

ANTI-ZIONIST JOURNALISTIC WORKS  
OF NAJĪB AL-KHŪRĪ NASSĀR IN THE NEWSPAPER  
*AL-KARMAL* IN 1914

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The aim of the present study is to explore the anti-Zionist journalistic activities of Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār in his paper *al-Karmal* in the period before the First World War. The focus of the paper is on the issues of *al-Karmal* published in 1914. All articles dealing with Zionism from this year were thoroughly analyzed. The editor of this newspaper, Najīb NaSSār, was the most active and persistent anti-Zionist journalist and activist of this period. Most of his attention was devoted to Zionist land purchases and he drew attention to every change to the existing *status quo*. He regularly warned his fellow citizens that the goal of the Zionists was to take possession of Palestine and drive out the indigenous Arab population.

**Key words:** anti-Zionist, Arab Press, *al-Karmal*, *al-Karmil*, Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār, Palestine, Palestinian Press, Zionism, 1914

Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār (1862 – 1948) was born in the village of °Ayn al-°Unūb situated to the south of Beirut in present-day Lebanon. He went to school in nearby Sūq al-Gharb. Upon completing his secondary education, he moved to the Palestinian town of Şafad, where his brother owned a pharmacy. He worked there for some time and later found a job in the Scottish hospital in Tiberias as a pharmacist's assistant. After fifteen years of work in the hospital he purchased some land and devoted himself to agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914): AHad ruwwād munāhadat aS-Sahyūniya. [Najīb NaSSār in His Paper al-Karmal (1901 – 1914): One of the Pioneers of Anti-Zionist Resistance.] In *Shu'ūn Filasṭīniya*, p. 103; MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 85.

There are two versions trying to explain the driving motives that led Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār to anti-Zionist activism. Based on a conversation with his widow, Khayrīya Qāsimīya believes that one of the main impulses was a study about Zionism from the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* which he obtained in 1905.<sup>2</sup> As soon as the political situation changed due to the Young Turk Revolution, he sold his land, bought a printing press and started to publish the newspaper *al-Karmal*.<sup>3</sup>

According to the second version drawn from Jewish sources, Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār worked for a few years for the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) as an estate agent and he turned against Jewish colonization only after he parted on bad terms with his employer.<sup>4</sup> This explanation does not seem to be sufficient. It is hard to believe that the only reason, or even the main reason, behind his diverse, persistent and intensive anti-Zionist activity was a quarrel with the JCA. If this was the case, he would have started to attack the Zionists in *al-Karmal*<sup>5</sup> from the very start; however, the first critique of them only occurred a half year after the first issue had been published.<sup>6</sup>

In all likelihood, Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār became an active anti-Zionist thanks to the fact that he could observe land purchases in the *qaḏā'* of Tiberias. In addition to this, the information he found in the study on Zionism enabled him to put the local circumstances into a wider context. In the course of time he came to the conclusion that if the situation did not change and the current development continued, the Zionists would eventually take possession of Palestine.<sup>7</sup> One should also bear in mind that it was in Tiberias that the first controversy concerning Jewish land purchases took place at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time the *qā'immaqām*, Amīr Amīn Arslān, tried to prevent the eviction of Arab peasants from their lands but he was unsuccessful in the end.<sup>8</sup> Presumably, Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār must have been not only aware of this affair but also influenced by it.

The newspaper *al-Karmal* started to be published at the end of 1908 twice a week in Haifa. Most of the issues from the first years are no longer extant. Many articles on Zionism from the early period have been preserved because

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<sup>2</sup> A few years later he translated this study and published it, first in his newspaper *al-Karmal* (from March to June 1911) as a series of articles, and then at the end of the same year as a book.

<sup>3</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> The paper is often mistakenly transcribed as *al-Karmil*.

<sup>6</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 103; MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 85; AL-KAYYĀLĪ, ʿAbdalwahhāb. *Tārīkh Filasṭīn al-Ḥadīth* [Modern History of Palestine], p. 49.

<sup>8</sup> BARBOUR, N. *Nisi Dominus: A Survey of the Palestine Controversy*, pp. 116 – 117; KHALIDI, R. *Palestinian Identity*, pp. 102 – 104.

they were carried by other newspapers, especially the Damascene *al-Muqtabas*. One of the reasons for this was the friendship between the owners of these papers – Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār and Muhammad Kurd ʿAlī.<sup>9</sup> Articles from *al-Karmal* were reprinted by other newspapers in the Levant and Egypt since Zionism was gradually becoming a topic that resonated in the whole region. A major contributor to this development was the owner of *al-Karmal*, who repeatedly appealed to the editors of newspapers in Palestine and neighbouring regions to join in the anti-Zionist fight.<sup>10</sup>

The personal experience of the editor of *al-Karmal* resulted in the main subject of his interest not being Jewish immigration as such, but chiefly the land purchases in Palestine and especially in the *sanjaq* of ʿAkkā. Therefore he drew attention to Jewish land purchases and the threat of Zionist sovereignty over Palestine. At the same time, he was offering a solution in the form of establishing Arab “associations for land purchases, because if not ‘... necessarily the day will come, when they [the Zionist] will have the decisive word’.”<sup>11</sup>

Already during the first year of publishing, Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār came to loggerheads with the Zionists. They appealed to the court, which suspended the paper for a couple of months in June 1909. In February 1910 Najīb NaṢṢār sharply criticized the people and the Ottoman government for not obstructing Zionist activities and idly standing by. The newspaper *an-Nafīr al-ʿUthmānī* [The Ottoman Trumpet], which according to Ruḥī al-Khālīdī’s manuscript<sup>12</sup> was financed by the Zionists, came out strongly against *al-Karmal*.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the *Hākhāmbāshī* of the Ottoman Empire and the *Jewish Chronicle* attacked

<sup>9</sup> KHALIDI, R. *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, p. 124; QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 121, ref. 5. Complete volumes from 1913 and 1914 are listed in the catalogue of the Egyptian National Library (Dār al-Kutub). However, during our repeated visits to this institution in 2006 – 2010 only the volume from 1914 could be retrieved.

<sup>10</sup> AL-KAYYĀLĪ, ʿAbdalwahhāb. *Tārīkh Filasṭīn al-Ḥadīth*, pp. 53 – 54; MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 103.

<sup>12</sup> *As-siyūnizm aw al-mas’ala aṢ-Sahyūnīya* [Zionism or the Zionist Question.] This manuscript has not been published and can be found in the al-Khālīdīya Library in Jerusalem. However, it is not accessible to scholars (e-mail from professor Walīd al-Khālīdī, 28.10. 2006).

<sup>13</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), pp. 103 – 104; MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, pp. 86, 127; AL-KHĀLIDĪ, Walīd. *Kitāb as-siyūnizm aw al-mas’ala aṢ-Sahyūnīya li Muḥammad Ruḥī al-Khālīdī al-mutawaffī sanat 1913*. [The Book “Zionism and the Zionist Question” by Muhammad Ruḥī al-Khālīdī, d. 1913]. In NASHSHĀB, Hishām. *Studia Palaestina: Studies in Honour of Constantine K. Zurayk/Dirāsāt Filasṭīniya: Majmūʿat abḤāth wuḌīʿat takrīmān li ad-duktūr QusṬīnṬīn Zurayq*, p. 74.

Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār for provoking strife between Jews on the one hand and Arabs and other Ottomans on the other.<sup>14</sup>

Najīb NaSSār's work must have had a strong response among the Arab inhabitants of Haifa. One and half years after the commencement of his paper, the correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* wrote about the trial of the editor: "The hearing with NaSSār was attended by a numerous crowd of Arabs and after his acquittal they have triumphantly carried him at a demonstration hostile to Jews..."<sup>15</sup>

Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār played a pivotal role in the first of two major controversies that occurred in 1910 and 1911. This concerned the sale of large estates that had previously belonged to Sultan Abdülhamit II to the Lebanese Christian Najīb Ibrāhīm al-ASfar. Fearing that the buyer was a Zionist 'straw man', he commenced an intensive campaign against this transaction and managed to persuade editors from leading Levantine papers to join him.<sup>16</sup> He also became involved in the struggle against the purchase of the village of al-Fūla by the Zionists – the most important affair that shaped anti-Zionist Arab public opinion in Palestine and beyond in the pre-WWI period.

In the article *SalāHaddīn's Monument between Nazareth and Tiberias*, the author criticizes the lack of interest on the part of Arabs in their own history and the lack of pride in important events and personalities. By contrast, Jewish immigrants' attitude to their own past was completely different. "By God, if we had [only] half of the passion, sense of honour, patriotism and pride in the Ottoman community of our ancestors, the Zionists would not dream about reacquiring the land of our forefathers with the help of money and restoring the ancient Israeli Kingdom in Syria and Palestine[!]"<sup>17</sup>

Articles on Zionism written by the editor of *al-Karmal* contributed a great deal to increasing awareness and interest in this movement and its plans and activities not only in Palestine but also in other Arab regions. In the first half of 1911, a debate started in which Zionists – most vocal among them was Nisīm Malūl<sup>18</sup> – emphasized the apolitical character of the Zionist movement and its

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<sup>14</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 104; MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 104.

<sup>16</sup> MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 87.

<sup>17</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Nuṣb SalāHaddīn bayna an-NāSira wa Tabarīyā. [SalāHaddīn's Memorial between Nazareth and Tiberias] In *al-Muqtabas*, 574, 15.1. 1911, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Nisīm Malūl was a Jew of Tunisian origin who from 1911 worked in Jaffa as a correspondent of the Egyptian daily *al-Muqattam*. At the same time, he clandestinely worked for the Palestine Bureau established by the Zionist Organization for which he translated articles from Arabic newspapers concerning Zionism. His other task was to react to articles about Zionism published in the Arab press. The Palestine Bureau tried

positive contribution to the local population. Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār refuted these claims.<sup>19</sup> At the beginning of February 1911, he responded in *al-Muqtabas* to an article by Sulaymān Bey Yalīn, who claimed that Jews had not had political ambitions for two millennia and that this was also valid for the present time. He also highlighted the merits of the settlers for the local population, their love for the Ottoman Empire and their Ottoman citizenship. Najīb NaṢṢār refuted his assertions one by one. He agrees that the Jewish settlers are Ottoman citizens, but asks till when? As soon as the settlers receive a recruiting order or a summons to the court, they pull out their foreign passports and cease to be Ottomans. Their love for the Ottoman Empire is purely selective – they like civil servants who are accommodating to them but hate honest, patriotic officials such as the *qā'immaqām* of Nazareth.<sup>20</sup>

In response to the parliament debate held in March 1911, which exposed the fact that the politicians knew very little about Zionism, Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār started to publish in his paper the translation of the chapter on Zionism from the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*.<sup>21</sup> At the end of the year he issued this translation together with his commentaries as a book.<sup>22</sup> In 1911 more than seventy articles dealing with Zionism were published in *al-Karmal*.<sup>23</sup>

In the summer of 1911 he was also active in other fields. He founded and headed a committee to monitor Jewish immigration in the port of Haifa.<sup>24</sup> Approximately at the same time he proposed reciprocal measures to the Zionist boycott of Arabs.<sup>25</sup>

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in this manner to counteract the growing number of anti-Zionist columns. JACOBSON, A. *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem in the Transition between Ottoman and British Rule*, pp. 136, 159 – 160; JACOBSON, A. Sephardim, Ashkenazim and the ‘Arab Question’ in pre-First World War Palestine: A Reading of Three Zionist Newspapers, ref. 83, pp. 36 – 37. This article was published in *Middle East Studies*, April 2003, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 105 – 130. We received it in a text file from the author; QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 104.

<sup>19</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 106.

NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *aṢ-Sahyūniyūn* „wa al-Jam‘īya aṢ-Sahyūniya“. [Zionists “and the Zionist Organization.”] In *al-Muqtabas*, 591, 4.2. 1911, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> GOTTHEIL, R. Zionism, pp. 666 – 686.

<sup>21</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 107; NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *aṢ-Sahyūniya, tārikhuhā – gharaḍuhā – ahammiyatuhā. Mulakkhhaṣan ‘an al-insiklūbīdiyā al-yahūdīya*. [Zionism. Its History, Objective and Importance. Abridged from the Jewish Encyclopaedia.] Haifa: Maṭba‘at al-Karmal bi-shārī‘ Dayr ar-Rūm, 1911. This book is one of six books that were translated into Arabic in Palestine prior to 1920. AYALON, A. *Reading Palestine*, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> KHALIDĪ, R. *Palestinian Identity*, pp. 124 – 125.

<sup>24</sup> AL-KAYYĀLĪ, ‘Abdalwahhāb. *Tārikh Filasṭīn al-Ḥadīth* [Modern History of Palestine], p. 54.

<sup>25</sup> MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, p. 123.

In the summer of 1912, Muḥdī Bey, the new *mutaṣarrif*, arrived in Jerusalem. A little later he visited the Jewish settlement of Rishon le Zion, where he delivered a speech in which he praised the Jewish settlers as “as a model for other Arab villages and professors and living books for people who can not read and write.”<sup>26</sup> Both major Palestinian newspapers *Filasṭīn* and *al-Karmal* sharply attacked the *mutaṣarrif*. Najīb NaSSār wrote: “It hurts as this was said by a representative of the government that should be the professor and the books for the peasants and that he expects from the enemies of the homeland to be the professors and books for the inhabitants.”<sup>27</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* exposed suspicious Zionist actions on the pages of the newspaper. In autumn 1912 he asked the *qā'immaqām* of Nazareth Amīn °Abdalḥādī why he did not intervene in al-Fūla against Jewish construction. He did not accept the *qā'immaqām*'s subsequent defense that they were building only stalls since “all settlements that the Zionists have built, they have built them under the name of stalls.”<sup>28</sup>

At the beginning of 1913 Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār was again acquitted by the court – in this case the trial concerned his feud with the *mutaṣarrif* of °Akkā and the *qā'immaqām* of Haifa.<sup>29</sup>

Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār appealed to Arab peasants to follow the example of the Zionists, who sought to achieve “the revival of their nation and its unity in your country at your expense...”<sup>30</sup> He noticed that the most fertile areas of Palestine were being sold and criticized the shortsightedness of the notables. Furthermore, he feared that “these foreigners will become the majority ... and this [country] will be afflicted by what afflicted other provinces that were detached from the body of the state ...”<sup>31</sup> He compares the future destiny of Palestine to Libya and Macedonia. Similar comparisons were later also made by the other major Palestinian newspaper *Filasṭīn*.<sup>32</sup>

On the one hand, Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār was a fervent Palestinian local patriot worried about the fate of the Arab peasants and the impact of Jewish immigration and colonization on the native population. On the other hand, he

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<sup>26</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 109. For a more detailed account of the speech, see MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, pp. 134 – 136; QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. *An-nashāt aṣ-Sahyūnī fī ash-sharq al-°arabī wa Ṣadāhu, 1908 – 1918*. [Zionist Activities in the Arab East and Their Echo, 1908 – 1918.], p. 119.

<sup>27</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 109.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>32</sup> Tilighraf ākhar mi ahālī Filasṭīn [Another Telegram from the Inhabitants of Palestine.] In *Filasṭīn*, 323 – 26, 11.4.1914, al-mulḥaq [insertion], p. 1.

was also an Ottoman loyalist fearing the breakaway of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire.

The Zionist movement carefully followed the Palestinian press and its representatives and backers often responded to articles published there. The Egyptian daily *al-Muqattam*<sup>33</sup> often carried articles advocating Jewish immigration to Palestine and its merits. Such a discussion commenced in December 1912 in connection with a remark by *al-Karmal* about the settling of Muslims who had been driven out during the First Balkan War in Palestinian villages threatened by the prospect of being sold to Jews. *Al-Karmal* wrote "... it offers a better guarantee for the future of the Ottoman [Empire] than to open [space] to Zionist organizations for colonization."<sup>34</sup> *Al-Muqattam* flatly rejected this practice with the argument that the goal of the government was to reduce the Arab element in Palestine. *Al-Karmal* voiced astonishment about "the shock of one of the correspondents of *al-Muqattam* from the arrival of a hundred refugees to Syria running away from the suffering of war ... [yet] we know *al-Muqattam* [is] open to articles [written] by Zionist writers who openly say about the Syrian lands that they are sparsely inhabited and the Zionists are coming to colonize them and invest in them."<sup>35</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* noticed that the Zionists focused their efforts on the most fertile areas of Palestine – the coastal Shārūn Plain, Marj ibn ʿĀmir and the Jordan Valley. "... [I]f they are seized, the Palestinians will suffocate and they will be left with no economic resource[s]."<sup>36</sup>

In the summer of 1913 the Arab Congress took place and Najīb NaṢṢār was one of the signatories of a telegram sent to the gathering by Christians from Haifa.<sup>37</sup> In an article in May 1913, he suggested following the example of the First Zionist Congress in Basel and establishing an organization and formulating a programme. However, the congress did not address the Zionist movement. The great hopes that the editor of *al-Karmal* had laid on the congress were dashed and he harshly criticized the assembly in a number of articles.<sup>38</sup>

Over time, Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār came to the understanding that the Palestinians could neither rely on the government nor the non-Palestinian representatives. They could count only on themselves.<sup>39</sup> If they wanted other

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<sup>33</sup> *Al-Muqaṭṭam* was an important Egyptian daily founded in 1889 by Fāris Nimr and Yaʿqūb Sarrūf. AYALON, A. *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History*, p. 56.

<sup>34</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. *Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal* (1901 – 1914), p. 112.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 113.

<sup>37</sup> AL-KAYYĀLĪ, ʿAbdalwahhāb. *Tārīkh Filasṭīn al-Ḥadīth*. [Modern History of Palestine], p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. *Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal* (1901 – 1914), pp. 113 – 114.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p. 115.

Arabs to notice and promote their interests, they had to “join forces ... and through setting up a patriotic anti-Zionist organization preserve the country for its inhabitants by raising its agriculture, economy and science, and achieving social harmony.”<sup>40</sup> In such a case, political parties would not be able to disregard Palestine and its problems; on the contrary, they would seek the support of the organization. In August he called for the convening of a congress in Nābulus on which this organization would be founded.<sup>41</sup> During the following months he continued in his efforts to convene an anti-Zionist gathering in Nābulus.<sup>42</sup>

He proposed sending a delegation to the eleventh Zionist Congress<sup>43</sup> in order to gather first-hand information about its proceedings.<sup>44</sup>

### **Analysis of the issues of *al-Karmal* published in 1914**

The whole 1914 volume of *al-Karmal* can be found in the Egyptian National Library (Dār al-Kutub). The newspapers are in fairly good shape; however, some pages, especially in later issues, are falling apart and therefore some passages are missing.

The article *Preserve your Fatherland for Yourself*,<sup>45</sup> which was published at the beginning of the year, contains a recapitulation of the principal ideas and opinions preached by Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār in relation to the Zionist movement. It was a political movement that sought its own state in Palestine and the surrounding regions. In the struggle against it, the survival of the local population was at stake. In order to face it successfully, the Arabs were not to sell their lands and they had to progress economically. He suggests several solutions – the modernization of agriculture, the provision of loans on favourable terms to peasants, and the advancement of education. He regards the control of land to be the decisive factor in the Arab-Zionist conflict. If the sale of land was prevented, the Zionists would not have room for expansion and their project would be doomed to failure. He had a very low opinion of those who sold land to the Zionists and considered them traitors. He expressed respect for the Zionists and their work and he uses them as an example for the Arabs.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 114.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pp. 114 – 115; MANDEL, N. J. Attempts at an Arab-Zionist Entente: 1913 – 1914, p. 256.

<sup>42</sup> AL-KAYYĀLĪ, °Abdalwahhāb. *Tārīkh Filasṭīn al-Ḥadīth* [Modern History of Palestine], p. 58.

<sup>43</sup> The congress took place in Vienna at the beginning of September 1913.

<sup>44</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 116.

<sup>45</sup> IHfāZū waṭanākum lakum.



Moreover, he points out that the Palestinians should not count on the government to stop the Zionist march and modernize the country because it faced many other problems. It was the local inhabitants who had to do it. The young educated generation would have to play a crucial role.<sup>46</sup>

At the beginning of the article he emphasizes the significance of money in the “struggle for survival.”<sup>47</sup> However, he calls for alternative ways to acquire money because “the methods we are using to obtain them [by means of] selling land are the wrong methods, the cause of calamity and [they] will lead to a loss of independence and unity.”<sup>48</sup> He adds that “the Zionist organization ... started an economic war without guns against us. By now no one has doubts about the goals of this political organization and its national aspirations...”<sup>49</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* likens those who sell their lands to Jews to Judas Iscariot. When he compares the situation of the Jews and the Arabs, like other Arab intellectuals, he concludes that the Arabs were in a better position than the Zionists. “Our task is much easier than the task of those who fight with us for survival in our homeland, since we do not need to buy land for peasants as most of them own their land. We do not need to build houses for them because they are satisfied with their small miserable houses ...”<sup>50</sup>

Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār was aware of the difficulties peasants faced when they needed to borrow money. He proposed setting up financial institutions that would provide low interest loans. This would prevent what was currently taking place: under the pressure of high interest rates, peasants were losing their land to usurers who subsequently sold it to the Zionists and the peasants were displaced. He drew inspiration for these measures from the Zionists.<sup>51</sup>

Throughout the year, a recurring theme in the paper was that in confrontation with the Zionists the Palestinians fought for their survival in their fatherland. The editor of *al-Karmal* considered his nation to be at war with the Zionist immigrants over who would stay in the country.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. IHfaZū waṬanakum lakum. [Preserve Your Fatherland for Yourself.] In *al-Karmal*, 396, 6.1. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> The editor of *al-Karmal* often voiced his conviction that what was at stake in the feud between the Zionists and the Arab population was the survival of the native inhabitants in their homeland. NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-iḥtijāj °alā aṢ-Sahyūniyīn. [Protest against the Zionists] In *al-Karmal*, 420, 10.4. 1914, p.1; NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. AS-Sahyūniya immā khaṬar caZim wa immā mithāl Hasan. [Zionism is Either a Great Danger or a Good Example.] In *al-Karmal*, 422, 17.4. 1914, p.1.

<sup>48</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. IHfaZū waṬanakum lakum. In *al-Karmal*, 396, 6.1. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Matā naṢīru min an-nās. [When Will We Become People?] In *al-Karmal*, 429, 15.5. 1914, p. 1.

At the turn of January and February 1914 the editor of *al-Karmal* dealt with the concession to drain the marshes around Lake al-Hūlā. In the first article he did not comment on the project since he did not have enough information.<sup>53</sup> In the next issue he addressed the subject in detail. Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār noticed an important advantage that the Zionists enjoyed when compared to other entrepreneurs. As their primary goal was not to acquire profit, but the land itself, they were ready to conclude unprofitable deals. He does not mention them directly, but he talks about “foreign companies supported by colonization societies striving to take possession of the homeland”<sup>54</sup> and “holders of political aspirations.”<sup>55</sup>

Najīb NaSSār followed the various cases systematically and on a long-term basis. When he obtained new details, even if they were in conflict with his previous statements, he printed them in his paper. A few days later he published an interview with the Egyptian economist Jūrj Bey cīd, who was sceptical about the trustworthiness of the information concerning the al-Hūlā concession. “I do not believe that the company will pay two Ottoman liras to the treasury for every *dūnum* after it drains it because these prices are too high. The Zionists did not pay Sursuq, one of the participants at this project, more than two liras for a *dūnum*<sup>56</sup> of the al-<sup>c</sup>Afūla<sup>57</sup> land [which is] suitable [for agricultural purposes and] situated at Hijāz railway station close to the port of Haifa.”<sup>58</sup>

Ten days later he came back to this issue. In all likelihood, he contacted the applicants seeking the concession as he adds new details. Sons of the applicants had studied agriculture in Europe and the estimated costs of draining the swamps were thirty thousand liras.<sup>59</sup> Based on this data, the price of draining one *dūnum* was only 65 piasters and they were supposed to pay the forenamed two liras to the state only after fifteen years. Under these circumstances, the project would be profitable and Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār determinedly espoused

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<sup>53</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Tajfif al-Hūlā. [Draining of al-Hūlā] In *al-Karmal*, 400, 27.1. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> “sharikāt ajnabiya madfū<sup>c</sup>a min al-jam<sup>c</sup>iyāt al-isti<sup>c</sup>māriya aT<sup>c</sup>ami<sup>c</sup>a bi-imitlāk al-bilād”

<sup>55</sup> “aSHāb al-maTāmi<sup>c</sup> as-siyāsīya” – NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Mashrū<sup>c</sup> tajfif al-Hūlā. [The Project for the Draining of al-Hūlā] In *al-Karmal*, 401, 30.1. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> According to the previous article, the forementioned company should have first drained the land (the estimated costs were one and a half liras for a *dūnum*) and subsequently bought it for two liras per *dūnum*. NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Mashrū<sup>c</sup> tajfif al-Hūlā. In *al-Karmal*, 401, 30.1. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> In reality the village concerned was not al-<sup>c</sup>Afūla, but al-Fūla.

<sup>58</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Tajfif al-Hūlā [Draining of al-Hūlā]. In *al-Karmal*, 402, 3.2. 1914, pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>59</sup> The area that was designated for draining comprised forty six thousand *dūnums*. NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Mashrū<sup>c</sup> tajfif al-Hūlā. In *al-Karmal*, 401, 30.1. 1914, p. 1.

the concession.<sup>60</sup> This project was the embodiment of all that the author stood for – the independent advancement of agriculture, application of modern science and progress of the country.

In order to emphasize his message, the editor of *al-Karmal* sometimes republished articles from the foreign press. In his column from 10 February 1914 he renders the content of several articles published in the British and American newspapers that describe Zionist activities and ambitions. At the end he adds his own commentary, which says: "... prominent authors in the West have begun to see the same Zionist danger as we have seen it, have called attention to it and have warned against it for a few years..."<sup>61</sup>

That *al-Karmal* must have had quite a significant influence on public opinion emerges from the fact that the people directly or indirectly criticized on the pages of the paper often promptly reacted and sent a response to the accusation in order to vindicate their actions. This also documents that the Zionist movement was by then widely unpopular among the local population and many Palestinian notables and Ottoman officials were trying to disassociate themselves from it and did not want to be presented as responsible for land sales to Jews. This occurred several times during 1914. For instance, on 30 January 1914 *al-Karmal* published a short article *Sales to Zionism* on the transfer of possession of three villages – Umm al-<sup>o</sup>Alaḳ, al-Ghāba and Sārūnā – to the Zionists. He does not mention any specific person, only where these villages are located.<sup>62</sup> Two weeks later, *al-Karmal* published the response of the *mutaṣarrif* of <sup>o</sup>Akkā Haṣīm Bey, who inculpated his predecessor Shākir Bey al-Hanbalī for the sale of these villages because the transfer had been executed during his tenure. Even faster was the response of two members of the notable Palestinian families, al-Husajnī and ash-Shawā, to the accusation of complicity in the sale of Bedouin land to Zionists."<sup>63</sup>

In the article *There is No Need to Worry about You if You Come To Be Men*, Najīb NaṢṣār describes the positive impacts of Zionism on the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. It seems that he was trying to find at least something positive about the present situation. Apart from a quite prevalent view that Jews could be an

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<sup>60</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Hawla tajfif al-Hūlā. [About the Draining of al-Hūlā.] In *al-Karmal*, 405, 13.2. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. AS-Sahyūniya fī Filasṭīn. [Zionism in Palestine.] In *al-Karmal*, 404, 10.2. 1914, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-buyū<sup>c</sup> li aS-Sahyūniya. [Sales to Zionism.] In *al-Karmal*, 401, 30.1. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-waṭaniya aS-Sādiqa. [The True Patriotism.] In *al-Karmal*, 453, 7.8. 1914, p. 1.

example to Arabs with their “solidarity, co-operation and cohesion,”<sup>64</sup> he emphasizes even more the role the Zionists played as the catalyst for Arab mobilization. “Many among us were gripped by despair when we saw the spread of Zionism in the country and its acquirement of half a million dūnums of land in Palestine. As far as I am concerned, I think ... that the presence of Zionism in the country was necessary to wake us up from the deep sleep in which we were submerged for generations. Competition and struggle is for nations like fire for gold. If it is false, it will become evident ...”<sup>65</sup>

In the article *At the Same Time*, analogously to Khalīl as-Sakākīnī a couple of days later in his diary,<sup>66</sup> Najīb NaSSār came to the conclusion that Palestine was a vital part of the Arab world. “... Palestine is tantamount to the chest, even the heart, of Syria and Arabia and one defends with his life less important organs ... than the organ on which life depends.”<sup>67</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* consistently differentiated between Ottoman and foreign Jews, whereby he accentuated that Ottoman Jews were on an equal footing with other citizens: “... an Ottoman Jew has equal rights as an Ottoman Muslim or an Ottoman Christian because religion can not deprive anyone of his national rights and citizenship.”<sup>68</sup>

When the *Hākhāmbāshī* proposed that Jews should be appointed to high positions in those areas of Palestine in which they constituted the majority, Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār responded negatively: “... Ottoman and foreign Jews of various nationalities do not form a majority [anywhere] in Palestinian districts or *sanjaqs*.”<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the principle that the *mutaṢarrif* or *qā'immaqām* belonged to the religious community that constituted the majority in a given region was not applied in the Ottoman Empire. The author disapproved of appointments of Jewish officials in Palestine who would be in a delicate situation. They would be caught between the interests of the Zionists on the one hand and the concerns of the government and the local inhabitants on the other.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Lā khawfa ʿalaykum idhā Sirtum rijālan. [There is No Need To Worry about You if You Come To Be Men.] In *al-Karmal*, 405, 13.2. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Lā khawfa ʿalaykum idhā Sirtum rijālan. In *al-Karmal*, 405, 13.2. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> AS-SAKĀKĪNĪ, Khalīl. *Kadhā anā yā dunyā*. [Such Am I, O World], 1982, pp. 64 – 65.

<sup>67</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Fī waqt wāḥid. [At the Same Time.] In *al-Karmal*, 409, 27.2. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-Hukkām al-isrāʾīlīyūn li Filasṭīn. [Jewish Governors in Palestine.] In *al-Karmal*, 411, 6.2. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

In the article *They Did Not Stop Misrepresenting [the Reality] before Us* Najīb NaṢṢār rebuts the assertion that in the dispute with the Hilfsverein<sup>71</sup> about the language of teaching at the Technikum<sup>72</sup> in Haifa, the Zionists had in mind the good of the Ottoman Empire and education in Ottoman patriotism. According to him, the Zionist efforts to impose Hebrew at the school had two completely different goals: "... to remove native Ottoman inhabitants from this institute ... and speed up the idea of a Jewish nation by reviving the Hebrew language."<sup>73</sup> The writer understands why the Zionists use camouflage and does not reproach them. He criticizes Arabs for passivity and disregarding what he can clearly see. "... [T]he Zionists have the right to pretend in front of us and others because of their goal, but we must not close our eyes and deafen our ears ... to the present reality ...."<sup>74</sup>

At the end of March a republished article from *Filasīn* took notice of the resourcefulness of the Zionists and their exploiting the lenience of the authorities in Palestine. The author mentions a case that he witnessed the previous day when a guard from the Jewish settlement of Dārān dressed in a gendarme officer's uniform was arrested. Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār claims that Zionists were using such fake uniforms to deceive the peasants when they were driving them out of their lands. Furthermore, a licence to carry firearms was also found on the guard. The writer wonders how it was possible that "the deputy commander in Ramla, Muḥammad KhalūṢī Efendi, issued such a permit to carry a prohibited gun without the knowledge of his superiors."<sup>75</sup>

Several times the paper conveys the fact that the Zionists do not respect the official judicial system even in cases involving Arabs. At the beginning of April, *al-Karmal* published a telegram sent by the youth of Jaffā to the Grand Vizier and the minister of the interior which described how the Zionists had created illegal parallel judicial and punitive structures and how they were using them. This message depicts a recent case when after a quarrel between an Arab peasant selling coal and a Jew, the former was arrested and escorted, while being continuously beaten, to a cell in the Jewish secondary school in Tel Aviv.<sup>76</sup> Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār was outraged by this incident and in the next issue he reproaches "the sons of my homeland" for not being able to prevent the Zionists from pursuing their diverse

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<sup>71</sup> Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden.

<sup>72</sup> School of Engineering.

<sup>73</sup> NaṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Mā zālū yumawwihūna ʿalaynā. [They Did Not Stop Misrepresenting [the Reality] before Us.] In *al-Karmal*, 412, 10.2. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> NaṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Mā zālū yumawwihūna ʿalaynā. In *al-Karmal*, 412, 10.2. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> NaṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Hurrās al-mustaʿmarāt aṢ-Sahyūnīya. [The Guards of the Zionist Settlements.] In *al-Karmal*, 416, 27.3. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> Al-iḥtijāj ʿalā aṢ-Sahyūnīyīn. [Protest against the Zionists.] In *al-Karmal*, 419, p. 2.

activities. “Oh, my nation, the hauling of one of you in front of your eyes ... to a non-governmental court is an offence to each and every one of you ...”<sup>77</sup> In this article he also calls for the convening of an anti-Zionist congress in Nābulus to lay the foundations of organized activity and to take measures to develop agriculture and prevent the transfer of assets to the Zionists.<sup>78</sup>

In the article *If You Had Public Opinion*, Najīb al-Khūrī Naṣṣār refers to another case in which the Zionists treated a local Arab cruelly. They accused him of stealing “fifty orange seeds” and as punishment they whipped him almost to death, according to the Egyptian daily *al-Iqdām*. No one came to his help even though many people witnessed the incident. *Al-Iqdām* asks: “Where is the *qā’immaqām* of Jaffa and where is the *mutaṣarrif* of Jerusalem to see the marks of the whip on the body of this poor man and where are the real patriots to barrage the central government and the local authorities with protests against these horrible acts?”<sup>79</sup> The editor of *al-Karmal* comes back to the importance of “public opinion” in Palestine. He understood it as that of the educated, conscious and active population that does not allow the officials to do what is against its interests. Moreover, such conscious citizens would prevent the occurrence of such injustices as were perpetrated by the Zionists against this Arab or in other similar cases.<sup>80</sup>

A short column describes the celebrations of the Zionist holiday *ash-Shākūl*. Pupils wore Zionist dress, the Zionist flag was displayed and Zionist songs were sung. “Every girl bore in her left hand a box and in the right hand a bunch of flowers and they asked every Jew for a contribution in exchange for a flower which they offered him. When I asked one [Jew] about the purpose of collecting these contributions he replied to me audaciously [that it is] for land purchases in Palestine. All these demonstrations took place and the government does not work against them at all.”<sup>81</sup>

In the first half of 1913 the first attempts to reach an Arab-Zionist understanding were made.<sup>82</sup> Initially, *Al-Karmal* did not comment on these

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<sup>77</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-iḥtijāj ‘alā aṣ-Sahyūnīyīn. [Protest against the Zionists.] In *al-Karmal*, 420, 10.4. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-iḥtijāj ‘alā aṣ-Sahyūnīyīn. In *al-Karmal*, 420, 10.4. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Law kāna lakum ra’y cāmm. [If You Had Public Opinion.] In *al-Karmal*, 433, 29.5. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Īd ash-Shākūl aṣ-Sahyūnī. [The Zionist Holiday ash-Shākūl.] In *al-Karmal*, 431, 22.5. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> MANDEL, N. J. *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, pp. 149 – 164; MANDEL, N. J. Attempts at an Arab-Zionist Entente, pp. 238 – 250.

efforts, but in October and November 1913 it began to vehemently confront these endeavours.<sup>83</sup> “... [W]hat are they bargaining about? About the sale of the country? The Zionists want a state in Arab Palestine. Is the virtuous youth willing to sign in their own hand the destruction of life in their country and of its economic, social and political strength?”<sup>84</sup>

The response of one of the Arab youth leaders in Istanbul, Sayfaddīn al-Khaṭīb, was unequivocal: “... I do not doubt that the Arab youth will [not] approve anyone to sell their land ... Let the Zionists and others know that in the capital of the state there are many hundreds with the same spirit as Najīb NaSSār ... and if it was possible to persuade Najīb NaSSār to [conclude] an agreement with the Zionists, it is inconceivable to entice the sons of today and the men of the future to commit such high treason.”<sup>85</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* addressed this issue repeatedly in 1914. In April he asked the Zionists: “Do you want to reach an agreement with us to rob us of our homeland and wealth and to form a nation and a state at the expense of us and our government and to bring us no benefit? I scold [such a] distinguished and respectable newspaper as *al-Muqaṭṭam*, for how can they agree to publish these distortions which we do not doubt the two eminent scholars and great patriots [Fāris] Nimr and [Ya°qūb] Sarrūf were not deceived by.”<sup>86</sup>

Then, one month later, he returned to the subject. When an article claiming that Palestine should be open to all immigrants and criticizing authors who oppose Zionism was published in the pro-Zionist paper *al-Maḥrūsa*, the editor of *al-Karmal* called it a “stupid philosophy”. He asks: “The one who requests the safety of his homeland and life for his nation is mean and he who despises and misguides it and seeks its destruction and the success of its adversaries over it is noble?”<sup>87</sup> He again laments non-existent public opinion that would prevent newspapers from publishing such deceptive information. “If you had public opinion, a respectable newspaper like *al-Muqaṭṭam* would not agree – even if out of shame from public opinion – to publish the misrepresentations of their correspondent in Palestine that the Zionists want to mix with Arabs and live with them, and you know what the Zionists are doing in your country and the owners of *al-Muqaṭṭam* know that even better than you.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> MANDEL, N. J. Attempts at an Arab-Zionist Entente, p. 256.

<sup>84</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 117.

<sup>85</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaSSār fī jarīdatihi al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), pp. 117 – 118.

<sup>86</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. AS-Sahyūniya immā khaṭār °aṬīm wa immā mithāl Hasan. [Zionism is Either a Great Danger or a Good Example.] In *al-Karmal*, 422, 17.4. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-falsafa al-bārīda. [Stupid Philosophy.] In *al-Karmal*, 428, 12.5. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-falsafa al-bārīda. [Stupid Philosophy.] In *al-Karmal*, 428, 12.5. 1914, p. 2.

Critique of this Egyptian daily recurred in *al-Karmal* in the following month when Najīb NaṢṣār wrote: “Even though boys from the streets are no longer ignorant about the Zionist designs and aims, *al-Muqaṭṭam* continues to publish misleading statements of those it calls Zionist leaders which are intended to throw sand into [our] eyes ... that the Zionists desire an agreement with Arabs and that they are faithful to the Arabs and the state.”<sup>89</sup>

In the article *Zionism and Its Threat* Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṣār, perhaps in the clearest and most emphatic manner, portrays the impossibility of an Arab-Zionist entente. He criticizes the inconsistency of the position of the president of the Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization.<sup>90</sup> Rafiq Bey al-<sup>c</sup>AZm on the one hand recalled the Zionist threat and proposed measures to stop it and on the other hand he was an advocate of Arab-Zionist congress and an ensuing agreement. In his opinion, Palestine should be represented at the conference by elected notables. The position of the editor of *al-Karmal* was unambiguous – conciliation with the Zionists was out of question. “The agreement between Arabs and Zionists is impossible. How can we come to an agreement with a nation that determines at its congresses that it seeks to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine safeguarded by the law with no contender contesting them there[?] Or how is possible to come to terms with them when they do not want to renounce [the intention] to seize Palestine[?] When Mr Chamberlain, the minister of English colonies, offered to grant them a homeland in the south of Africa, where they would enjoy administrative independence, they resolved that the south of Africa was not Palestine and it was impossible to turn into Palestine. The distinguished leader Max Nordau once said to a correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* that ‘ we do not endeavour to return the Jews to Palestine, but to return Palestine to the Jews’ ... How is it possible to make a bargain with a foreign nation that strives to rob the homeland of the Arabs from their hands and establish its own homeland and state [?]”<sup>91</sup> The only ones who could represent the Palestinians were the enlightened youth, not the notables because “the calamities [that befell] Palestine come from the elites more that they come from the Zionists because these elites are the middlemen of the Zionists and those who sell to them ...”<sup>92</sup>

The leaders of the Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization were castigated several times in *al-Karmal* throughout the year. “The paper *Jirāb al-*

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<sup>89</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Al-Muqaṭṭam wa aṢ-Sahjūnīja*. [Al-Muqaṭṭam and Zionism.] In *al-Karmal*, 434, 2.6. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Hizb al-lāmarkazīya al-idārīya al-<sup>c</sup>uthmānī.

<sup>91</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *AS-Sahyūnīya wa khaṭaruhā*. [Zionism and Its Threat.] In *al-Karmal*, 435, 5.6. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *AS-Sahyūnīya wa khaṭaruhā*. In *al-Karmal*, 435, 5.6. 1914, p. 2.



*Kurdī* told [that] Rafīq Bey al-<sup>°</sup>AZm the president of the Ottoman Party for [Administrative] Decentralization in Egypt said that if Zionists wanted to reach an agreement with Arabs, I am ready to ask the leading personalities from Palestine for a delegation to represent it. It escaped this gentleman that the notables from our country have been in an agreement with the Zionists since long ago, otherwise we would not hear about the Zionists in our country. For the country it is better to be without [such] prominent [people] ...”<sup>93</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* was very irritated when he found out that the secretary of the Ottoman Party for Administrative Decentralization who at the time endeavoured to reach an entente with the Zionists, Haqqī Bey al-<sup>°</sup>AZm, headed the newly established anti-Zionist youth organization (Jam‘īyat muqāwamat aṣ-Ṣahyūnīya).<sup>94</sup> “... [R]esistance to defend life does not correspond in our judgement with the effort to reach an agreement with the adversary that can be only achieved by the surrender of national life and capitulation.”<sup>95</sup> He considers the set up of this organization as sheer opportunism in order to gain support of the youth for the forenamed political party.

At the beginning of May 1914 the owner of *al-Karmal* engaged in a discussion with Shiblī Shumayyil, the author of the article *Build and Colonize because the Land Is the Heritage of the Industrious*<sup>96</sup> in *al-Muqāṭam*. Shiblī Shumayyil writes that the land belonged to those who cultivated it and not to those who live on it and do not care about it. Arabs should not complain about the Zionists but compete with them in construction and agriculture.<sup>97</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* republished the article and in an attached commentary endorsed the main arguments of Shiblī Shumayyil that the Arabs in Palestine must unite and start to work. “As the philosopher said we can preserve our dignity only by resistance to the Zionists with reason ... To complain about their competition resembles the crying of a child.”<sup>98</sup>

In a subsequent piece printed in *al-Ahrām*, Shiblī Shumayyil scolded Arab authors for non-constructive criticism of Zionism even though the response of the editor of *al-Karmal* was of a completely different nature. Thereafter, Najīb

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<sup>93</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Rafīq al-<sup>°</sup>AZm wa mu’tamar al-ittifāq. [Rafīq al-<sup>°</sup>AZm and the Entente Conference.] In *al-Karmal*, 438, 16.6. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> Resistance Organization to Zionism.

<sup>95</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. I’malī mustaqillatan ayyatuhā ash-shabība. [Oh, Youth, Work Independently!] In *al-Karmal*, 453, 7.8. 1914, pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>96</sup> cAmmirū wa istacmirū fa al-arḌ mīrāth al-mujtahid.

<sup>97</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. cAmmirū wa istacmirū fa-l-arḌ mīrāth al-mujtahid. [Build and Colonize because the Land is the Heritage of the Industrious.] In *al-Karmal*, 426, 5.5. 1914, pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>98</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. cAmmirū wa istacmirū fa-l-arḌ mīrāth al-mujtahid. In *al-Karmal*, 426, 5.5. 1914, p. 2.

al-Khūrī NaṢṢār wrote a column in his newspaper with the title *You are Right and We are Right*<sup>99</sup> in which he sharply criticized Shiblī Shumayyil. “It did not occur to us ... that the philosopher would once again pour the bowl of his anger on the opponents of Zionism and deny them the legitimate right ... to defend their existence ...”<sup>100</sup> In one place he asks ironically: “Why don’t you, [Ya°qūb] Sarrūf, [Fāris] Nimr and Rafīq [Bey al-°AZm], follow the example of Herzl, Nordau and others to create public opinion in your nation as they did in theirs[?] ... [Y]ou and people like you have neglected your national duty ...”<sup>101</sup>

In the middle of April, Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār published a crucial full-page article with the title *Zionism is Either a Grave Danger or a Good Example*. There he describes at length what threats the Palestinian Arabs face from the Jewish immigrants on various levels. “Zionism is a great danger for Palestine and its inhabitants, the Arab nation and the Ottoman Empire. If the Palestinians in particular and the Arabs in general remain idle and asleep ... and will not strive to preserve their being and to ward off the danger that threatens their existence by robbing them of their homeland ... Because then the Zionists will continue to expand and stretch with impunity and without resistance. They will acquire farm after farm and drive the inhabitants from them and replace them with Zionist immigrants.”<sup>102</sup>

The author notices that Zionist land purchases had a negative impact on Palestinian trade. “... Zionists only seldom do business with the locals. They sell them to make money, but buy from them only which they can not buy from their brothers so that the locals do not earn. The Zionists know that money is power [which] the locals must not obtain because it could help them to preserve their existence.”<sup>103</sup>

The article makes a strong appeal to the Arab fellow-citizens. It was still not too late; it was possible to prevent the ominous scenario from happening. “If the Palestinians of today open their eyes to Zionism, become aware of the real threat and [join the ranks of] those who do not agree with the loss of their homeland, the destruction of their existence and the losing of the future of their children ... and will be men, take an example by the Zionists and proceed like them, then Zionism will cease to be a threatening matter...”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ma°aka Haqq wa ma°anā Haqq

<sup>100</sup> NaṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Ma°aka Haqq wa ma°anā Haqq*. [You are Right and We are Right.] In *al-Karmal*, 437, 12.6. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>102</sup> NaṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *AS-Sahyūnīya immā khaTar °aZim wa immā mithāl Hasan*. In *al-Karmal*, 422, 17.4. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

He sees several advantages for Arabs – they lived contiguously throughout Palestine and owned land there, whereas Jews were scattered and needed to acquire the land.<sup>105</sup>

At the end he directs his criticism against Zionist authors and the Egyptian newspaper *al-Muqaṭṭam* that opened its pages to their lies. The Zionists who claimed that an Arab-Zionist agreement was possible were lying. “How do you want to reconcile your deceptive statements with your deeds[?] Which farm did you buy and leave one of its Arab inhabitants untouched there[?] Can you show us your people who enter the shops of the natives and buy from them like we do with your merchants[?] How many of you have become Ottomans, oh, you, who want to live under the shadow of the crescent and how many soldiers do you give to the government every year ... [?]”<sup>106</sup>

The article *What the Zionists Are Afraid Of* presents an extract from the program proposed by the Zionist Auerbach living in Palestine. It contains several interesting suggestions and ideas. For example, it encourages Jews to focus on holding public offices in Palestine, which would bring “immense benefits to the Jews.” The only threat for the Zionist movement was the “solidarity and unity of the Arabs.” The author counts on the Ottoman government that it would prevent this and cooperate with the Jews.<sup>107</sup>

When the newspaper *FilasṬīn* was suspended (for an anti-Zionist article),<sup>108</sup> Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār expressed his support for it. The following formulation, despite cautiously chosen words, represents a sharp critique of the Minister of the Interior, Tal‘at Bey. “... [I]t did not occur to us that the Ministry of the Interior considers the Zionist Organization made up in all corners of Europe, America and Asia of Russian, German, French, English and American Jews and which strives to acquire Palestine and transform it to a rightful Jewish homeland, and, more clearly expressed, it endeavours to rip off part of the Ottoman fatherland and to expel its inhabitants from it and settle there Zionist Jews ...” an Ottoman organization.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> NaṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Mimmā jakhāfu aṢ-Sahyūniyūn. [What the Zionists Are Afraid Of.] In *al-Karmal*, 422, 17.4. 1914, p. 2. This article was first published under the title *The Zionist Movement* in the paper *FilasṬīn* and *al-Karmal* republished it one week later. Al-Ḥaraka aṢ-Sahyūniya. [The Zionist Movement.] In *FilasṬīn*, 323 – 26, 11.4. 1914, insert, p. 1.

<sup>108</sup> NaṢṢĀR. [Advice.] In *FilasṬīn*, 321 – 24, 4.4. 1914, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> NaṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Jarīdat FilasṬīn ayḌan. [Newspaper FilasṬīn too.] In *al-Karmal*, 425, 1.5. 1914, p. 3.

The article *Zionism and the Son of the Doyen* may be considered as an indirect appeal on Najīb Bey Sursuq not to sell three villages in Marj ibn ʿĀmir – Nūris, Maʿlūl and Jinjār – to the Zionists.<sup>110</sup> Three weeks later, *al-Karmal* carried an article from *al-ISlāH* which contains Sursuq’s agent’s rebuttal of the speculations about negotiations between Najīb Bey Sursuq and the Zionists. However, the editor of *al-Karmal* did not consider this sufficient and asked Najīb Bey Sursuq to confirm this bearing in mind deceptive statements by agents of rich latifundists in the past.<sup>111</sup>

During 1914 the mood of his columns was increasingly pessimistic. “We must have genuine patriotic and social principles ... a spirit of solidarity, generosity and civic courage and we must always be ready to make a sacrifice for the common good. Without that ... we are a nation on the path to extinction.”<sup>112</sup> Not a single time did the author use in this long three-column-article the term “Zionists” or “Jews”. It is likely that he avoided these words because of mushrooming lawsuits against newspapers that openly criticized the Zionist movement.

In several articles, Najīb al-Khūrī NaSSār calls the attention of the reader to the contradictoriness of the Russian policy in Palestine. On the one hand, it advocated the interests of Orthodox Christians, and on the other hand it supported the Zionists, whose goal was to drive out the Arabs, including the Christians, out of the country.<sup>113</sup>

The Russian consul in Haifa commented on the article *Russian Policy in Palestine* with the following statement: “... the policy of Russia towards its Jewish citizens is similar to the policy of France towards the monks. It expels them from the country and protects them abroad.”<sup>114</sup> However, Najīb NaSSār did not consider Russian and French policy to be the same. “The monks ... build hospitals, establish orphanages and schools, dedicate themselves to the education of the youth ... bring benefits to the country ...” Russian support for the Zionists has a different effect and did not benefit Russia. So far, the Zionists had been interested in Russian backing, but as soon as they became stronger and

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<sup>110</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *AS-Sahyūniya wa ibn ʿamīd*. [Zionism and the Son of the Doyen.] In *al-Karmal*, 427, 8.5. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Takdhīb ishāʿa*. [Denial of a Hoax.] In *al-Karmal*, 433, 29.5. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Matā naSīru min an-nās*. [When Will We Become People?] In *al-Karmal*, 429, 15.5.1914, p. 1.

<sup>113</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Siyāsat Rūsiyā fī Filasṭīn*. [Russian Policy in Palestine.] In *al-Karmal*, 425, 1.5. 1914, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Siyāsat Rūsiyā fī Filasṭīn*. [Russian Policy in Palestine.] In *al-Karmal*, 429, 15.5. 1914, p. 1.

more self-confident, “they will naturally become enemies of Russia, since it has persecuted them and has driven them out of the country and in addition to this will provoke anger of the Arab masses and their avoidance of Russian products.”<sup>115</sup> It is likely that one of the goals of the author was to influence the Russian attitude toward the Zionists through his articles.

Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār put affiliation to the Arab nation and to the Ottoman Empire above religious identity and took an active stand against religious strife. In the article *Arab Revival and Their Decline* he writes: “There is no difference between a Muslim and a Christian ...”<sup>116</sup> At the time of reconciliation between Druzes and Christians in the village ar-Rāma, he published the following appeal: “... we ask all inhabitants to understand that they are children of one country and they must live together as brothers...”<sup>117</sup> He also requested from the French missions not to “differentiate between Muslims and Christians”.<sup>118</sup>

In the last months before the termination of his newspaper, Najīb NaṢṢār paid increasing attention to Palestinian youth organizations and societies that began to spring up in Palestine and the neighbouring regions. After a period marked by pessimism – which he was passing through from the beginning of the year – he was becoming more optimistic. Carefully and with great joy, he observed the establishment of these societies. He informed about their programme and activities, encouraged them, and gave them advice on how to proceed. “The youth must walk slowly and prudently in order not to stumble and shy away from self-seekers...”<sup>119</sup> In articles from this period one main thought occurs repeatedly. He calls on the youth to create public opinion, by which he means that they should become enlightened and active citizens ready to intervene against oppression and injustice and willing to help to improve the peasants’ lot.<sup>120</sup>

Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār got the impression that the old generation was not able to put up resistance against Zionism and this task had to be carried out by the youth. In the last period before World War I, anti-Zionist youth organizations

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<sup>115</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Siyāsāt Rūsiyā fī Filasṭīn. In *al-Karmal*, 429, 15.5. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>116</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Nuhūd al-ʿArab wa suqūṭuhum. [Arab Revival and Their Decline.] In *al-Karmal*, 433, 29.5. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-amm Ḥawālaynā. [Security around Us.] In *al-Karmal*, 431, 22.5. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>118</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Ilā al-baʿṯhāt al-faransāwīya. [To the French Missions.] In *al-Karmal*, 431, 22.5. 1914, p. 3.

<sup>119</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Jamʿīya filasṭīniya jadīda fī Farūq. [A New Palestinian Association in Istanbul.] In *al-Karmal*, 437, 12.6. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>120</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Jamʿīyat ash-shabība an-nābulusiya. [The Association of the Nablus Youth.] In *al-Karmal*, 438, 16.6. 1914, p. 2.

were established at various places in the Ottoman Empire. One of them was set up by Palestinian students at al-Azhar.<sup>121</sup> Young people from Nābulus studying at the American College in Beirut also founded their own organization and Palestinian students in Istanbul took the same step.<sup>122</sup> According to the Sephardic newspaper *ha-Herut*, the editor of *al-Karmal* participated at the establishment of the aforementioned organization *ash-Shabība an-Nābulusīya* [Nābulus Youth] in Beirut. Furthermore, he was also behind the *Literary Club* (*al-Muntadā al-adabī*) in Haifa, whose unofficial programme included the struggle against Zionism.<sup>123</sup>

In the article *I Have No Home* Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār recounts the questioning of a Palestinian in Haifa. This short piece prompts the reader to think not only over the suffering and fate of this man who served the fatherland in wars, but also about the future destiny of the Palestinians.

“We learned that one of them was summoned to give testimony to the magistrate’s court in Haifa. The examining magistrate asked him for his name and then for his address. He said, ‘I do not have an address’.”

“The examining magistrate said, ‘I am asking you about your home’.”

“He replied, I have told you that I do not have a home – the village of al-MarāḤ was my home, but after I came back from the service to my homeland in the army, I found that my home had been sold to the Zionists.”

The author closes this article with a short consideration: “If Palestinians won’t be on guard and won’t eliminate the Zionist threat, all of them will lose their homes.”<sup>124</sup>

The editor of *al-Karmal* says that “homeland [means] that the lands remain in the hands of their owners from among the native inhabitants.”<sup>125</sup> Loss of ownership of the land would eventually lead to the loss of homeland. The owner of *al-Karmal* believed that Palestinians needed three types of institutions in

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<sup>121</sup> Al-Jamcīya lā Sahyūnīya. [Anti-Zionist Association.] In *al-Karmal*, 429, 15.5. 1914, p. 2; for its five-point program see: AL-KAYYĀLĪ, °Abdalwahhāb. *Tārīkh FilasṬīn al-Ḥadīth* [Modern History of Palestine], p. 61.

<sup>122</sup> QĀSIMĪYA, Khayrīya. Najīb NaṢṢār fī jarīdatihī al-Karmal (1901 – 1914), p. 119.

<sup>123</sup> AL-KAYYĀLĪ, °Abdalwahhāb. *Tārīkh FilasṬīn al-Ḥadīth* [Modern History of Palestine], p. 61.

<sup>124</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Laysa lī waṭan*. [I Have No Home.] In *al-Karmal*, 437, 12.6. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>125</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. *Akhbār Sahyūnīya*. [News about Zionism.] In *al-Karmal*, 424, 28.4. 1914, p. 2.

order to make progress and to be able to resist the Zionist expansion: “technical schools, land banks and agricultural companies...”<sup>126</sup>

Throughout the year, Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṣār increasingly expressed criticism of the Palestinian and Levantine notables. In a series of articles with the title *Beirut is the Culprit* he criticizes the Beirutis as European agents who sucked the wealth out of the Levant, wasted everything that they earned and did not invest anything in the homeland. They were blindly adopting and disseminating European customs but at the same time disregarding the positive aspects of Europe. In the second column he also deals briefly with Zionism. He reproached the Beirutis for ignoring the Zionist threat. The rich men from Beirut made money from increasing land prices which were caused by the criticism of the Zionist land purchases in the newspapers.<sup>127</sup>

In one issue in the middle of July, *al-Karmal* published mixed news. One article was about setting up an Arab-Islamic association that was supposed to have immense financial resources (in the amount of one million Ottoman liras) at its disposal. Among the goals of this association was to buy up estates that might fall into Zionist hands.<sup>128</sup> At the same time, menacing news came to light about the intended sale of extensive state lands in the Bīsān valley (more than 500 km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>129</sup>

After a period of rising optimism about the activities of Palestinian youth, new information about the planned sale of lands in the Bi'r as-Sab<sup>c</sup> district turned Najīb NaṢṣār's mood back to pessimism. In the article *Oh, Youth of Palestine, Assert Your Existence[!]*,<sup>130</sup> he turns to the young generation with an appeal to wake up and act. He gives the details about the intended sale of Bedouin lands in the as-Sirr area in which two Palestinian notables from the al-Husajnī and ash-Shawā families are involved. “After so much has been written and is known about Zionism ... there exist people among Palestinian notables such as ibn al-Husajnī ash-sharīf and ibn ash-Shawā al-aṢīl who are helping to

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<sup>126</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-farq baynanā wa baynahum. [The Difference between Us and Them.] In *al-Karmal*, 447, 17.7. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>127</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Bayrūt jāniya. [Beirut is the Culprit.] In *al-Karmal*, 439, 19.6. 1914, p. 1; Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṢār: Bayrūt jāniya. [Beirut is the Culprit.] In *al-Karmal*, 440, 23.6. 1914, p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> Jam'īya 'arabīya islāmīya. [Arab-Islamic Association.] In *al-Karmal*, 446, [probably] 14.7. 1914, p. 2.

<sup>129</sup> Ghawr Bīsān yubā' li aṢ-Sahyūnīyīn. [The Bīsān valley is Being Sold to the Zionists.] In *al-Karmal*, 446, [probably] 14.7. 1914, p. 3.

<sup>130</sup> Yā shabībat Filasṭīn uthbutī wujūdaki.

tear out a piece of the homeland out of the hands of its sons to deliver it to the Zionists?”<sup>131</sup>

He contrasts leaders in advanced countries and in Palestine. The former “strive with all of their strength ... to reinforce the national community” while “our wealthy and our leaders exploit the ignorance of the people in order to trade in them and to break their wings with their [own] hands and to diminish their glory by their deeds.”<sup>132</sup> Then he turns to the notables with a question: “Oh, leaders of Palestine, if it is true that you are middlemen [in the sale] of your homeland how can we address the Zionists about their attack against us and why should we rebuke the Beirutis for the sale of their lands...[?]”<sup>133</sup>

“Oh, leaders of Palestine, if this is the fruit of our sincere service to you during six consecutive years then our efforts are futile and our service lost...”<sup>134</sup>

He again addresses the young generation: “Oh, youth, here assert your existence and compel the leaders of your fatherland to respect your future, honour, life, glory and hope[!]”<sup>135</sup>

Najīb NaṢṢār turns to the youth with a specific request of what they can do for the benefit of their motherland. “We know that there are more than eighty educated young people in Gaza and no doubt among them are many sons of [the families] ash-Shawā and al-Husaynī. If all those are not able to persuade two persons to abandon dealing in the homeland ... then what is the worth of this youth...?”<sup>136</sup>

In the last paragraph there is a very emphatic appeal: “Oh, youth ... if you are not able to prevent your fathers from selling your homeland, then the least you can do is to protest against them, wash your hands from their deeds and leave their houses ... It is better for you to be poor and honest than to eat the bread of treason, the bread of selling the country to the holders of political aspirations against you and your Arab Ottoman country.”<sup>137</sup>

One week later the newspaper printed a telegram written by the persons mentioned in the previous article, Saʿīd ash-Shawā and AḤmad ʿĀrif al-Husajnī. In it they refuted the accusations that their goal was to sell the lands to the Zionists. On the contrary, they wrote “... we oppose everyone who has sold a foot of ground to others than the citizens of the homeland. We seek to acquire the lands in as-Sirr to counteract those who want to broker them to the

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<sup>131</sup> NASSĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Yā shabībat Filasṭīn uthbutī wujūdaki. [Oh, Youth of Palestine, Assert Your Existence.] In *al-Karmal*, 451, 31.7.1914, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1 – 2.



Zionists...”<sup>138</sup> In the same issue, there was another telegram signed by more than twenty persons who defend the two aforementioned notables. The editor of *al-Karmal* voices his joy at the spirit of these telegrams. If they are truthful, “we bow our head in reverence before the patriotism of these two honourable persons, ʿĀrif Efendī al-Husajnī and Saʿīd Efendī ash-Shawā.”<sup>139</sup>

Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṣār informed also about Jewish activities in Europe. For example, in the article *Jews in Poland – a Warning for Palestine* he portrays growing Jewish self-confidence in Poland and the growth of nationalism among them. This article, which was first published in *Filasṭīn*, pointed out that Jews had similar nationalist and hegemonic tendencies in Poland. These occurred as soon as their numbers started to grow and their economic and social standing strengthened.<sup>140</sup>

Najīb al-Khūrī NaṢṣār was the most eloquent, tireless and critical opponent of Zionism in the years before the First World War. His activities in this regard were very diverse – he worked as an editor, journalist, translator, organizer and speaker. He was the first Arab writer to publish a book on Zionism, even though it was only an abridged translation of a study from the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* with his commentaries.<sup>141</sup> There is no doubt that he was the author of the highest number of articles dealing with Zionism in this period. Repeated legal actions against him and his paper did not discourage him from criticizing the Zionists and their Ottoman accomplices. At the same time, he deserves a great deal of credit for spreading awareness of Zionism behind the borders of Palestine.

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<sup>138</sup> NAṢṢĀR, Najīb al-Khūrī. Al-waṭaniya aṣ-Ṣādiqa. [The True Patriotism.] In *al-Karmal*, 453, 7.8.1914, p. 1.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>140</sup> Al-yahūd fī Būlūniyā. ʿIza li Filasṭīn. [Jews in Poland: A Warning for Palestine.] In *al-Karmal*, 452, [probably] 5.8.1914, p. 3.

<sup>141</sup> The commentaries are on pages 2 – 3, p. 12, pp. 16 – 17, p. 44, pp. 50 – 51 and pp. 58 – 64.

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