahjar* associational life, tempering its divisive and sycophantic tendencies.

Local figures in the Argentine *mahjar* declared their support for a youthful Syrian Nationalism in the Arabic-language press. Jubran Massuh and Farid Nuzha, both of whom would serve as directors of *al-Zawbaʿa*, noted Saʿadeh's youthful appearance. In *El Diario Siriolibanés*,

Massuh described first meeting this "young man [*fattā*]:" "I say young man because he is still at the prime of his youth, so that if you saw him you would not believe that he is thirty-five years old."[34] Nuzha, the editor of *al-Jamiʿa al-Suryaniyya*, a Buenos Aires monthly focused on Syriac communal issues, also found Saʿadeh "a younger man that [he] had thought."[35] This awe at Saʿadeh's youth served to accentuate the perceived male vigor of the Syrian Nationalist movement. Nuzha opened a special issue of his journal to Saʿadeh with a reflection on the word "'man': this word, not meaning here any superficial, literal meaning . . . in this study today it points to the true man who arouses hidden active power."[36] Youthful masculinity, in turn, was linked to modern scientific knowledge.[37] A cartoon in *Suriya al-Jadida* portrayed Saʿadeh as a surgeon, reassuring the male doctors surrounding the woman on the operating bed—"Syria"—that he was "resolved to eliminate the sicknesses. There is no doubt that the patient will recover."[38] Another cartoon rendered him as a brawny ironsmith in a factory forging Syria's sects and regions into unity in the "Syrian Nationalist crucible."[39]

Depictions of Saʿadeh in the *mahjar* often distinguished the party leader's youth from established authority figures, who served as foils. In the opposing square of the cartoon of Saʿadeh as a surgeon, a coterie of visibly older and rotund "so-called *zuʿamāʾ* [*mutazaʿʿimūn*]," or "those who pretend to be leaders," fret: "Just who is this surgeon? He knows the disease and the beneficial remedy. This does not suit our interests. If Syria is cured, our profits will be cut off and our corruption will become known."[40] The juxtaposition of the two scenes accentuated Saʿadeh's masculinity, professionalism, and youth. One of the first Syrian Nationalists to join the party in Argentina also found Saʿadeh a welcome contrast with his previous image of the typical Syrian political leader. After overhearing mention of a *zaʿīm* in a Buenos Aires hotel, Salim ʿAlam al-Din al-Maʿni remarked after seeing Saʿadeh from a distance in the lobby: "Is that man, with his radiant face, flashing eyes, and piercing gaze, really a *zaʿīm*? What *zaʿīm*? I [thought all] the *zuʿamāʾ* of our lands [had] handlebar mustaches . . . red tarbushes with shaking tassels [and] big, voluminous, and prominent bellies."[41] In both cases, sartorial and physical characteristics set a previous generation of authorities apart as corrupt and power hungry. The fact that al-Maʿni might have theoretically claimed the noble title of emir due to his Maʿn lineage made his eager assent to the title of comrade (*rafīq*) during this first encounter with Saʿadeh all the more symbolic of an epochal shift from outdated elites to a young leadership.

Massuh's encounter with Saʿadeh's then-aide Khalid Adib confirms the intersection of youth, masculinity, and scientific knowledge in a budding Syrian Nationalist self-conception in diaspora. Adib, who had joined the party in West Africa and accompanied Saʿadeh during his passage from Dakar to São Paulo and then Buenos Aires, was from Tripoli and a hometown friend of George Elmir, an early party recruit in Buenos Aires whose younger sister was Juliette.[42] In his initial article on Saʿadeh in *El Diario Siriolibanés*, Massuh expressed his pleasant surprise that Adib, a Muslim, was "not fanatical [*mutaʿaṣṣib*]."[43] This was a striking admission for someone who only two years earlier had written to the Maronite patriarch with a plea to confront the "fanaticism [*taʿaṣṣub*] which filled [Syrian Muslims'] hearts [who] look at nothing in the world except through the lens of religion."[44] Adib's youthful comportment was part of what disabused Massuh of this prejudice:

> He is a smart young man, educated and convincing, which you realize within ten minutes of meeting him. . . . His speech is all marrow, with no filling, nor flattery, nor vacuous words as is the custom among us. He explains our social ills as they are, and then describes the true medicine which science has determined, and which experience corroborates.[45]

Buoyed by his impressions of a youthful movement that overcame sectarianism and disingenuousness, Massuh, "an orphan among friends with living parents"—in other words, immigrant communities of Argentina with national pride—found in Syrian Nationalism a new brotherhood: "All of a sudden, I had a nation, and I had brothers in Syria whom I trust and who trust in me."[46]

In articles for *Suriya al-Jadida* and *al-Zawbaʿa*, Massuh contended that young people born or raised in the *mahjar* also needed to rediscover their national identity. He complained of the parenting failures of Syrian fathers "[breaking] the spiritual-cultural relations that should link them to their children born in the New World."[47] This alienation, he argued in a 1942 article for *al-Zawbaʿa*, could in part be ascribed to *mahjar* commercialism. Massuh recounted meeting a depressed young man born in Argentina of Syrian parents whose father had forced him into a career in business and crushed his dreams of a singing career.[48] Not only had this pressure deprived the world of the young man's artistic talents but also it skewed Syria's reputation in

"[these] American regions [that] all know that we are merchants" but did not know "what we excel in other than [trade] in order to know what kind of people we are." Massuh thus implied that *mahjar* society's treatment of youth had stymied the national pride of the community.

Unsurprisingly, then, Syrian Nationalists celebrated their inroads among diaspora youth as an "awakening of Syrian youth" that pierced through the vacuous tendencies of *mahjar* society.[49] *Al-Zawbaʿa* reported a 1943 visit to Tucumán during which Saʿadeh simply "asked [the crowd] if they all knew Arabic or whether the majority preferred Spanish. They preferred the latter, due to the preponderance of those born in this country that do not know the language of their kind."[50] The article rejoiced in this audience's interest: "Many of 'the sons of so-called Lebanese [*mutalabnanīn*]' said: This theory [of Saʿadeh's] is correct and we hope our fathers would adopt." A similar scene unfolded in Santiago del Estero according to an account in *Suriya al-Jadida* subtitled "All the youth support Syrian Nationalist principles."[51] *Al-Zawbaʿa* also published Spanish-language articles from younger *mahjar* Syrian Nationalists, such as seventeen-year-old Victor Massuh (son of Jubran), eighteen-year-old Alberto Nasif (son of Syrian Nationalist and *al-Zawbaʿa* contributor Yaʿqub Nasif), and seventeen-year-old Aniceto Schain (Shahin) of Santiago de Chile, who confessed in 1942: "My conscience is unsettled seeing the homeland of my parents—Syria—forgotten."[52] *Mahjar* youth support meant not only new potential party members, but, more fundamentally, a means of turning the tide against diasporic estrangement.

Efforts to translate Syrian Nationalism for presumably younger Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking audiences layered new registers onto arguments for Saʿadeh's exceptional leadership. Both *al-Zawbaʿa* and *Suriya al-Jadida* often retained the term *zaʿīm* by transliterating it as "*el Zaím*" or "*o Za'im*."[53] This move echoed a distinction in the Syrian Nationalist press between true and false *zaʿāma* (leadership).[54] For example, one Portuguese translation of an Arabic-language article used "*Za'im*" as a singular proper noun referring to Saʿadeh and "*chefes*" (leaders) as a translation for the Arabic *mutazaʿʿimīn*, or "so-called *zuʿamāʾ*."[55] A similar logic applied to the term "Syrian Nationalist" (*qawmī sūrī*), which became "sírio qaumi" or "Social-Kaumista" and only occasionally the direct Spanish equivalent "nacionalista."[56] Another strategy for elevating Saʿadeh above his competitors was to draw analogies to South American national histories. Several articles described Saʿadeh as a *caudillo*, as in the early nineteenth-century political and military leaders and recurrent symbols of populist

authoritarian rule in Latin America.[57] Others likened him to foundational figures of South American independence such as Brazil's Tiradentes or Argentina's José de San Martín.[58] Other South American analogies reiterated the backwardness of the Syrian Nationalists' opponents. Aniceto Schain rendered the Syrian Nationalist term *rajʿīyya-iqṭāʿīyya* (or reactionary-feudalism) as "*retrogradismo-latifundista*," condensing the historical landed elites of Syria's *iqṭāʿ* and Latin America's *latifundio* into a composite image of reactionary privilege.[59]

The South American upbringing of younger members of the *mahjar*, however, also complicated the Syrian Nationalist approach to assimilation. In general, the Syrian Nationalist press strenuously denied the notion of multiple homelands. When a young man, born in Syria but raised in the US, Brazil, and Uruguay, asked *al-Zawbaʿa* what he should call his homeland (*waṭan*), the journal took the opportunity to criticize a perceived *mahjar* cosmopolitanism: "What we think is that your homeland is Syria because you are of Syrian blood, and you were born there. However, there is a theory . . . that makes for each man two homelands, the first and the second, or the old and the new." "This theory isn't bad," the author continued sarcastically, "because it liberates you from any responsibility and duty" towards any nation whatsoever.[60] Yet some younger Syrian Nationalists employed assimilationist conceptions of national belonging. Julio Chaij (Shaykh), one of the founders of the Syrian Cultural Association, made the following case against pan-Arab national identity:

> How should we call a child born in Buenos Aires of a Syrian father and Italian mother? Must he also be Spanish, for the sole reason that he speaks the language of Spain? It is not possible to call him Spanish, Syrian, Italian, [but rather] he must necessarily be called by the name of the ground in which he has been born, that is to say, Argentinean. . . . It only makes sense to emphatically call SYRIANS all those born within the natural and conventional limits of that region called Syria; for the same reason that those born in Argentina are called Argentineans; and those born in Spain are called Spanish.[61]

Chaij's equivalence echoed Syrian Nationalism's geographical determinism but contradicted its concern for the Syrian national identity of the locally born children of migrants. Such ambiguities

dogged attempts to engage a *mahjar* reading public in a youth-nationalist revival.

Syrian Nationalist recruitment efforts in the initial years of Saʿadeh's time in South America offered a politics of renewal in *mahjar* society through nationalist youth. Migrant communal life, in the Syrian Nationalist perspective, needed this masculine and modern youth to breathe an authentic and ordered national life into its alienated, fragmented, and materialistic institutions. Simultaneously, the *mahjar* SSNP reformulated the distinction between a nationalist movement led by a genuine *zaʿīm* and the regressive rule of "so-called *zuʿamāʾ*." These two processes were deeply entangled. Saʿadeh's youthfulness and his following among *mahjar* youth buttressed claims of a redemptive Syrian Nationalist leadership for homeland and diaspora alike. Equivocal results like Chaij's likening of Syrian to Argentinean national identity only served to confirm the importance of youth as a political signifier for overlapping audiences in the *mahjar*. Indeed, youth remained a potent theme for both Syrian Nationalists and *mahjar* literary figures in the midst of their increasingly contentious public debates about national identity and the contest for leadership in the early 1940s.

CONTESTING AUTHORITY IN THE *MAHJAR* PUBLIC SPHERE

After initial successes in Argentina, Saʿadeh met a wave of blistering criticism in Arabic-language newspapers in North and South America. The situation spiraled into caustic polemics and sharp personal attacks between Saʿadeh and the Syrian Nationalists, on the one hand, and prominent *mahjar* writers and publishers, on the other. In 1943 and 1944, a group of such figures in Argentina—including former Syrian Nationalists—compiled two free "supplements" dedicated to critiques of Saʿadeh. At their core, these controversies concerned the national allegiances of a transnational and prominently Christian middle class and its ties to Arab-Islamic cultural heritage, which Syrian Nationalists largely rejected. Throughout these exchanges, however, youth remained a crucial touchpoint. Disagreements about nationalist politics employed a common set of tropes about youthful heroism and immaturity that reflected middle-class political anxieties beyond identity disputes. The polemics surrounding Saʿadeh in the early 1940s pointed to an internecine conflict among middle-class public figures in the *mahjar* which colored their understandings of popular leadership.

The intense mudslinging of this period was largely waged among *udabāʾ* (men of letters, sing. *adīb*), a term that covered both literary and journalistic writing. Despite a common professional identity, political and social differences separated these authors, with some affiliated with nonpartisan communal Syrian-Lebanese (*siriolibanés*) institutions and others cleaving to more openly nationalist positions with varying degrees of ideological consistency.[62] Nonetheless, these figures shared a prominence in diasporic print culture and associational life that put them in close contact; reprinted articles and exchanged visits were the occasions for volleys of praise and disdain. This class furnished Syrian Nationalist promoters like Nuzha and Massuh. Many others, however, only briefly passed through the party's ranks or expressed varying degrees of support for Saʿadeh. The efforts of some public figures in the Argentinean *mahjar* to distance themselves from Saʿadeh began as soon as May 1940, when the writer Husni ʿAbd al-Malik, poet Zaki Qunsul, and writer-editor Jurj ʿAssaf wrote "clarifications" (*ayḍāḥ*) in *Assalam* explaining that they were not, in fact, Syrian Nationalists.[63] With these, Saʿadeh's association with *El Diario Siriolibanés* and Club Honor Y Patria ended. Notably, however, Syrian Nationalist controversies embroiled not only men of letters but also figures such as the touring singer Fadwa Qurban, who repudiated rumors of her becoming a member of the party in 1942.[64] Furtive Syrian Nationalist contacts with the Arabic-to-Spanish translators José Guraieb of Argentina and Laila Neffa of Uruguay, meanwhile, coincided with the aforementioned appeals to Spanish-speaking children of migrants.[65] These cases demonstrate that the *udabāʾ* who debated Saʿadeh formed just one part of a broader *mahjar* public sphere.

The case of Ilyas Farhat, a *mahjar* poet in Brazil, illuminates how this social context impacted the reception of Saʿadeh and the Syrian Nationalists through a shared celebratory rhetoric of youth. In 1937, inspired by press reports of the SSNP as a persecuted secular anti-imperialist movement dedicated to fostering Syrian unity, Farhat penned "The Youth of Syria." In a rousing patriotic tone, the poem rallied "the youth of Syria, sublime youth / mountain eagles, desert lions" in their fight for independence.[66] Yet when Farhat disavowed Saʿadeh in September of 1938 in an article for São Paulo's *al-Sharq*, he claimed ignorance about the true nature of the party and its leader and insisted that he wrote the poem "thinking [only] that every free Syrian young man [*shāb*] must be a member in this party that wants to kill the germs of sectarian fanaticism."[67] The fact that *al-Zawbaʿa* nonetheless

reprinted "The Youth of Syria" in the summer of 1941—albeit with the stated removal of a line that mentioned Arabism (*ʿurūba*)—confirms that youth often represented a common if contested value among these personalities.[68]

Saʿadeh's most extensive diatribes against a member of the *mahjar udabāʾ* were directed at the Brazilian *mahjar* poet Rashid Salim al-Khuri, better known as al-Shaʿir al-Qarawi or the Village Poet. In the spring of 1940 in São Paulo, al-Khuri had given a lecture on the occasion of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday which was subsequently published in both Brazil's *al-Rabita*, affiliated with the literary group al-Rabita al-Andalusiyya, the Brazilian counterpart to New York's Pen League, and in Buenos Aires in *La Bandera Árabe*.[69] The lecture extolled Islam as the perfect hybrid of law-giving Judaism and spiritual Christianity and a source of pride, unity, and vitality in the Arab struggle against European imperialism. In response, Saʿadeh launched a series of articles in *al-Zawbaʿa* later published as *Junun al-khulud* (The madness of eternity), *Tujjar al-adab fi al-mahjar* (Merchants of literature in the *mahjar*), and *al-Masihiyya wa al-muhammadiyya wa al-qawmiyya* (Christianity, Islam, and Nationalism). In this series, Saʿadeh sought to rebut al-Khuri's advocacy of Arab nationhood for Syrians and questioned the literary worth of al-Khuri and other prominent *mahjar* writer-publishers, particularly Elia Abu Madi of *al-Samir* and ʿAbd al-Masih Haddad of *al-Saʾih*, both of New York City. Saʿadeh strained in the later parts of *Junun al-khulud* to prove the spiritual compatibility of Christianity and Islam, a reflection of his interest, shared with al-Khuri and others, in imagining an anti-sectarian popular politics for a prominently Christian middle-class *mahjar* audience. Nonetheless, Saʿadeh insisted that Arab linguistic and cultural ties were insufficient as a basis for nationalism compared to the geographical and sociological unity of Syria, as he had elaborated in his 1938 book *Nushuʾ al-umam* (The development of nations). In these polemics about civilizational heritage, the Syrian Nationalists and their critics frequently invoked youth.

Both Saʿadeh and al-Khuri felt that a strong national identity required heroism examples to inspire a nationalist youth. In his speech, al-Khuri had waxed eloquent on the nobility of the Islamic heritage, a font of "bravery" (*shajāʿa*) and "enthusiasm" (*ḥamāsa*) desperately needed to overcome Christian Syrian "flabbiness" (*tarahhul*) and "effeminacy" (*takhannuth*).[70] He found these values embodied in the figure of the pan-Islamist Shakib Arslan, a "youth among Arab youths" (*fatā fityān al-ʿarab*).[71] The Syrian Nationalists also stressed masculine

determination, but Saʿadeh argued that al-Khuri's sense of history was debilitatingly nostalgic. He pointed to a poem in which al-Khuri called out to the Muslim hero of the Crusades Saladin, remarking that the poet "sees no hope or ability [for his nation] other than that Saladin should rise from his grave."[72] Saʿadeh contended that, ultimately, Arab political unification was materially unrealistic, only fooling "the powerful youth of Syria . . . [into] waiting for this imaginary awakening [*nahḍa*]."[73] Saʿadeh extended this critique into the *mahjar* when he accused ʿAbd al-Masih Haddad of being one of the "merchants of literature" in diaspora whose inability to evoke national pride had led to "the dissolution of the national and social ties in our colonies and the distancing of our children born in the *mahjar* from their language and their hatred of being affiliated with us."[74] In each case, a historical sense of self buoyed by heroic precedents was assumed necessary to make youth an enthusiastic contributor to nationalist politics.

Saʿadeh and his opponents also disputed how young people themselves were to be commended in the diasporic public sphere. *Tujjar al-adab* disparaged obituaries by Abu Madi and Haddad for the only son of a West Virginia candy company owner as sycophantic attempts to impress the young man's father—a "famous trader" (*tājir kabīr*)—with "traditional literary phrases" and "dictionary vocabulary" that conveyed "manufactured distress." "What [words] have these two 'authors' saved," Saʿadeh wondered, "for leaders of nations and heroes of the decisive military and intellectual battles of history?"[75] This critique of empty flattery intersected with Saʿadeh's argument in *Junun al-khulud* that al-Khuri's poetry "[praised] false thinking and illusions . . . with veneration and praise [*al-madḥ*]."[76] The reference to praise poetry (or *madḥ*), linked the poet's use of classical Arabic poetic forms and his sympathy for Arab-Islamic political projects with what Saʿadeh found to be obsequiousness towards wealth in the *mahjar* press. Saʿadeh's enemies, in turn, rejected how the Syrian Nationalists apportioned praise and censure to young men. Al-Khuri's lecture faulted their treatment of Fuʾad Mufarrij, an American University of Beirut alumnus, general secretary of the Arab Bureau in Damascus, and member of the Syrian delegation to the New York World's Fair who had died in the US in a 1939 car accident.[77] Mufarrij was, according to *Suriya al-Jadida*, a former Syrian Nationalist who had been expelled from the party.[78] His work with Arab nationalists and Syrian National Bloc leaders like Fakhri al-Barudi, including lectures throughout the US and Canada, made him a direct competitor for *mahjar* allegiances.[79] Al-Khuri's lecture lamented that the Syrian Nationalists had called

Mufarrij "a traitor to Syria when he died serving its cause [just because] he was outside of the party. . . . Is there no mercy for Syria, O its energetic youth [*shabābuha al-nashīṭ*]!"[80] Both al-Khuri and Saʿadeh valued a print culture that commemorated young men's contributions to the national cause, but they disagreed about which achievements to mark due to ideological differences.

Paralleling triumphal conceptions of youth, accusations of childish immaturity also surfaced throughout the polemics between the Syrian Nationalists and their adversaries. Drawing on *nahḍa* discourses of *tarbīya* (or moral education), Saʿadeh often branded his interlocutors uneducated and juvenile. In *Tujjar al-adab*, he likened Haddad to "alley boys devoid of education" (ṣibyān al-aziqqa ʿadīmī al-tarbīya) for failing to appreciate Syrian Nationalist ideas.[81] Likewise, he suggested that al-Khuri had lost his migrant youth to "travelling for trade" (al-tajawwul al-tijārī) and "vices," and that a romantic poem of his was evidence of premature sexual development and weak self-control.[82] Al-Khuri was thus, to Saʿadeh, like "all children with poor education [*tarbīya*] . . . accustomed to freeing the reins of their obstinate desires and wishes [and who] hate the teacher that strives to teach them the way of virtue."[83] He thus painted his enemies as infantile while insinuating class difference with mentions of urban poverty and migrant petty commerce. Notably, Saʿadeh and the Syrian Nationalists were consistent in reserving the positive connotations of the term *shabāb* (youth or young men) for their own current or prospective supporters. *Mahjar* critics of the Syrian Nationalists, on the other hand, questioned youth's political competence. Abu Madi described Saʿadeh as merely a "young man who found an idea that today fills the heads of youth in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine."[84] This skepticism towards youth as a political force also emerged in a debate in Abu Madi's Brooklyn daily *al-Samir*. In 1941, Abdallah Berry of Detroit, a Ford employee from Tibnin of pan-Arab leanings, responded in *al-Samir* to an article in *al-Zawbaʿa* critiquing the Syrian government's arrest of young men caught eating openly during Ramadan, which sparked an exchange with the Boston-based Syrian Nationalist Fakhri al-Maʿluf.[85] In his final rebuttal, Berry asserted the rashness of both the young men and his interlocutor: "Our youth today is a quick youth that fails to deliberate."[86] He mentioned reports of waves of youth leaving the SSNP "because those youth believe in every imitation [*taqlīd*] and everything new. Every Syrian is disposed by nature to loving imitation and novelty. The garment of the Syrian Nationalist Party was like a new shirt weaved by Antun Saʿadeh's hand."[87] Like Abu Madi, Berry

dismissed youthful fervor as a passing fashion. Here, an immature youth seemingly reflected a superficial national political culture.

Saʿadeh's most fervent opposition in Argentina's *mahjar* press came from three nationalist publications that also charged Saʿadeh and the Syrian Nationalists with corrupting youthful enthusiasms. Sayf al-Din Rahhal's pan-Islamist and pan-Arab *Natur-Islam*, ʿAbd al-Latif al-Khushn's pan-Arab *La Bandera Árabe*, and *Ad-Difah*, whose editor Rafael Lahud advocated Lebanese autonomy within an Arab polity, all shared the Syrian Nationalists' interest in celebrating nationalist youth. *La Bandera Árabe* proclaimed itself the "Official Organ of Arab Youth in America," while *Natur-Islam* publicized a local Association of Young Muslim Men. Nonetheless, like Abu Madi and Berry, they cast aspersion on Saʿadeh's claim to leadership of youth. A 1942 article in *La Bandera Árabe* imagined a monologue in which al-Khuri's poetry collection *al-Aʿasir* confronted the Syrian Nationalist outlet *al-Zawbaʿa*: "I am the one who inspired enthusiasm in the shaykhs such that they became young men and you inspired enthusiasm in the young men such that they became monkeys."[88] This declaration reversed Saʿadeh's aforementioned critique, suggesting that, far from dampening it, al-Khuri's poetry galvanized youthful passion. The monologue simultaneously suggested that *al-Zawbaʿa*, and by implication the Syrian Nationalists, brought out the worst in youth. In 1943 and 1944, Saʿadeh's opponents, including former Syrian Nationalists like Khalid Adib, joined critics like Lahud and Rahhal to publish two free supplements to *Natur-Islam* devoted exclusively to exposing the Syrian Nationalist leader as an immoral opportunist. The supplements dramatized the party's youth politics. The former Syrian Nationalist Naʿman Daw imagined Saʿadeh addressing a gathering of "notable men accompanied by their boys and children" (al-aʿyān wa rifāquhum al-ṣibyān wa al-aṭfāl). Daw sarcastically depicted the party leader boasting that

> history now presides over our meeting and the coming generations await our speech to convey it as lessons in nationalism. . . . Is not the presence of these sons among us proof of the influence of our teachings in family homes and . . . the beds of children?

During Saʿadeh's two-hour speech, the young followers "listen and do not understand but enjoy it and clap."[89] In this way, critics of Saʿadeh

reframed nationalist leadership of youth as mere incitement of ignorant young minds.

Saʿadeh's opponents wove his ability to stir young people into a web of fraud that had afforded him the prominence that they now sought to dismantle. Gendered psychological language pervaded this litany of abuses. In the *mahjar*, according to Rafael Lahud of *Ad-Difah*, Saʿadeh had only managed to influence prominent men by insinuating himself into the company of their wives. His initial reception, then, was no more than a "hysterical fit" (*nūba histīrīyya*) in the otherwise rational upper echelons of the community.[90] Lahud also suggested that Saʿadeh had a psychological complex that compelled him to theatrically "[play] the 'fuehrer' . . . like a Charlie Chaplain movie."[91] Amidst such recriminations, which resonated with depictions of the SSNP as a fifth column in service of the Axis powers, Syrian Nationalist claims of masculinity, determination, and intelligence threatened to give way to allegations of subterfuge and greed.[92] In this way, the nationalists opposing Saʿadeh resituated his sway over youth as one among several examples of his manipulative deceit. In jointly coordinating the publication of the two supplements, these figures sought to disabuse the Argentinean *mahjar* reading public of any sympathy that Saʿadeh had once received as an exiled nationalist, sociologist, and beacon of educated youth. The supplements were not to be their only collaboration. Indeed, shortly before the publication of the second supplement, Rahhal, al-Khushn, Lahud, and Adib volunteered for a committee organizing an event to honor the late Emin Arslan, former Ottoman ambassador, writer, and highly respected member of the community.[93] Saʿadeh's critics thus situated themselves as arbiters of honor. Reasserting their position meant reversing the significance which the Syrian Nationalists had placed on youth, which now, represented as unruly and gullible, served to underline the inauthenticity of Saʿadeh's leadership.

The coexistence of rival visions of youth as an enthusiastic collective reflected a transnational middle class riven with ambivalence about popular authority. Debates about genuine or spurious leadership over young people revealed anxieties about conflicting claims to distinction in a crowded field of competing political figures and ideologies. Indeed, *mahjar* nationalists often bemoaned the proliferation of inflated personalities proliferated in the public sphere. *Zuʿamāʾ* were, according to Juliette Elmir Saʿadeh, "a dime a dozen in our lands. How many of those conniving charlatans had stopped [in the *mahjar*!]"[94] The Syrian Nationalists decried analogous imposture

among middle-class intellectuals. Saʿadeh derided Farhat for considering himself one of "the major *udabāʾ*" in Brazil and counted al-Khuri among those who "fancied that [mere] incitement [*taḥrīḍ*] would make them leaders [*qāda*] of the people and representatives of their cause!"[95] The pretensions of every petty *zaʿīm* or *adīb*, in other words, imperiled national unity. Representations of a following among youth became, as a result, one means of adjudicating the difference between nationalist lodestars and self-serving demagogues. It is no wonder, then, that both the Syrian Nationalists and their opponents tended to think of leadership normatively as a quality that inspired humility. In 1939, Massuh described the negative reaction—"Have you gone mad?"—of one of the "major men of letters" (aḥad kibār udabāʾunā) in Buenos Aires to Massuh's decision to dedicate a book to "[his] great *zaʿīm* Antun Saʿadeh." Massuh replied that he was more rational than ever, arguing that non-nationalist Syrian *udabāʾ* pridefully rejected anyone with a "greater personality" for fear of losing themselves.[96] He thus implied that his own nationalism had overcome the desire for public recognition. Similarly, a 1942 article in *La Bandera Árabe* contended that of three types of *zaʿāma*—descent, wealth, and culture (*adab*)—it was only the latter that truly deserved the title. The author emphasized that a *zaʿīm* by way of *adab* was so "even if he did not call himself that in public or private."[97] In both cases, the normative conceptions of *zaʿīm* and *adīb* drifted towards one another, revealing a common hesitance towards efforts to cultivate public visibility. The contested imagination of young people as an audience for political campaigns echoed and reinforced these middle-class misgivings towards those who sought popular authority.

CONCLUSION

Saʿadeh's time in South America amply demonstrates that the lively contest between nationalisms in late-Mandate urban Syria and Lebanon took place with equal contingency and complexity in the *mahjar*. These contests of national identity also reflected shifting conceptions of popular leadership in transnational middle-class politics. In Brazil and Argentina, both SSNP recruitment and the reactions against it invoked young people's political backing as a token of (il)legitimacy. The support of the young implied either recognition of legitimate authority or juvenile obsession with affected imposture. Behind this binary between authenticity and duplicity lay middle-class anxieties about dissimulation in the public sphere. Both the Syrian Nationalists and their critics implied that *mahjar* literature, print

culture, and associational life, hubs of diasporic community and middle-class respectability alike, were vulnerable to empty formalism, on the one hand, and manipulative demagoguery, on the other. Youth provided a gauge against which to measure this frailty as either a much-needed restorative or the specter of mob rule. Syrian Nationalist skirmishes in the *mahjar* thus reveal a transnational middle class that turned to the trope of youth as its ranks were riled by nationalist popular politics on both sides of the Atlantic.

A *mahjar* perspective on the entanglement of youth and authority calls attention to transnational middle-class politics in the interwar period as a generative space that shaped the popular historiography of nationalist leadership. Wary of Elmir Saʿadeh's "conniving charlatans," transnational middle-class actors drew on both the futurity of a modern youth and the historicity of national identity to debate their choices among nationalist political tendencies.[98] By imagining a nationalist youth confronting "so-called *zuʿamāʾ* [*mutazaʿimūn*]" in both homeland and diaspora, the Syrian Nationalists were participating in a broader process in which claims to leadership came to be justified as the fruition of the nation in linear historical time or rejected as an anachronism. This observation applies as much to the pro-notable Arabism of figures like Fuʾad Mufarrij or Edmond Rabbath, ally of the Aleppine notable Saʿdallah al-Jabiri, as it did to the anti-notable Syrianism of supporters of Saʿadeh, who, as Nuzha put it, was the "true man that Syria has awaited for twenty-five centuries or more."[99] Whatever their affiliation in terms of nationalism or late-Ottoman notables, transnational middle-class public figures juggled claims of historical novelty and legacy in contested attempts to promote an authentic nationalist politics. The *mahjar* context is uniquely suited to further an understanding of youthful opposition to the notables as one dimension of a burgeoning historiographical imaginary with a global audience. For the transnational middle-class, competing conceptions of world-historical being—which migrant communities had their own distinct stake in claiming—shaped fundamental political questions about historical change and authority, and vice versa.[100]

The diasporic view of middle-class encounters with popular politics also suggests an alternative reading of the academic historiography of nationalist leadership. Albert Hourani's "politics of notables" was shaped by an awareness of its protagonists facing inevitable defeat at the hands of the youth-identified harbingers of a new politics.[101] The framework harbored nostalgia for an era, as

Hourani put it elsewhere, "when issues would be determined . . . by delicate negotiations between men who understood and trusted one another."[102] His evocative portrait of the notables as "cautious and even ambiguous" thus contrasts with the revolutionary populism of mid-twentieth-century nationalisms.[103] It also seems no accident that Hourani would later elegize nationalist Arab-British intermediaries like George Antonius and Musa Alami as notables—whether by heritage, disposition, or both—whose careers also waned with the arrival of a new epoch.[104] Philip Khoury later extended this line of thought by distinguishing notable subtlety from nationalist bravado in more drastic terms: "In the era of Syrian independence, members of these new groups [what Khoury earlier in the text describes as "modern ideological parties headed by a rising generation"] contributed to the demise of the old way of politics. *Indeed, it might be argued that they brought an end to politics altogether in Syria*" (emphasis added).[105] This sentiment elevated the notables to the tragic champions of liberalism.

Tellingly, Hourani's own biographical trajectory featured both migration and middle-class partnership with late-Ottoman notables. Born in Manchester with roots in Marjʿayun, his path from an inspiring early encounter with Philip Hitti to his service at the Arab Office with, in his own words, the "notable" Musa Alami dovetails with the same historical conjuncture discussed above.[106] Like other transnational middle-class figures who participated in this historical moment's nationalist mass politics, Hourani engaged with elite authority and popular politics through his expert narration of national history to foreign audiences. In his case, it was only in the sixties, with the benefit of hindsight and a tinge of nostalgia, that he outlined the representative legitimacy of the notable's "accepted and 'natural' leadership."[107] That the young Hourani may have had short-lived Syrian Nationalist sympathies in the 1930s, meanwhile, hints at counterfactual possibilities.[108] Instead of Saʿadeh's "so-called *zuʿamāʾ*," however, Hourani's notables became intermediaries who reconciled popular demands and imperial pressures in much the same way that the middle-class intellectual articulated local culture and history on a global stage. The politics of notables, in this way, echoed a diasporic reckoning with mid twentieth-century nationalist mass politics, recalling Walter Benjamin's suggestion that "[the middle classes] will never quite have done with feudalism."[109] Similarly too, perhaps, with *zuʿamāʾ*, notables, and other apparent relics of the past that, with or

against the youth, have been called upon to negotiate the uncertainties of popular politics in the twentieth century.

NOTES

[1] The author wishes to thank the anonymous reviewer, the editors of *Mashriq & Mahjar*, the participants in the New Perspectives in Middle Eastern Migrations workshop and conference, including guest discussant Camila Pastor, and colleagues Jenny Tsundu and Thamyris Almeida for their insightful comments and generous support.

[2] Ilyas Jubran Hardan, "al-Hizb al-qawmi al-suri," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 8 March 1941.

[3] "En el Teatro ASTRAL," *Assalam*, 30 July 1940; "Haflat shay," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 16 August 1940. Saʿadeh's name has also been transliterated as Antoun Saadeh or Sa'ada.

[4] Antun Saʿadeh, "Speech of 1 June, 1935," trans. Adel Beshara, accessed 26 August 2022, http://antoun-saadeh.com/languages/en/828.

[5] Tawfiq Fudul Labaki and Mishal Marun, "Fadiha adabiyya tuʿlinuha al-Jamiʿa al-Wataniyya al-Lubnaniyya ila al-raʾi al-ʿam," *Assalam*, 30 July 1940.

[6] "Riwayat Fi sabil al-taj," *La Bandera Árabe*, 13 November 1940.

[7] On youth and fascism in Lebanon in this time period, see Dylan Baun, "Lebanon's Youth Clubs and the 1936 Summer Olympics: Mobilizing Sports, Challenging Imperialism and Launching a National Project," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 34, no. 13 (2017): 1353; Jennifer Dueck, "Uniforms and Salutes: Fascism and Youth Policies in Syria and Lebanon under French Rule," in *Arab Youth: Social Mobilization in Times of Risk*, eds. Samir Khalaf and Roseanne Saad Khalaf (London: Saqi Books, 2011).

[8] Charles Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation: The Palestinian National Movement and the Rise of Mass Politics, 1929–1939" (PhD diss., New York University, 2013); Dylan Baun, *Winning Lebanon: Youth Politics, Populism and the Production of Sectarian Violence, 1920–1958* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[9] Baun, *Winning Lebanon*.

[10] See, amongst others, James Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Keith Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

2006). On diaspora, see Reem Bailony, "From Mandate Borders to the Diaspora: Rashaya's Transnational Suffering and the Making of Lebanon in 1925," *Arab Studies Journal* 26, no. 2 (2018): 44–73; Stacy Fahrenthold, *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora, 1908–1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Camila Pastor, *The Mexican Mahjar: Transnational Maronites, Jews, and Arabs under the French Mandate* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017).

[11] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005), 74.

[12] On his arrest in Brazil, see Nawwaf Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar: al-juzʾ al-thani (1938–1940)* (Beirut: Bisan li-l-nashr wa al-tawziʿ, 1996), 135–73.

[13] "Prof. Antonio Saadeh," *O Estado de São Paulo*, 4 December 1938.

[14] "Hadith zaʿim al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi ila al-suhuf al-suriyya fi al-Arjantin," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 1 July 1939.

[15] "Zaʿim al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi fi maʾdabat abnaʾ Tarablus," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 29 July 1939; "Zaʿim al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi wa al-ruh al-qawmiyya fi [Buenos Aires] tanbuth wa tataʿazzaz fi maʾdabat takrimihi," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 12 August 1939; "Zaʿim al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi fi haflat jamʿiyyat Nur al-Huda," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 7 October 1939.

[16] See Steven Hyland, "'The Summit of Civilization': Nationalisms among the Arabic-Speaking Colonies in Latin America," in *Immigration and National Identities in Latin America*, eds. Nicola Foote and Michael Goebel (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2014). See also Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar*, 248, 271.

[17] On Azize, see Sofía Martos, "The Balancing Act: Ethnicity, Commerce, and Politics among Syrian and Lebanese Immigrants in Argentina, 1890–1955" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007), 146.

[18] "Nos Formula Interesantes Declaraciones Antún Saadeh, El Jefe Del Partido Nacionalista Sirio," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 1 December 1939.

[19] "Mabadiʾ al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi wa ghayatuhu," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 2–14 December 1939.

[20] "Sobre 'Influencia de los Sirios en América' se Disertará en El Club Honor Y Patria," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 19 December 1939; "Taʾthir al-suriyyin fi Amrika," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 19 December 1939; "Ghadan mawʿad al-muhadara," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 22 December 1939; "Disertó En Honor Y Patria Antun Saadeh," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 26 December 1939.

[21] "Comisión de Homenaje Al Gran Sociologo Saadeh [. . .]," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 24 February 1940; "Agasajan Hoy a Antun Saadeh en Honor Y Patria," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 30 December 1939; Husni ʿAbd al-Malik and Catalina Massuh, "Ma'dabat takrim li-za'im al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi," *Assalam*, 20 February 1940.

[22] Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar*, 297–98.

[23] Ibid., 184, 187, 195.

[24] Ibid., 232; Juliette Elmir Saʿadeh, *Memoirs of Juliette Elmir Sa'adeh: Syrian Social Nationalist, Reformer, Political Prisoner*, trans. Mazen Naous (London: Folios Limited, 2022), 27.

[25] Hardan, 104, 409.

[26] "Al-Zaʿim fi [Pergamino]," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 30 April 1941.

[27] See Naʿman Daw, "Ya ibn Suriya," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 April 1941; "Risalat suri qawmi," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 March 1942. Small communities of Syrian Nationalists in the Canary Islands and the island of Bioko in Equatorial Guinea (formerly Fernando Po) are also documented in *Suriya al-Jadida* and *al-Zawbaʿa*.

[28] On rural-urban mobilities of the *mahjar* in Argentina, see Lily Pearl Balloffet, *Argentina in the Global Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), 39.

[29] On the rituals of organizational life in "youth popular organizations," see Baun, *Winning Lebanon*, 71–96.

[30] Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar*, 452.

[31] Elmir Saʿadeh, *Memoirs*, 6.

[32] Ibid., 37.

[33] Ibid., 34.

[34] Jubran Massuh, "Kayfa ʿaraftu al-zaʿim," *El Diario Siriolibanés*, 8 January 1940.

[35] Farid Nuzha, "al-Hizb al-suri al-qawmi: Muqabala khususiyya yaqum biha muharrar al-jamiʿa maʿ zaʿim al-hizb al-sayyid Antun Saʿadeh," *al-Jamiʿa al-Suryaniyya*, 12 March 1940.

[36] Nuzha, "Antun Saʿadeh zaʿim al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi: al-rajul," *al-Jamiʿa al-Suryaniyya*, July 1940.

[37] For a similar argument about masculinity in the *mahjar*, see Stacy Fahrenthold, "Sound Minds in Sound Bodies: Transnational Philanthropy and Patriotic Masculinity in al-Nadi al-Homsi and Syrian Brazil, 1920–32," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 2 (2014): 259–83.

[38] "As Realidades Ilustradas," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 1 March 1940.

[39] "Sahr al-taʾifiyyat wa al-iqlimiyyat fi al-butaqa al-suriyya al-qawmiyya," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 30 March 1940.

[40] "As Realidades Ilustradas."

[41] Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar*, 178.

[42] Elmir Saʿadeh, *Memoirs*, 32.

[43] Massuh, "Kayfa ʿaraftu al-za'im."

[44] Jubran Massuh to Antonius Arida, 15 February 1937, Folder 112, 160, Drawers of Antonius Arida, Maronite Patriarchal Library, Bkirke, Lebanon.

[45] Massuh, "Kayfa ʿaraftu al-za'im."

[46] Ibid.

[47] Massuh, "al-Silla al-thaqafiyiyya al-ruhiyya bayna al-muhajirin al-suriyyin wa abnaʾihim," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 21 December 1940.

[48] Massuh, "Awladuna fi Amirka," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 July 1942.

[49] "Yaqzat al-shabab al-suri," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 9 March 1940.

[50] "Awwal Maris fi [Tucumán]," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 July 1943.

[51] "Al-Shabiba kulluha tuʾayyid mabadiʾ al-suriyyin al-qawmiyyin," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 1 June 1940.

[52] Aniceto Schain, "Inquietud Siria," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 April 1942; Victor Massuh, "Por la justicia siria," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 February 1942; Alberto J. Nasif, "Carto [*sic*] de Un Joven Sirio," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 April 1944.

[53] See, for example, Jubran Massuh, "O Za'im Antes de Tudo," *Suriya al-Jadida*, 1 June 1940.

[54] See, for example, "Ibn al-ʿasi," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 5 April 1941; "al-Zaʿama al-haqqa," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 5 April 1941; "al-Zaʿama al-batila," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 12 April 1941; Naʿman Daw, "Zaʿama al-qawmiyyin wa ghayruha min al-zaʿamat," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 January 1942.

[55] "ʿAmal al-iqtaʿ ʿala ibʿad al-muhajir ʿan watanihi," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 7 December 1940. See also, "Fajr umma," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 16 November 1940.

[56] Aniceto Schain, "La Misión Historica del Social-Kaumismo," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 August 1942; Jubran Massuh, "Nahdatuna hiya madrasa," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 5 October 1940.

[57] See, for example, Jorge Iza Haddad, "La Liga Nacionalista," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 September 1943.

[58] Ibrahim Habib Tannus, "Um Marco Historico: Para a vida da Nova Siria," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 October 1943.

[59] Schain, "La Misión Historica del Social-Kaumismo."

[60] "Suʾal wa jawab," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 October 1941.

[61] Julio Chaij, "Patria y Nacionalidad," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 14 April 1944.

[62] On elite Syrian Lebanese institutions in Argentina, see Steven Hyland Jr., *More Argentine than You: Arabic-Speaking Immigrants in Argentina* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), 69–70.

[63] Husni ʿAbd al-Malik, "Aydah haqaʾiq," *Assalam*, 30 April 1940; Zaki Qunsul, "Aydah haqiqa," *Assalam*, 4 May 1940; Jurj ʿAssaf, "al-Hizb al-qawmi al-suri," *Assalam*, 9 May 1940.

[64] Khalid Adib, "Qissa waqiʿiyya," *La Bandera Árabe*, 30 September 1942; "La Sta. Fadua Kurban nos Habla," *Ad-Difah*, 28 October 1942.

[65] "Al-Zaʿim fī [Córdoba]," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 15 February 1941; Antun Saʿadah, *al-Athar al-kamilah al-juzʾ 6: Fi mughtarabihi al-qasri 1939* (Beirut: ʿUmdat al-Thaqafah fi al-Hizb al-Suri al-Qawmi al-Ijtimaʿi, 1983), 209.

[66] Salma Khadra Jayyusi, "Ilyās Farḥāt," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography 1850–1950*, ed. Roger Allen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 86–93.

[67] Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar*, 85.

[68] Ilyas Farhat, "Shabab Suriyya," *al-Zawbaʾa*, 15 June 1941.

[69] "Al-Muhadara allati aʿiddaha al-Shaʿir al-Qarawi," *La Bandera Árabe*, 1 February–9 October 1940.

[70] Rashid Salim al-Khuri, *Aʿmal al-Qarawi al-nathriyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Raʾid al-ʿArabi, 1984), 100, 102, 107.

[71] Al-Khuri, *Aʿmal al-Qarawi*, 95.

[72] Antun Saʿadah, *Junun al-khulud* (Beirut: Muʾassasat Saʿadah lil-thaqafa, 2012), 40.

[73] Saʿadah, *al-Masihiyya wa al-muhammadiyya wa al-qawmiyya* (Beirut: Muʾassasat Saʿadeh lil-thaqafa, 2012), 199. See also Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar*, 135.

[74] Saʿadah, "Tujjar al-adab fi al-mahjar," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 May 1942.

[75] Saʿadah, "Tujjar al-adab fi al-mahjar," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 June 1942.

[76] Saʿadah, *Junun al-khulud*, 217.

[77] "Greetings to Foreign Visitors," *Detroit Free Press*, 4 September 1938.

[78] "Risalat [New York]," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 25 March 1939.

[79] Elie Kedourie, "The Bludan Conference on Palestine, September 1937," *Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 1 (January 1981): 114; "al-Jadid ʿan al-hizb al-suri al-qawmi," *al-Hoda*, 11 March 1939.

[80] Al-Khuri, *Aʿmal al-Qarawi*, 99.

[81] Saʿadah, "Tujjar al-adab fi al-mahjar," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 1 May 1942. On *tarbīya*, see Susanna Ferguson, "A Fever for an Education: Pedagogical Thought and Social Transformation in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, 1861–1914," *Arab Studies Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 59.

[82] Saʿadah, *Junun al-khulud*, 69, 88; Saʿadah, *al-Masihiyya*, 76, 89.

[83] Saʿadah, *al-Masihiyya*, 29–30.

[84] Saʿadah, "Tujjar al-adab fi al-mahjar," *al-Zawbaʿa*, 15 May 1942.

[85] Draft Registration Card for Abdallah M Berry, WWII Draft Registration Cards for Michigan, 16 October 1940–31 March 1947, Records of the Selective Service System, Record Group 147, Box 88, National Archives at St. Louis, MO; Edward Curtis, *Muslims of the Heartland: How Syrian Immigrants Made a Home in the American Midwest* (New York: New York University Press, 2022), 186–87.

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[87] Berry, "Hawl maqal Antun Saʿadah fi al-Zawbaʿa."

[88] "Bayn al- Zawbaʿa wa al-Aʿasir," *La Bandera Árabe*, 28 January 1942.

[89] N[aʿman] D[aw], "Khitaban khatiran," *Suplemento de Natur-Islam*, April 1944.

[90] "Antun Saʿadeh taht mibdaʻ Abi Madi," *Ad-Difah*, 19 September 1942.

[91] "Explotan en la Argentina la Torpe Idea de la Unión Siria," *Ad-Difah*, 29 August 1942.

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[93] "Lajnat ihyaʾ dhikra al-amir [Emin Arslan]," *Natur-Islam*, 20 April 1943.

[94] Elmir Saʿadeh, *Memoirs*, 25.

[95] Hardan, *Saʿadeh fi al-mahjar*, 87–101; Saʿadah, *Junun al-khulud*, 86.

[96] Jubran Massuh, "al-Adib alladhi yathiq bi-nafsihi," *Suriyya al-Jadida*, 16 December 1939.

[97] "Al-Zaʿamat al-thalath," *La Bandera Árabe*, 8 July 1942.

[98] Elmir Saʿadeh, *Memoirs*, 25.

[99] Keith Watenpaugh, "Middle-Class Modernity and the Persistence of the Politics of Notables in Inter-War Syria," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 2 (2003): 257–86; Nuzha, "Antun Saʿadeh."

[100] On the articulation of national heritage and local belonging in Argentina, see Christina Civantos, *Between Argentines and Arabs: Argentine Orientalism, Arab Immigrants, and the Writing of Identity* (New York: State University of New York, 2006).

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[102] Hourani, "The Arab Awakening Forty Years After," in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), 213–14.

[103] Hourani, "Ottoman Reforms," 42.

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[105] Philip Khoury, "Continuity and Change in Syrian Political Life: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 5 (1991): 1392.

[106] Hourani, "Musa Alami and the Problem of Palestine," 24.

[107] Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," 40.

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[109] Walter Benjamin, "The Interior, The Trace," in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 215.