L'ALLIANCE ISRAÉLITE UNIVERSELLE AND THE POLITICS OF MODERN JEWISH EDUCATION IN BAGHDAD: 1864-1914

by

Derek Angus Frenette
B.A., Simon Fraser University 2003

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
Department
of
History

© Derek Angus Frenette 2005

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer 2005

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.
NAME: Derek Frenette

DEGREE: Master of Arts, History

TITLE: "L'Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Politics of Modern Jewish Education in Baghdad, 1864-1914."

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

__________________________________________________________
William Cleveland
Senior Supervisor
Professor of History

__________________________________________________________
Derryl MacLean
Supervisor
Associate Professor of History

__________________________________________________________
Thomas Kuhn
Supervisor
Instructor of History

__________________________________________________________
Jerry Zaslove
External Examiner
Professor Emeritus, Departments of Humanities and English

Date Approved: May 24, 2005
The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further granted permission to Simon Fraser University to keep or make a digital copy for use in its circulating collection.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

Permission for public performance, or limited permission for private scholarly use, of any multimedia materials forming part of this work, may have been granted by the author. This information may be found on the separately catalogued multimedia material and in the signed Partial Copyright Licence.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

W. A. C. Bennett Library
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada
Baghdad was home to the largest and one of the most wealthy and influential Jewish communities in the late-era Ottoman Empire. The community was heavily involved in regional trade, politics and the social life of the city, and comprised a significant percentage of its population. This thesis examines the many changes that affected this community between 1860-1914. The Tanzimat reform period, growing European interest and economic penetration in the region, and economic growth drastically changed the way Jews in Baghdad viewed themselves, their place in the Empire, and the way their communities were governed. In particular, the establishment of a French Alliance Israélite Universelle school in Baghdad in 1864 created new opportunities for young Jews, opening pathways to commercial and political success and offering modern educational methods and European culture and languages. The attitudes of the French Jews who opened the school, and the response of the community leadership to this new institution is the focus of this study. The examination of this interaction not only provides illustrations of the larger processes of change and reform that are detailed in the secondary literature on this period of Ottoman history, but also an opportunity to study the interaction of European and Middle Eastern individuals during a crucial point in the history of the world and this region. The Jewish community at Baghdad is the subject of valuable case studies of Ottoman Jewish life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as the growth of modernity and the negotiation of reform within a matrix of political, social and economic change.
DEDICATION

To Angus and Lydia MacFarlane
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents, family and friends, for their support throughout the course of this project. Special thanks to Dr. William Cleveland and Dr. Derryl MacLean for their guidance, and to Dr. Thomas Kuhn for his direction and advice.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval ........................................................................................................................................... ii

Abstract .......................................................................................................................................... iii

Dedication ......................................................................................................................................... iv

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... v

Table of Contents .............................................................................................................................. vi

Introduction ....................................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 1: The AIU's Mission in Baghdad .................................................................................... 12

Chapter 2: The AIU and Baghdad's Jewish Leadership ............................................................. 37

Chapter 3: The Changing World of Baghdad's Jews ................................................................. 60

Conclusion ....................................................................................................................................... 80

Bibliography .................................................................................................................................... 84

Archival Sources .............................................................................................................................. 84

Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle: Paris, France ...................................................... 84

Files on Iraq .................................................................................................................................... 84

AIU Publications .............................................................................................................................. 84

Secondary Sources ........................................................................................................................... 84

A. Books 84

B. Articles & Book Chapters: ........................................................................................................... 86
INTRODUCTION

When the founders of L'Alliance Israélite Universelle began their mission to expose the Jews of the Orient to the methods of liberal French education in 1860, their intent was to raise the moral and material living standards of their coreligionists in the Middle East and North Africa. A series of schools were opened beginning in 1862, and by 1900 a curriculum centered on the French language and modern European educational methods was offered to some 26,000 Jews in over 100 schools from Morocco to Persia, a number which reached 48,000 children in 188 schools by 1914.¹ Tetuan, Morocco was the site of the first AIU school opening in late 1862, followed soon thereafter by Damascus and Baghdad. From the beginning, Ottoman Jews were a focus of the AIU founders’ efforts to ameliorate the situation of their coreligionists in the Middle East. The organization eventually opened schools in most of the major urban centres of the empire. The AIU opened schools in six different Istanbul neighbourhoods alone, making the Ottoman capital the leading recipient of its educational work.

The AIU kept immaculate records of its activities throughout the Jewish world in the archive of its headquarters in Paris. These consist of personal communications, figures and accounting statements, photographs, meeting minutes, and other minutiae of daily life in the AIU school that help to reconstruct a picture of Jewish life in the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries. For a student of Ottoman Jewry who does not read Hebrew or Arabic, the archive offers a rare and valuable glimpse into the lives of students and administrators, as well as the changing pattern of life for Ottoman Jews during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among the letters from administrators and teachers from all over the world, the AIU archive

houses a particular group of sources that allow rare insight into life in Ottoman-era Baghdad. Baghdad was chosen as the subject of this study for several reasons. Sources of information on Baghdad during the Ottoman era are relatively rare and the AIU archive presents the researcher with an opportunity to explore the politics, society, and culture of Iraq's capital in the days when it was the hub of the Ottoman-Iraqi frontier. This opportunity is especially valuable because the nature of the sources allows for the exploration of this history from a Jewish point of view, one that is significant given the fact that the AIU opened its first school in the city in 1864, in the midst of the Tanzimat reform period. The history of the AIU's activity in Baghdad is therefore a history of an ancient Jewish community that disappeared in the mid-20th century and also a history of the process of reform and development during a period of unprecedented political, social and cultural change in Ottoman lands. The modern education that the AIU wished to disseminate amongst the Jews of the Middle East was of a particular brand, influenced by European liberal ideals and French culture; the resistance of certain members of Middle Eastern Jewish communities to the organization's activities was inevitable. Elie Kedourie, himself a product of AIU schooling in Baghdad, once wrote that the AIU archives were full of material that would allow future researchers to detail the clashes between traditionalists and innovators in Oriental Jewish communities. The primary purpose of this study is to analyse the form and character of such a "clash" in Ottoman Baghdad. In order to shed light on the ideals, goals and perceptions of the AIU and its functionaries in the context of their mission in Baghdad, it is necessary to define the sources of the organization's mission and world view. Primary among these sources were the founding ideals of the AIU as an organization, the ideals of the Jewish emancipation project and the position of Western European Jewry in the mid-19th century.

2This study will use the term "Iraq" for the Ottoman provinces in the region corresponding to the modern state of Iraq. The vilayets of Basra, Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk will be referred to as the "Ottoman Iraqi provinces" of the empire. The noun "Orient" and the adjective "Oriental" are used in the study to denote the region and its inhabitants only when they are the subject of European discourse from the period.

contemporary European discourse on race and imperialism, and the historical perception of
Baghdad and Iraq in European Jewish thought.

In June 1860, the AIU's founders drafted a series of statutes that defined the
organization's purpose, activities and goals. *Les Statuts de L'Alliance Israélite Universelle*
evolved over time, but the main goals of the organization remained unchanged. The three main
goals of the organization were as follows:

1. To work everywhere for the emancipation and moral progress of the Jewish people
2. To provide effective support to those who suffer because they are Jewish
3. To encourage all publications aimed at pursuing this goal

In addition to these basic principles, the AIU focused on European educational
models and the transformative power they held for Oriental Jewish populations. The main focus
of the AIU's efforts in any community was the school. The AIU's founders believed education
was the vehicle to deliver the Oriental Jew from a state of perceived degradation and misery into
one of dignity and equal civic participation. In the fledgling organization's first general
communication, a pamphlet entitled *À tous les Israélites*, the institution of the school was placed
at the centre of the AIU's mission; a place where the effects of centuries of oppression and misery
could be erased, where Jews could regain their dignity. These aims provide a basis for
understanding the general mission that the functionaries of the AIU worked towards in North
Africa and the Middle East throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. As early as 1864, *L'Alliance*
had schools in Morocco, Syria and Iraq, and the number of cities in which the AIU worked grew
exponentially in the following decades to include most major urban centres in the Maghrib and
the Middle East. The great variety of cultures and political milieux in these regions, as well as the
disparate situations and needs of Jewish communities within them, led to the development of
more specific regional goals by the AIU's central leadership and its cadre of educator-

---

4 Chouraqui, *Cent Ans d'Histoire*, 412.
5 Chouraqui, *Cent Ans d'Histoire*, 151.
missionaries. In the case of Baghdad and Iraq, it is possible to gauge the regional goals of the Alliance from the thoughts of its functionaries in Paris and Baghdad.

In his capacity as Secretary of the AIU, Narcisse Leven stood on May 31\textsuperscript{st} 1864 to address the organization's General Assembly, outlining the progress made to date and the bright future he believed lay in store. In his speech, Leven called Baghdad a “cradle of our race.”\textsuperscript{7} He observed that the opening of schools in Baghdad, Damascus and Tetuan, Morocco, were essential to dispelling anti-Semitism in these regions and expressed the hope that in the future, the work of the Alliance would ameliorate the situation of Jews to a great degree everywhere it reached. In this way, “The emancipated Occident would repay its debt to the regenerated Orient.”\textsuperscript{8} Fifty years later, in his overview of the AIU’s first half-century of work, Leven observed that Baghdad's Jews were confined to a moral ghetto “More impenetrable than a bastille of stone” before the foundation of the first school.\textsuperscript{9} He noted that Jewish education in Baghdad was strictly religious. Baghdadi Jews had no idea of the progress that had transformed Europe, and they were mired in an oppressive and backward environment. To this lost community came the saving grace of two Europeans, Isaac Lurion and Herman Rosenfield, as well as the telegraph and the steamships, proof of the progress of Europe.\textsuperscript{10} They were to plant the seeds of a brilliant future that their backward brethren would later harvest.

These brief observations set the scene for Leven’s further summary of the activities of the Alliance in Baghdad and shed light on the core principles of the Alliance's mission there. These principles – protection, education to affect moral and intellectual progress, and ultimately regeneration - were undoubtedly influenced by the founding ideals of the Alliance. Chief among these was the belief that Jews throughout the world were oppressed on basis of faith, and were thus in need of protection and moral and intellectual regeneration. To the influence of these

\textsuperscript{7}“Alliance Israélite Universelle: Procès Verbal de l'Assemblée Générale de L'Alliance Israélite Universelle Tenue le 31\textsuperscript{e} Mai, 1864” in Bulletin de L'Alliance Israélite Universelle (Paris, 1864), 11.
\textsuperscript{8}“AIU: Procès Verbal, 31\textsuperscript{e} Mai, 1864” 12.
\textsuperscript{9}Leven, Cinquante Ans d'Histoire, 53.
\textsuperscript{10}Leven, Cinquante Ans d'Histoire, 53.
founding goals must be added the influences of the Western European Jewish context of the mid-19th century and the French Jewish perception of Baghdad and its Jewish community. The theme of regeneration itself provides valuable insight into the process by which the goals of the Alliance were informed by the situation of European Jews, then formulated and deployed in this region.

The term "regeneration" and its use in Leven's address reveal several implicit notions that characterize the French Jewish perception of their relationship to the Jews of North Africa and the Middle East. First, in terms of the relationship between French and European Jews and their Oriental counterparts, regeneration implies the existence of a deficit – at once moral, intellectual and political – between the emancipated European Jew and the backward Oriental Jew. Second, the term implies another deficit relationship between the past glory of Jewish history in the region and the current state of oppression, lethargy and stagnation. Finally, it implies the necessity of the role of emancipated and modern European Jews in helping their backward brethren achieve standards of moral, intellectual and political modernity.

Once again, Leven's speech to the Central committee in May 1864 is a perfect illustration of these ideals. His closing phrase places an "emancipated Occident," next to a "regenerated Orient," thus affirming the relationship between Western European Jewry and the regeneration of Oriental Jewry. Leven's mention of the wonders of European progress and his use of the term "emancipated" suggest two further connections between conditions of political, economic and social modernity in Western Europe and their effect on emancipated Jewish populations there. It also suggests the important connection between these modern conditions and the ability of Western European Jewry to aid their Oriental brethren. In this way, Leven's view of the AIU's project in Baghdad (indeed in the entire Orient) can be placed within the context of Jewish emancipation experiences in Western Europe, and the discourses of social and political modernity that helped to inform them. It was not only education that would effect moral and intellectual progress, it was the experience of European civilization, even Europe itself, that would aid the Jews of Baghdad, Damascus and Tetuan achieve an improvement in their moral
and intellectual lives as it had aided the Jews of France. The Alliance was predicated on a philosophy that mixed equal parts liberal humanism, moderate Judaism and French civic values. In the words of Aron Rodrigue, in the “ideal world of the Alliance, the virtues enshrined in Judaism were the same that characterized the model modern citizen.”

This belief in European languages, social theories and technologies and their connection to a progressive notion of modernity were not the only European ideals that informed the project of the AIU in the Orient. The darker aspects of the modernity project, including pejorative racial theories informed by the Darwinian evolutionary model, the Orientalist discourse, and the imperial and colonial projects of France and other Western European powers informed the AIU's projects in Baghdad and the Ottoman Empire to as great a degree as did beliefs in the progressive and empowering components of European modernity. In fact, they can be seen as a natural corollary to a European modernity informed by ethnocentric theories and faith in progress. Leven's writings on the subject of Oriental Jewish populations are relatively measured, even fair for their day. Other functionaries of the AIU in Baghdad were far less kind in their assessments of Baghdadi Jewish culture, whether due to their greater personal acceptance of these ethnocentric theories, their suspicion and dislike of the foreign environs in which they found themselves, or the sheer frustration and emotional stress associated with their difficult tasks.

The AIU education platform was based on a supra national, universal Jewish nationalism and the French language as the primary medium of instruction. The heritage of the organization helped to decide the language question, but the founders also believed that French was the most widespread European language in the Orient and that it was the vehicle of a universal culture based upon political liberty and the rights of man. The choice of French language and culture as the core of the AIU curriculum often resulted in the close interest of the Quai d'Orsay in the affairs of AIU schools throughout the world. This close relationship later

11Aron Rodrigue, French Jews, Turkish Jews (Bloomington, 1990), 84.
aided the AIU in North Africa, which was an early focus of its educational efforts. AIU schools received French consular protection in Morocco and Tunisia and French colonial officials in both countries usually looked favourably upon the AIU's dissemination of the French language and culture in the region.\(^{13}\)

In Baghdad, the interest of both French and British consular employees is evident in the source material. British interest in the school most likely stemmed from the prominent place English was given in the curriculum, and the important place that the city's Jewish population occupied in the commerce of the region. Elie Kedourie draws our attention to the irony implicit in the close relationship between the AIU and European imperial ambitions and social theories, often the very instruments of anti-Semitic propaganda in the Middle East. The French consul at Damascus was a key initiator of the blood libel fabrication of 1840, in which Jews were accused of kidnapping and murdering a Capuchin Monk and his Muslim assistant, using their blood in secret Passover rituals and the baking of matzo, and French anti-Semitism was evident in the Dreyfus affair and the actions of the Vichy regime during the Second World War.\(^{14}\)

The connection between French imperialism and the work of the organization was downplayed by the AIU's central and local functionaries through the concentration on a universal Jewish-themed curriculum. However, there can be no denying that the French foreign office and its officials in the various localities where the AIU operated were usually interested partners in seeing the school programs grow and succeed, and Baghdad was no exception to this rule. The French government was engaged in an attempt to challenge British supremacy in the Mediterranean and in Arab lands, and in a heated competition with Italian designs on North Africa. The French therefore supported various missionary organizations that spread French

\(^{12}\) Chouraqui, *Cent Ans d'Histoire*, 192.

\(^{13}\) For the connections between French imperialism and the AIU, see Michael Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco 1862-1962* (Albany, 1983); J. Dean O'Donnell, Jr., *Lavigerie in Tunisia, the Interplay of Imperialist and Missionary* (Athens GA., 1979).

\(^{14}\) Kedourie, "The Alliance Israélite Universelle," 76-77.
language, culture and the Catholic religion in these regions.\textsuperscript{15} As a Jewish organization, the Alliance was not privy to the same level of government support that Christian missionary organizations received, but the government did recognize the utility of spreading the French language amongst the Jews of the Orient. Furthermore, Alliance schools served as a model for Christian missionary bodies, such as the Alliance Française, an organization founded by Christian missionary groups in the 1880's.\textsuperscript{16} The work of Christian and Jewish missionaries from France was an important component of French imperialist strategy, and there seems to be evidence to support the idea that the AIU were tacit if hesitant partners in the government's imperial ambitions, although they attempted to appear as neutral as possible. In the organization's early years, a group of founding members petitioned the French government to extend diplomatic protection to the Jews of the entire Mediterranean basin. Charles Netter, in whose home the AIU was first conceived, wrote that such protection should assume the character of the French relationship with the Maronites of Lebanon.\textsuperscript{17}

The AIU often faced stiff competition from Christian missionary schools for the enrolment of the wealthier Jewish pupils and traditional educational institutions such as the heder or the larger Talmud Torah for the enrolment of the poorer children. In cosmopolitan areas such as Cairo or Alexandria in Egypt, or the ports of the Levantine coast, the AIU school may have only been one of many offering modern education to Jews. Some of the publicly-funded schools offered instruction in European languages and secular subjects where the Jewish population was large and diverse; many of the large and wealthy Sephardic mercantile populations in the Eastern Mediterranean were closely affiliated with various European nations and desired that their children be exposed to European languages for commercial activities.

\textsuperscript{15}J. Dean O'Donnell, Jr., Lavigerie in Tunisia: the Interplay of Imperialist and Missionary (Athens, GA, 1979), 1-3. O'Donnell's book is an interesting study of the interplay between Christian missionary work and French imperilism in 19\textsuperscript{th} century Tunisia. The study sheds light on the process whereby such missionary works were used by the French government to further their interests in the region. Although the Alliance is mentioned rarely in O'Donnell's book, it allows for a better understanding of how this process worked and shaped relations between Europeans and Tunsiains in the period.

\textsuperscript{16}O'Donnell, Lavigerie in Tunisia, 133-134.

\textsuperscript{17}Andre Chouraqui, Cent Ans D'Histoire, 152
The AIU schools were unique in several ways: they offered a curriculum that was as modern as any in the *lycées* of Paris; they were secular; and they acted as a focus for AIU activity that quickly transcended education and charity to include representation, protection and advocacy in the face of perceived threats to Jewish well-being. In more remote areas, the impact of the AIU schools was magnified by the relative paucity of educational opportunities for any youth, let alone Jews. The education of young Jews according to a secular French curriculum changed Jewish life in these more remote areas forever. The eastern Ottoman Empire and Persia had a number of significant Jewish populations. They were more homogeneous than those of the Mediterranean basin, consisting mainly of “Arab Jews,” who had lived amongst Muslims for centuries and spoke a vernacular Arabic. Few Sephardim resided in the cities of the Eastern Ottoman Empire and Persia, and fewer European influences had penetrated by the mid-19th century than in western Ottoman provinces.

The first chapter will present a chronology for the educational mission of *L'Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Ottoman Baghdad in the period 1865 to 1914. Beginning with the opening of the first school in 1864, and ending in 1914 with the Ottoman declaration of war on the Triple Entente and the ban on AIU activities in the Empire, the focus will be on the foundation and elaboration of the *Alliance*'s scholarly work and the main issues that shaped this development. This survey of the AIU's mission is relatively detailed and utilizes the source material closely in order to create an account of the AIU's activities in Baghdad that is not available in any other secondary source.

The second chapter will analyze the interaction of local Jewish authorities with AIU functionaries in Baghdad. The response of the local Jews to this mission was mixed; while certain groups within the population supported the work the *Alliance* pursued in Baghdad, elements of the lay and religious leadership of the community opposed the work of the organization in certain areas, while supporting work in others. Although the opposition was often expressed in religious terms, I will argue that reading the conflict as a struggle between the forces
of modernity against entrenched tradition is mistaken. Instead, the chapter will examine this interaction of local elites and AIU administrators in a variety of contexts and attempt to provide insight into the various forms it took. Rather than a narrow and futile defense of tradition in the face of an irrepressible modernity, this opposition can be more accurately interpreted as a negotiation between agents of a European organization and members of the local community leadership on the course of modern development and the emerging forms modernity would take in the Jewish community of Baghdad in terms of education, social structure, and relations with the outside world.

Those who opposed the AIU's work in Baghdad were not backward and ignorant, nor were they opposed to education and progress despite such accusations by many AIU functionaries. These were members of a lay and religious leadership who sought to defend their own interests in the community and the economic life of the region, the Jewish position within the Ottoman Empire, as well as their input into the way their community was governed, their youth were educated, and the way in which Jewish identity was defined in Baghdad. This opposition was fostered by the arrival of a foreign European organization and its functionaries, who were imbued with their own sense of a civilizing mission and a set of beliefs and definitions that often clashed with those of the local Jewish elite; these functionaries engaged in concerted attempts to reform Judaism in Baghdad according to their own beliefs and convictions about Jewish identity, education, and progressive ideals born of the emancipation project. In short, though the Jews of Baghdad and those of the AIU were coreligionists, their interactions were deeply affected by the character of political and economic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Europe in this period.

The third chapter will attempt to place the micro-history of the AIU's mission in Baghdad against macro-level developments that were affecting Jewish life in the region during this period. The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of immense change in the Ottoman Empire, especially for those who were members of various religious minority
communities. The effect of the Tanzimat reform era on the notion of membership in the Ottoman polity was marked. Peoples who had been traditionally treated as protected subjects were extended full citizenship rights by the Sublime Porte in the royal decrees of 1839 and 1856, and the concept of equal Ottoman citizenship was enshrined in the Constitution of 1876. Ottoman administrative centralization and military reform resulted in a stronger imperial presence in the various provinces of the Empire, and new opportunities arose for educated individuals in this era of imperial resurgence. Jews and Christians were often better educated than their Muslim counterparts, due in large part to the growth of European and American Christian missionary schools, the activities of the Alliance, and affiliated Jewish organizations in Britain, Germany and Austria-Hungary. Even during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1908) - long characterized as a period of autocratic reassertion and political regression - bureaucratic modernization, the improvement of communications and transport infrastructure, and the changing economic conditions of the empire drove the process of reform forward.18

European influence in the Ottoman Empire increased as European goods displaced local manufactures, and European merchants made use of the Capitulation Treaties to dominate local markets. The industrial revolution and resultant growth of British and French trading power had immediate and lasting effects on the economies, societies and politics of the region. The interaction between these events and the changing tenor of Jewish life in Baghdad is evinced by the source material in a number of ways, and emphasizes certain aspects of the AIU's presence amongst the city's Jews. This is the second major theme of this investigation; it is part of an attempt to contextualize the larger situation of 19th century Baghdad in the region and the world, and to demonstrate how these events were involved in shaping the larger reality of Jewish existence in this corner of the Ottoman Empire in the years 1864-1914.

The lands of Iraq had been home to a substantial Jewish population since 503 BCE, when Nebuchadnezzar exiled the Israeli King Jehoiachin and his army to Babylon. The Jews endured varying degrees of persecution and tolerance under the Seleucids, Parthians and Sasanians before the Arab Muslim conquest of the region in the seventh century. They became fairly well integrated into the Arab society surrounding them and enjoyed communal autonomy under the rule of the Exilarch, a descendent of the Davidic line, and the ge'onim, heads of the Talmudic academies in Iraq. The compilation of the Babylonian Talmud marked Iraq as the centre of Jewish learning and culture during the early medieval period and made Baghdad an important centre of Jewish intellectual life under the Abbasids. The Jews lived relatively well in the city until the fall of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258 CE. There was an interruption of the Jewish presence in Baghdad after Tamerlane’s sack of the city, but the Jews returned to Baghdad slowly from the mountains of Kurdistan and from Persia. The Ottoman capture of Baghdad in 1534 CE was followed by years of intense competition between the Osmanli state and its eastern rival, the Safavid Empire, for control of the city and its hinterland; a competition that ended with the decisive capture of Baghdad by the forces of Sultan Murad IV in 1638. Baghdad was to remain under Ottoman control until the British capture of the city in 1918, though the city was governed by a series of Mamluk beys who enjoyed relative autonomy from the metropole from the early 18th century to the recapture of the city from the last such bey Da'ud, in 1831.

The 19th century was a period of unprecedented Jewish population growth. An estimated 2,500 Jews resided in Baghdad in 1794, comprising 3.3% of the population. By 1908
this had risen to 53,000 Jews comprising 35.3% of the urban population. Much of this growth has been attributed to immigrating Persian Jews, attracted by economic opportunities and heartened by the relative freedom of Baghdad, where the Jewish community practised self-government and administered its own affairs. In the mid-19th century, two councils led the community: one comprised of lay notables called the al-Majlis al-Jismani; the other a religious council called al-Majlis ur-Ruhandi. The division of authority into political and religious spheres was an age-old characteristic of communal leadership in Baghdad. During the early exile period, the former was represented by the Exilarch and the latter the Ge'onim. In later times, this division was manifested in the offices of the Nasi, or Community President, and the Hakham Bashi, or chief rabbi. The former was elected from amongst a group of the wealthiest and most influential notables in Baghdad and headed the lay council. The Nasi was also usually the chief banker or saraf for the Vali in Mamluk and Ottoman times. In the late 19th century members of prominent trading and landowning families, men such as Menahem Saleh Daniel and Meir Elias, filled this post. The Ottoman “Organizational Regulations of the Rabbinate” created the latter post in 1865 as a liaison between the central government and the Jewish millet. Chosen from amongst local rabbinical leaders and ratified by the Sultan, the Chief Rabbi superseded the Nasi in the financial and civic affairs of the community in principle. In reality the community was still controlled in large part by wealthy notable families, who exerted control over the financial affairs of the community and the Hakhamim, the group of rabbinical legal experts who directed spiritual and legal matters. The imperial Hakham Bashi was the Chief Rabbi of Istanbul, who presided over the lay and rabbinical councils of the capital and was the nominal head of all the regional councils throughout the empire.

A quick survey of traditional education in the community is required before moving on to the development of the AIU school. Jewish education in Baghdad was centered on two

types of institution: the heder or stad and the larger Talmud Torah. The former were small private religious schools that taught Jewish children rudimentary skills such as the Hebrew alphabet and elementary study of the Torah. At more advanced stages, the heder may have provided the students with basic arithmetic and writing skills, or writing in Arabic with Hebrew characters. Many such schools existed in Baghdad throughout the period, offering a limited education to boys and girls in exchange for a meagre tuition. The Talmud Torah, a primary school with a greater degree of organization financed by the community, provided a slightly better standard of education. In 1908, the Midrasch had an enrolment of approximately 2,200, and about 50 smaller heders had a total enrolment of about 2000.

The Baghdad Midrasch Talmud Torah, founded in 1832, was the first public community school built by the Jews of Baghdad. Students of the school received primary lessons in the same subjects as the heder. The Midrasch was a vast institution, housing approximately 2000 male students as of February of 1884. The school was financed through the gabelle, a tax on kosher meat sold in the community, and was often in dire financial straits as this was the only significant source of revenue collected by the community. The gabelle also paid the salaries of shohet slaughterers, supported the office of the Hakham Bashi, other local officials, and paid the Bedel Askeri military exemption tax to the Ottoman government. A yeshiva for higher Jewish learning, Beit Zilkha, was opened in 1840 under the direction of Hakham Abdallah Somekh. Noted for its lax discipline, poor curriculum, and incompetent rabbinical staff by AIU functionaries, the Midrasch was for these men and women of the Alliance both the target of derision and an object of jealousy. Though they decried the poor education offered there, many AIU staff members eyed the huge enrolment of the community school with envy. Some of the AIU's directors imagined taking over the school and diverting the community funds on which it

---

25AIU L.C.2, Nissim Albala to Nahum Solokow, September 21\textsuperscript{st}, 1908.
26Cohen, The Jews of the Middle East, 114-115.
operated to Alliance coffers. The low estimation of community education in Baghdad by the Masters and administrators of the Alliance schools was a characteristic of the organization’s stormy relationship with local educators in most cities. In Cairo, the AIU faced intense competition from the schools administered by community President Moïse Cattaui, who was deeply opposed to the AIU’s very presence in his city.\(^2\) In Istanbul, the local schools were criticized in very harsh terms by AIU observers. Here too, the local schools were often the main competitors for enrolment and valuable tuition funds.\(^2\) The AIU school came about as a result of the initiative of two European Jews, Hermann Rosenfield and Isaac Lurion. These small craftsmen who had resided in Baghdad since the 1850’s were instrumental in approaching L’Alliance\(^3\) in 1863. Together with certain members of the indigenous Jewish community and the help of the AIU, these two men helped to open the first Alliance school in Baghdad on December 10, 1864.\(^3\) Lurion and Rosenfeld would continue to have influence in the matters of the school until the 1880’s, and Isaac Lurion, as head of the local AIU schools committee, was particularly influential in virtually all matters pertaining to the school until 1884. Rosenfield, who acted as Treasurer for the local AIU committee, was not involved in the first school to the extent that Lurion was, though Narcisse Leven gives him equal mention in his account of the opening of the school. Leven, a noted French trial lawyer, founding member and fifth President of the AIU, wrote L’Alliance israélite universelle, Ciquante Ans d’histoire\(^4\) in 1912. The work is a summary of the first fifty years of the organization, and is an important source for information on the early development of the AIU. The first Director of the school, Monsieur Nerson, arrived on December


\(^3\) As community president, Moïse Cattaui Pasha oversaw the Jewish community of Cairo for decades. The AIU schools in the city (a boys' school, opened 1896; a girls school, opened 1898; and a school in the suburb of Abassieh, opened in 1902) faced intense competition from the community schools and the Christian schools in the city for students and funds. The Cairo schools were eventually turned over to the community in 1914, marking the end of the AIU’s relatively short venture in the Egyptian capital. This study was originally envisioned as a comparison between the activities of the AIU in Baghdad and Cairo, but due to restrictions on length, the focus was narrowed to Baghdad.


\(^4\) Leven, Ciquante Ans d’Histoire, 54.
5th, 1864 and was received by Lurion, with whom he resided for the first months of his stay.\textsuperscript{31} Nerson, a personal friend of AIU Secretary Rabbi Nordmann, had journeyed overland from Syria and down the Tigris to open the school at the behest of the AIU.\textsuperscript{32}

The AIU school grew quickly in the first months of its operation, and counted 43 students on January 5th, and 75 by the month of June.\textsuperscript{33} Of these students, 33 paid tuitions of 5-10 francs a month, depending on the ability of the parents, while the rest attended free of tuition. The students were divided into three divisions, the highest of which learned French exclusively, the second studied the Talmud, while the lower divisions were divided into classes undertaking study of the Torah and those learning Hebrew.\textsuperscript{34} Funding for the school was obtained from numerous other sources: the local committee paid 1,800 francs for the Director’s salary; the Central committee contributed 1,000 francs annually; and the local community also contributed a portion of the local taxes to the school. The data on exactly when this began is not clear, but the Jewish community financial statement from 1910 indicates that a contribution of £T 366 was made to the Alliance school.\textsuperscript{35} The total revenues for the community that year from the gabelle, intestinal tax, and fees for marriage and notary duties was £T 3,730; the AIU received almost 10% of community revenues.\textsuperscript{36}

While the school fared reasonably well in this initial period of operation, the relationship between Lurion and Nerson quickly deteriorated. It has been written that Nerson was emotional and a drunk, that Lurion was a power hungry bully, and that the new Director was exhausted and overwhelmed by the sheer enormity of the task that lay before him. Regardless of the real reasons behind the conflict, Nerson departed in September of 1866, and the school was without any European staff, a situation that endured until the arrival of a second director, Maurice Marx, in November of 1868. During the interim, the school was staffed by local rabbis, an Indian

\textsuperscript{31}AIU I.E.3, letter from Lurion to Cremieux, January 5th, 1865.  
\textsuperscript{32}AIU I.E.3, letter from Nerson to Nordmann, October 7th, 1864.  
\textsuperscript{33}Leven, Cinquante Ans d’Histoire, 54.  
\textsuperscript{34}Leven, Cinquante Ans d’Histoire, 54.  
by the name of John Muattar who taught English and acted as interim director, and an Italian employee of the Baghdad telegraph station who taught French in his spare time.  

Added to this stress were the first concerted efforts made by some elements within the community leadership to oppose the AIU's presence in Baghdad. During the tail end of Nerson's stay, the rabbinical council began to threaten the students of the school with excommunication if they continued to attend. Although exact figures are hard to determine, it is evident that the enrolment at the school dropped sharply during this period. Isaac Lurion indicated that approximately 50 students were attending classes at the school – a figure that was an improvement on those of the recent past. Muattar's letter of August 17th, 1866 indicated that the peak enrolment of approximately 70 students had fallen sharply.

In September 1866, after the departure of Nerson, some students of the AIU school wrote to the central committee, requesting a new Headmaster from Europe. They informed the central committee that they were gaining knowledge of the French language, but the Italian telegraph operator who taught them on a part-time basis was distracted by the duties of his position. The request was repeated in French and English again in February 1867, as the students pressed the President and the Central Committee to honour their promise to send a French master. The students who signed these petitions reveal something about who was attending the school in the early phase of its existence. Names of some of the most prominent Jewish families in Baghdad – Somekh, Suliman, Sassoon, and Levy appear on the bottom of these letters, as does the name of Joseph Lurion – son of committee President Isaac Lurion. It seems clear that while certain elements of the lay and rabbinical leadership of the Baghdad community had reservations

---

37 AIU 2.E.3, letter from Students to Cremieux, September 16th, 1866.
38 AIU 2.E.3, letter from Muattar to Cremieux, August 17th, 1866.
39 AIU I.E.3, letter from Lurion to Cremieux, 16th September, 1868.
40 Muattar to Cremieux, August 17th, 1866.
41 AIU 7.E.75, AIU students to Cremieux and Central Committee, February, 1867.
42 AIU 2. E.3, AIU students to Cremieux, September 17th, 1866

AIU 7.E.75, AIU students to Cremieux, February 1867
AIU 7.E.75, AIU students to Cremieux, (undated) 1867

17
about the AIU and its school, other prominent members from both these groups endorsed the school in the most powerful way possible - by sending their own children there.

Meanwhile, Isaac Lurion and the local AIU committee were also petitioning the Central Committee in Paris for a replacement Director, and promised to subsidize his salary to the tune of 1,800 francs per annum.\textsuperscript{43} The Central committee responded to these demands after a delay of two years, dispatching Alsatian educator Maurice Marx to Baghdad to assume the duties of Director and to improve the situation of the school and its students in September, 1868. A former assistant director of the Alliance's orphanage in Paris, Marx was 43 years old at the time, and was hired at the high salary level of 5000 francs per annum (of which 1,800 was paid by the local committee as mentioned).\textsuperscript{44} Marx arrived in November, 1868, to find the school in a sorry state, still located in the poorly ventilated building in the Jewish quarter that had apparently played a part in driving Nerson to despair (and perhaps drink).\textsuperscript{45} After the arrival of Marx, the school began to flourish once again, and under his directorship the educational mission of the AIU expanded. Isaac Lurion wrote to AIU President Adolphe Cremieux, the famed French lawyer and statesman, in January 1869 to express his great hope that a period of good fortune was beginning for the school, and that the darkness that had clouded the past few years was dispelled; students were returning to the school, and numbered about 65, and the budget figures were steadily improving as well.\textsuperscript{46}

The period of the directorship of Maurice Marx marked an important period for the AIU mission in Baghdad. New facilities were built, large donations solicited, and new students admitted to the school, which enjoyed a period of growth and development after the stagnation that characterized the period of administrative difficulty. However, conflict between the local committee and the director arose over an issue that was to become central to the future of the AIU's mission – the issue of language instruction. The new Vali of Baghdad, the famed Ottoman

\textsuperscript{43} AIU L.E.3, Lurion to Cremieux, September 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1866.
\textsuperscript{44} Elizabeth Antebi, Les Missionnaires Juifs de la France 1860-1939 (Paris, 1999), 215.
\textsuperscript{45} Maurice Marx to President Cremieux, 7\textsuperscript{th} October, 1869 in Antebi, Les Missionnaires Juifs, 219.
constitutionalist and modernizer Midhat Pasha, took a keen interest in the school and was present during annual examinations on three occasions. There was considerable excitement and optimism amongst Baghdad's Jews regarding the arrival of Midhat in Baghdad, sentiments that were shared by the functionaries of the AIU.

Isaac Lurion wrote that the situation for Jews in the vilayet was improving steadily thanks to the efforts of the new governor, an "impartial defender of the equality of all the religions." The school was faring well under Marx, and the number of students enrolled had reached a new high of 100 in August 1869. Marx and Lurion attempted to involve the administration of the Vali in the affairs of the school whenever possible, and the occasion of the annual examination at the end of the school year was a prime opportunity. The annual examinations were a concerted attempt on behalf of the AIU to involve the local government, notables and European consular employees in the affairs of the school. The visits made by Midhat and his successors to the school were also a product of the growing Ottoman concern with non-Muslim education in the empire. The 1869 Ottoman Law on Education specified the need for government inspection and approval of non-Muslim school curricula. This need was reaffirmed in 1880, and in 1894 the teaching of Ottoman Turkish became mandatory in all non-Muslim schools. Although the Porte was primarily concerned with the proliferation of foreign Christian missionary schools in the Empire, there is no doubt that Ottoman officials would have closely monitored the Alliance schools.

This official interest often had positive ramifications. In April 1870, for instance, guests at the school included members of Baghdad's Hakhamim, Midhat, his assistant governor Radif Pasha, commander of the Ottoman garrison Ahmed Pasha, members of the Jewish notable

---

46 AIU I.E.3, Lurion to Cremieux, January 17th, 1869.
47 AIU I.E.3, Lurion to Cremieux, August 17th, 1869.
48 AIU I.E.3, Lurion to Cremieux, August 17th, 1869.
class and the English Consul General.\textsuperscript{50} Apparently Midhat planted the seed for an important campaign when, caught outside by a storm, he was forced to rush into the old school building which he found quite unsatisfactory. It is not hard to believe that the annual examinations would have been held outside in view of what the sources suggest about the ruinous state of the school building. He urged those dignitaries present to donate toward the construction of a new facility and began a collection.\textsuperscript{51}

That same month, Isaac Lurion wrote to Colonel Herbert, British consul general, outlining the progress made by the AIU in the eight years of its operations, and asking for his assistance in approaching merchant scion Sir Albert Sassoon of the Sassoon trading dynasty of Bombay for a donation.\textsuperscript{52} By July of that year, with Herbert's assistance, the AIU had secured a large donation of 2,000 pounds sterling for the construction of a new school building from Sassoon and his family. By 1871, the student enrollment had increased to 141 (22 of whom attended on scholarships), and the old facility was showing its limitations under the stress of these enlarged numbers.\textsuperscript{53} The support of the Sassoon family was invaluable to the AIU. The new facility opened on January 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1873, accompanied by a grand opening celebration attended by community notables, British and French consular officials, and governor Radif Pasha. Known as the Albert Sassoon College, the facility allowed the AIU to house several hundred students in more modern and spacious conditions. The construction of this new facility was a watershed of the AIU's activities in Baghdad, giving it a spacious and modern facility to work with, affirming its relationship with one of the most prominent merchant families of the city, and involving the British consul general in the fortunes of the school. This facility would be the backbone of the AIU's educational mission in Baghdad throughout the rest of its existence. The building was abandoned by the Jewish community around 1950, shortly before the mass exodus of Iraqi Jews

\textsuperscript{50}Marx to Cremieux, April 13\textsuperscript{th}, 1870, in Antebi, Missionaires Juifs, 220.
\textsuperscript{51}Leven, Ciguante Ans D'Histoire, 56.
\textsuperscript{52}AIU I.E.3, Lurion to British Consul-General Col. Herbert, April 24th, 1870.
\textsuperscript{53}AIU I.E.3, Lurion to Cremieuex, August 30th, 1871.
to Israel, and was used as a temporary shelter for Palestinian refugees for a time. Nearly a century after its inauguration, this monument to the cooperation between Baghdadi and French Jews stood abandoned, as many of its former students were forced to flee their own country to Israel.

The opening of the new facility in January 1873 is somewhat overshadowed in the source material by the growing conflict between Maurice Marx and the local AIU committee led by Isaac Lurion. At the heart of the matter was the issue of language instruction – in short, the local committee and Lurion favored more stress on Hebrew in the curriculum and a stronger focus on Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, while Marx defended the French based curriculum. Lurion had written to Paris as early as September 7th, 1870, on the subject of reforming the Hebrew curriculum in the school, and in November of 1872 he wrote again, complaining that the proposed reforms were unacceptable to Maurice Marx. In a meeting on December 24th, 1872, Lurion and the local AIU committee met to discuss the proposed changes to the language curriculum. The committee affirmed that the students were not receiving adequate instruction in Hebrew, Arabic or Turkish, and that French was not sufficient to make a living in Iraq.

The committee proposed that in future, students should be ranked in classes according to their knowledge of Hebrew, that Hebrew and Arabic should be given first priority, followed by French, and that a teacher of Ottoman Turkish should be hired as soon as possible. The conflict between Marx and Lurion came to a head over the issue of hiring a particular Turkish teacher, and Marx announced his intentions to leave in the spring of 1873. Soon after the opening of the new Albert Sassoon College, the local committee held a meeting, affirming that the proposed changes to the curriculum would take place, and making known the fact that Marx would indeed be leaving the city. A Baghdad-born instructor was requested from the AIU's

---

55 AIU I.E.2, Lurion to Cremieux, September 7th, 1870.
   AIU I.E.2, Lurion to Cremieux, November 26th, 1872.
56 AIU I.E.2, AIU Baghdad Committee Meeting Minutes, December 24th, 1872.
57 AIU I.E.2, AIU Baghdad Committee Meeting Minutes, December 24th, 1872.
teacher training academy, the *Ecole Normale Israélite Orientale* (ENIO) in Paris. The ENIO was created in 1867 to train graduates from the AIU schools in North Africa and the Middle East as teachers, so that they might return to the Orient and carry on the work of the organization. The first student from Baghdad entered the school shortly after its foundation.\(^58\) Lurion indicated in a letter written two days after the committee meeting that the situation at the school was becoming desperate – over 30 students had left the school for the city's *hederim* schools, the paying students were all gone while the students on scholarship remained, and the community was demanding that Hebrew and Arabic be given priority over French.\(^59\) On April 2\(^{nd}\), Lurion wrote again, indicating that the school's enrolment stood at 115 students, of whom 32 attended for free.\(^60\) It would appear that a certain number of students had left since Lurion reported the high number of 141 in August of 1871, but whether this was the result of the conflict over language instruction is not fully clear. Maurice Marx left Baghdad after the annual examinations in April, 1873. He was assigned to a new post as Director of the AIU's mission in Salonica.

A letter from French consul Ragier to AIU President Adolphe Cremieux dated April 17\(^{th}\), 1873, allows some insight into the argument between Marx and Lurion. Ragier reported that the results of the end of year examinations exceeded all expectations, and that the teaching methods of Maurice Marx were responsible. The examinations included material in Turkish and Arabic, and the students translated accurately between the languages. Ragier believed Marx was an exceptional Director and detailed the latter's fight against the narrow and ignorant members of the local committee, whose Oriental laxity precluded effective action and hampered him continually.\(^61\) Aside from Ragier's harsh commentary, the letter helps to define a clear line of conflict between the French consulate and the French director of the school on one hand and the local committee and Isaac Lurion on the other over the issue of language instruction. To this

\(^{58}\)Leven, *Cinquante Ans d'Histoire*, 22.

\(^{59}\)AIU I.E.2, Lurion to Cremieux, March 19\(^{th}\), 1873.

\(^{60}\)AIU I.E.2, Lurion to Cremieux, April 2\(^{nd}\), 1873.

\(^{61}\)AIU I.C.1, French Consul Ragier to Cremieux, April 17\(^{th}\), 1873.
scene came Marx's replacement, the Baghdad born M. Garat, whom the members of the local committee had requested from Paris.

The archival sources provide less evidence about the directorship of Garat than either of his predecessors, but the problems that plagued the early years of the school's existence seem to have persisted. A new French consul, C. Destrees, reported that Garat was fitting in well in his position after visiting the school in February and June 1875 and noted the excellent performance of the students.62 In April 1877, Destrees praised Garat's work to the AIU executive, but warned that many within the Jewish community of Baghdad opposed the AIU's mission because they viewed the organization's attempts to educate the local children as a direct attack on their religion.63 This would seem to suggest that further community opposition to the AIU's mission had been making itself felt, but Destrees may have been referring to another conflict brewing between the Director and the local committee. In May of 1879, another French consul, A. Peritie, wrote to AIU President Cremieux to inform him that Garat's mission was becoming difficult due to the opposition of several wealthy and influential men from within the community.64 Peritie believed that these local notables had been making an issue of the extra lessons Garat had been giving to Muslims at the military college after school hours, using this opportunity to criticize the AIU director in an attempt to undermine the success of his activities.65 Peritie defended Garat, noting that these extra hours of instruction were performed at the request of the Mouchir, that in Baghdad one did not refuse such a powerful local official, and claimed that the extra hours of instruction did not detract from the AIU school in any way.66

Peritie's summation was that community opposition stemmed from the natural alliance between lay and rabbinical authorities aimed at guarding their traditional influence within the community, an opinion that seems fairly accurate in light of the sources. More will be said

62AIU 1.C.1, French Consul Destrees to Cremieux, February 17th, 1875.
AIU 1.C.1, Destrees to Cremieux, 10th June, 1875.
63AIU 1.C.1, Destrees to Cremieux, April 4th, 1877.
64AIU 1.C.1, French Consul Peritie to Cremieux, May 11th, 1879.
65AIU 1.C.1, French Consul Peritie to Cremieux, May 11th, 1879.
about this in chapter two. Peritie wrote to new AIU President Solomon Goldschmidt in January of 1881, notifying the Central Committee that there were ongoing quarrels taking place between Mr. Garat and the local committee. It seems as if Lurion and the committee members had accused Mr. Garat of engaging in commerce and personally enriching himself at the expense of his commitment to the school, a claim Peritie found ridiculous. He noted that Garat had received an inheritance after the death of his wife's relative and that this newfound personal fortune neither endangered the position of the school nor his commitment to it. He closed his communication by asserting that Garat was a good professor and a good director, and that the fault lay with the local committee, their narrow thinking. They did not properly respect the teaching staff and directors, and Garat's replacement would likely face the same problems as his predecessor.

It is evident that internal conflict between the school director and the local committee was endemic to the situation of the AIU's mission in Baghdad. The first three directors of the school – Nerson, Marx, and Garat – were all forced to resign after ongoing conflicts with the local committee and Isaac Lurion. External community opposition was also a strong challenge to the success of the school. After Garat's departure, Morris Cohen, the school's English teacher, became the acting Director of the school. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact date of the change, Isaac Lurion vacated his post as President of the local AIU committee sometime between 1881 and 1884, and Chalom Levy, a member of the local AIU committee since at least March of 1873, took over as President.

Cohen favored reforming the language instruction to concentrate on a curriculum anchored on one European language. He believed that English would serve more use than French given the growing commercial and political presence of England in the region. Cohen also

---

66 AIU I.C.I., French Consul Peritie to Cremieux, May 11th, 1879.
67 AIU I.C.I, Peritie to AIU President Goldschimdt, January 14th, 1881.
68 AIU I.C.I, Peritie to AIU President Goldschimdt, January 14th, 1881.
69 AIU I.C.I, Peritie to AIU President Goldschimdt, January 14th, 1881.
70 The signature of "Raphael Schalom Levy" appears on the translated minutes of the committee meeting on curriculum reorganization, 17th March, 1873.
71 AIU 4.E.28, Morris Cohen to AIU Secretary Isidore Loeb, April 26th, 1881.
believed instruction in literary Arabic – apparently instituted as part of the curriculum changes of 1873 – was useless, and that the Arabic vernacular, though infinitely more useful, was vulgar and hard to teach given the absence of proper materials.\textsuperscript{72} Cohen kept his thoughts on the language curriculum from the local committee, seeing that Isaac Lurion believed strongly in the teaching of Arabic in the school. Cohen reiterated these thoughts in a letter to President Goldschimdt in November 1890.\textsuperscript{73}

Jacques Louria arrived from Paris on February 7th, 1884, to assume the post of Director. Upon his arrival in Baghdad, Louria found the school in a state of mismanagement and neglect. Although he approved of the teaching methods and the commitment of Morris Cohen, he noted that the classes were disorganized and that enrolment had fallen to 110 students.\textsuperscript{74} This number is five students less than the count given by Isaac Lurion in April, 1873, and 30 less than the approximate number given by the French consul in April, 1882.\textsuperscript{75} This may suggest that a period of stagnation or regression in terms of the enrolment at the school had set in during the absence of a real director. Several comments made by Louria add weight to this view. He mentions that the local notables of the community had received him somewhat mildly, and that while all gave empty promises of support, the reception amongst the community for a “reconstitution” of the old school was not met with favour.\textsuperscript{76} The use of this term would seem to suggest that there was a perception of a crisis or at least an interruption of some sort in the AIU’s mission in Baghdad, as does the fact that Louria does not feel the need to elaborate on exactly what is meant by “reconstitution.”

Louria’s comments about the local notables reveal that opposition to the activities of the AIU amongst leading Baghdadi Jews was still an important factor militating against the success of the mission. Of all the notable individuals, Louria had only found three who could be

\textsuperscript{72}AIU I.E.28, Morris Cohen to AIU Secretary Isidore Loeb, April 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1881.
\textsuperscript{73}AIU 4.E.28, Cohen to Goldschimdt, November 20\textsuperscript{th}, 1890.
\textsuperscript{74}AIU I.E.2, Louria to Goldschmidt, February 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1884.
\textsuperscript{75}AIU I.C.I, Peritie to Goldschmidt, April 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1882.
\textsuperscript{76}AIU I.C.I, Peritie to Goldschmidt, April 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1882.
reasonably counted on to provide support to the cause of the school: Dr. Elias Modiano, a native of Salonica from a Sephardi family, Heskel Somekh, former President of the Jewish community and longtime member of the local AIU committee, and the aforementioned president of the local committee, Schalom Levy. He noted that while all were imperfect, they were all supportive of the school and were cut from the same sort of cloth as the former President Isaac Lurion.

These four men had great plans for the future of the AIU’s mission that involved the Midrasch community school. Heskel Somekh was opposed to the continued mismanagement of this institution by the community, and wished to see the school transformed into a “Vast Alliance school” under the directorship of Louria. In this scenario, the Alliance would not only have access to many new pupils, but also the community funds designated for the operation of the school - funds that would allow the hiring of three or four European professors. The first stage of this plan was a reorganization of the local committee. Dr. Elias Modiano was named President of the committee on February 26th, 1884 in a public meeting, where it was also decided that a concerted campaign to increase enrolment at the AIU school would be undertaken through two approaches. First, Louria had succeeded in recruiting forty “rebels from all discipline” from the Midrasch - one could assume that these were students too unruly for even the undisciplined environment of the community school. These students would increase the enrolment to 150. Second, a general appeal was to be made in synagogues throughout the city to secure approximately 80 new students, to bring the enrolment up to the target of 230.77 Despite these ambitious plans, the development of the school continued slowly; according to a report in 1887, the school had 204 students enrolled.78

A letter from Louria to AIU President Goldschmidt closes with an interesting reference to the vital issue of language curriculum. Louria states that although he is aware of the discussions that have taken place between Morris Cohen and the Central Committee on the subject of reforming the curriculum to focus on English, he is committed to maintaining French

77 AIU I.C.I, Peritie to Goldschmidt, April 7th, 1882.
as the basis of instruction, with Arabic and English being assigned one hour of instruction per school day. In terms of the conflict over languages, and despite the announcements of change in the early 1870's, it appears that the situation remained static: French was the dominant language of instruction and would remain so.

The 1880's saw the widening of the AIU's presence to include a new philanthropic foundation. Called Kasse Leated, the organization was founded by Jacques Louria, Morris Cohen, and numerous alumni of the Baghdad school. Kasse Leated was part alumni association, part philanthropy, and partly an attempt to further the interests of the AIU. Louria and Cohen wrote to the Central Committee in November of 1885, requesting material support for the new organization, stressing its charitable principles, and affirming the usefulness of such an entity for the Jews of Baghdad. Jacques Louria's years as Director represent a change from the relatively quiet period of the previous decade. His activism was aimed at aiding his coreligionists and expanding the role of the AIU, pushing the boundaries of the organization's role in the community beyond education. The plan to create an Alliance institution out of the Midrasch was never realized, but the fact that Louria and the local committee members considered this plan demonstrates two important facts about the position of the organization in relation to the political and religious status quo in Baghdad.

First, the AIU was established. Although the school was not experiencing explosive growth, it was nonetheless stable and a more or less permanent fixture by this point. It had been in existence for over 20 years, had numerous alumni amongst Jewish residents of the city who were becoming active in Kasse Leated, and a working (though often strained) relationship with Jewish leaders. Second, the AIU and its functionaries desired a larger and more direct presence within the community: the attempts to take over the Midrasch, involve Ottoman and European dignitaries in the fortunes of the school, and create a working alumni association that would spread the name of the AIU through philanthropic works reveal that Jacques Louria and the

---

members of the local committee were not interested solely in accommodation with the local Jewish leadership. Rather, they sought to actively redraw the lines of community authority, education and charity according to their view of the position of Jews in the city and the need for progress. This activist period would result in a stronger community resistance and open conflict between AIU functionaries and elements of the community leadership in the 1890's.

In 1888, Jacques Louria departed Baghdad, and a new director, Samuel Somekh, arrived to direct the school. Somekh was an alumnus of the AIU school in Baghdad. He had graduated from the ENIO and spent time teaching for the AIU in Tunis, later directing schools in Istanbul and Aleppo before returning as Director to his native city. Somekh served as Director in Baghdad until 1894, when he was sent to open the AIU's first schools in Egypt. Somekh spent the rest of his career in Cairo and Alexandria, working as the AIU's chief representative in the region. Scholar Paul Dumont's work on the effects of cholera on intercommunal relations in Baghdad utilized Somekh's letters on the state of the city during an epidemic in 1889. Dumont's work shows that the epidemic gave rise to stress between the Muslim majority and the Jewish minority, stress that resulted in an altercation between crowds of Jews and Muslims when the former attempted to bury Rabbi Abdallah Somekh (the Grandfather of Samuel) in a particular cemetery that the Muslims also held sacred. As a result of this altercation, twenty six Jewish community leaders were imprisoned, and the Jews shouldered the official blame for the incident. The most interesting aspect of this conflict for this study is the way in which the local leadership turned to the AIU in its time of need, requesting material relief from the organization during the cholera outbreak, utilizing its network of contacts in Europe and the international Jewish community to involve the Ottoman government and obtain redress for what they considered unjust treatment.

79 AIU 2.E.3, Louria & Cohen to AIU Central Committee, November 20th, 1885.
80 Antebi, Les Missionnaires Juifs, 98.
The leaders of the community were immediately ready to forget the disagreements they had with AIU officials when they faced persecution from the local authorities and a deadly outbreak of disease. The fact that Somekh was in charge of the school, a native-born Baghdad Jew and grandson of *Hakham* Somekh, also blurred the lines of community conflict and shows how external pressures could create areas of accommodation and cooperation between the AIU and its local opponents. Somekh is also interesting for this study due to his categorical refusal to accept French citizenship or protection, and for his unease with the relationship between the AIU and European imperialism in the Middle East. Writing during his time in Cairo, Somekh decried the position of the Sephardi mercantile elite of the city. He noted that it was their European passports and consular protections under the Capitulations Agreements that allowed them to prosper, openly flaunt local laws, and to become fantastically rich in the process. Somekh noted that his own status as an Ottoman Jew made him the target of scorn and ill-treatment amongst these elite Jews in Egypt. These were hardly the words and thoughts of a dedicated European liberal innovator. Somekh himself is a good representation of the often-divided loyalties of communities and individuals who passed through the schools of the *Alliance*. Although the organization had given him his education and his career, he noticed the problems with European activities in the Middle East and was concerned about the relationship between the AIU’s Jewish identity and French interests overseas. There is also a measure of hesitancy in his attempts to obtain French consular support for the AIU schools in Egypt, a task he was charged with by the President and Central Committee of the AIU.

Joseph Danon arrived in Baghdad to take control of the AIU schools in 1894. He would later work under Samuel Somekh as Director of the Alexandria boys' school beginning in 1898. His term in Baghdad was difficult; the deepest rift in relations between the community leadership and AIU functionaries in Baghdad occurred during his directorship. In March 1895, Farha Suliman Daniel, daughter of Rebecca Nourriel and member of the wealthy landowning

---


29
Daniel family, approached Danon in hopes of establishing an endowment for future works of charity in Baghdad to be administered by the AIU. In her letter to AIU President Solomon Goldschmidt, Daniel made known her aspirations and the conditions that she wished to place on the gift. The endowment, or waqf, was to include properties that produced an annual income of approximately 30,000 francs, and was dependent upon the condition that the AIU would administer them until the death of both Farha and her mother. At that point, the AIU would assume the income, which was to be used to build and support a Jewish hospital, and other charitable works. This simple act of generosity set off a conflict between the AIU and its representative Joseph Danon, and members of the Daniel, Nourriel and Saleh families on the one hand, and community President Meir Elias, leaders of the rabbinical establishment such as Maalem Nissim, and some prominent Jews on the other over whether the AIU could assume such a prominent role in the community.

This conflict involved Ottoman and European officials in Baghdad, the Ottoman Minister of the Interior, the Grand Vizier, Sultan Abdulhamid II, and many prominent AIU functionaries and their supporters in Baghdad, Paris and Istanbul. This event provides a window into the process whereby local Jewish authorities in Baghdad attempted to limit the influence and power of the AIU, not only through internal opposition and threats of excommunication, but through a complex, sustained and organized legal challenge that involved the highest powers in the land. This development will be examined in greater detail in chapter two.

As for the development of the educational mission in the 1890's, the AIU opened a school for girls in 1895 with the assistance of the prominent Kedourie family. Named for the late wife of the wealthy Baghdad merchant Eliezer Kedourie of Hong Kong, the Laura Kedourie school for girls was the first such school for females in Baghdad and was successful within a very
short period of its inception. The first year the girls school reported an enrolment of 48 students, a number that doubled over the course of the next year. At the same time, the Sassoon school continued to develop slowly, with an enrolment of 210 reported in 1895. Danon’s attention was often pulled away from the schools as the Nourriel-Daniel waqf affair developed, and he mentions relatively little about the schools and their development in his letters. It is clear that while opposition from the community continued to be staunch, the AIU and its schools were by this point a permanent fixture in the community, and were gaining support slowly but steadily amongst the Jewish population of Baghdad. Despite the suppression of certain aspects of the Tanzimat reforms during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid, both the Jewish community in Baghdad and the work of the AIU amongst them continued to grow and enjoy a relative degree of success.

The early years of the twentieth century saw a continuation of the conflict between the local elites and the AIU, but the fortunes of the organization and its schools improved markedly in the years leading up to 1914. Two individuals held the position of AIU Director during this period. The first, M. Raffoul, appears to have taken the post sometime in 1898, and vacated it in 1904, when his replacement Nissim Albala arrived. Albala was to direct the school at Baghdad until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Shortly after the CUP Revolt in summer 1908, Albala wrote a letter to the acting Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire in which he provided an interesting overview of the changing landscape of Jewish politics in Baghdad. It appears that a serious dispute between Community President Meir Elias and Rabbi Maalem Nissim and a broad coalition of middle class Jews called the Rahema group was brewing over political representation and the financial affairs of the community. The conflict was broad and the Rahema group agitated for lower taxes, better fiscal management and transparency, and a fair elected lay council, the Majlis al-Jismani, to oversee...
financial affairs.\textsuperscript{91} This was a drastic reform to community political structures and was granted by community President Meir Elias. Although Albala mentions attempts by the rabbis to undercut the authority and block the action of those elected to the Majlis, this body became a fixture in the community that oversaw taxation and the allotment of revenues by 1910.\textsuperscript{92} The issue that brought the conflict to a head was the collection of the gabelle, a tax on meat that supported the activities of the office of the Hakham Bashi, and the Bedel Askeri military exemption tax for non-Muslims. The Rahema group accused the community authorities of over-taxation, mismanagement of funds, and of siphoning monies from community accounts for their own personal purposes.

As AIU Director, Albala was drawn into the conflict, attempting to mediate between the two groups and generally lending support to the Rahema group against the entrenched interests of the rabbinical and political elite. He noted that although the community leaders were forced to make concessions, they had prevented the reforms in question from taking root by vetoing any action the Majlis undertook. Two years after the first elections, the members of the council resigned because of this powerlessness, and Maalem Nissim and Meir Elias ruled the community alone. Albala believed that this elite opposition kept the Jews backward and resistant to change. Rabbi Maalem Nissim was the primary target of Albala's criticism, and was accused of deliberately mismanaging community funds by funnelling monies from the community into his own accounts.\textsuperscript{93} Nissim was also accused of using his position as brother of the famed luminary Hakham Joseph Hayyim to influence members of the community and deflect attention from his underhanded activities.

Albala's letter also reveals that the AIU had four schools with a total enrolment of 1,600. The Midrasch remained under community control, offering education to some 2,200 students. Albala mentions finally that about 50 of the small heder schools in the community

\textsuperscript{91}AIU I.C.2, Albala to Solokow, 21st September, 1908

\textsuperscript{92}Sassoon, A History of the Jews in Baghdad, 160.

offered rudimentary education to about 2000 children. Maalem Nissim oversaw the school, and refused to allow the AIU to reform the programs offered there or to influence policy as far as community education was concerned. Albala closed by urging the Chief Rabbi to assist the AIU in Baghdad by using his influence to disarm Maalem Nissim, clearing the path for the AIU to become more heavily involved in community education. This was the same project envisaged by Jacques Louria in the mid-1880's, and the same individuals in the community opposed the ambitions of the AIU. Although the Midrasch would remain under community management, other developments were occurring that suggest the AIU was gaining ground in its competition with the lay and rabbinical elites in the community.

First, the enrolments of the AIU schools increased exponentially in the period 1900-1914. Narcisse Leven's figures suggest an enrolment of 731 boys at the Albert Sassoon College, 788 girls at the Laura Kedourie school, and a total enrolment of 553 at two other smaller trade schools run by the organization – the Rebecca Nourriel school (founded in 1902 and named for the matriarch of the Nourriel and Daniel families whose waqf has already been discussed), and the Aaron Saleh school for infants (founded in 1905 and named for another scion of the same extended family). The Aaron Saleh school was a girls’ school, and the Nouriel school was a Midrash-style primary school which offered more traditional education in Arabic. Of the 2,072 students at the Alliance schools, over 700 attended without paying any tuition at all. This was particularly true for the smaller schools founded with privately donated monies. The Nourriel and Saleh schools had only 45 students who paid tuition. The proliferation of institutions and students in this period suggests that the AIU's prominence in the community was growing as was the support it received from parents in the community. Non-Jewish students of the schools must

---

94 AIU I.C.2, Albala to Sokolow, September 21st, 1908.
96 Leven, Ciquante Ans D'Histoire, 56.
98 Leven, Ciquante Ans d'Histoire, 56.
also be included in this assessment. Although generally comprising a small percentage of total school populations, Muslims and Christians were welcomed in the schools throughout the period in question, and many non-Jews were thus imbued with the same values, ideas and methods of conceiving their world as their Jewish counterparts. Muslims were enrolled in a population of 141 students at the boys' school in August of 1871; in April of 1873, there were three Muslims and six Armenian Christians, who favoured the schools for their secular curriculum, which differed from the doctrinaire Catholic curriculum of the Brothers' schools. This is interesting not only because it illustrates the fact that non-Jews were also subject to the changes wrought by modern education at the AIU schools, but also because it underlines the secular, universal nature of the AIU curriculum. This type of curriculum may have found favour with wary Armenian Christian parents, but to many in the rabbinical establishment, it was obviously a negative facet of the AIU's mission.

Second, the reputation of the AIU amongst the Jews of Baghdad seems to have improved steadily as the ranks of alumni grew and enrolments increased. The influence of the organization on the community appears to have been marked in several ways. A report written by the British Consul General and his Jewish dragoman Haroun Da'ud Shohet in February 1910 suggested that the AIU's activities had an erosive effect on the power of the religious establishment over members of the community. According to Shohet, the hakham bashi was the nominal head of the community, but was a figurehead without any real power. The real power lay with individuals from the richest class of the city - Meir Elias and Menachem Saleh Daniel - and the effects of modern education provided by the AIU had been the main impetus for this shift to secular leadership. Shohet also mentioned that the young generation of the community had activist tendencies and was full of initiative. Taken together with Nissim Albala's observations

99AIU I E.2, Lurion to Cremieux, August 30th, 1871.
AIU I E.2, Lurion to Cremieux, April 2, 1873.
about the conflict over taxation, it seems as if changes were occurring to the structure of Baghdad's Jewish community, and that disputes over community leadership between a wealthy elite and a growing group of young, educated and secular Jews were ongoing, and that the AIU was involved in this process.

Finally, the AIU's graduates were increasingly able to find gainful employment and possessed a sizable advantage over individuals educated in other schools, or not educated at all. The British Consular report also noted that Baghdad's Jewish community had "monopolized" the trade in European goods in Iraq, and that neither Muslim nor Christian merchants could hope to compete with them. Also interesting is the author's mention that Muslim and Christian merchants hire exclusively Jewish clerks, and that the commercial primacy of the Jews and their emancipation is the result of the good work of the Alliance during the past 45 years. Assigning such a central position to the Alliance and its activities amongst the Jews of Baghdad may seem like an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that the education offered by the AIU was of the highest caliber available in Baghdad. The ranks of Alliance alumni were increasing steadily and organizing themselves through associations such as Kasse Leated, the AIU schools were educating increasing numbers of Jewish children from all classes, and Alliance graduates had the best employment opportunities in the burgeoning commercial sector. The period of administrative centralization during the Tanzimat created new civil service positions, as did the expansion and modernization of the Ottoman bureaucracy during the reign of Abdulhamid II.

Furthermore, Alliance graduates were instrumental in opening up avenues of opportunity heretofore closed to Jewish Ottoman subjects in Baghdad. The most famous example was AIU graduate Sir Sassoon Heskel, who was elected to the Iraqi Parliament and was named Finance Minister by King Faysal in 1921. The growing politicization of the Jewish community is

---

also evinced by the large number of Jews who joined the local branch of the Committee of Union and Progress after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. By 1914, the AIU was a well-established and integral part of the social fabric of Baghdad's Jewish community.
CHAPTER 2: THE AIU AND BAGHDAD'S JEWISH LEADERSHIP

Different groups within Baghdadi Jewish society reacted differently to the presence of the AIU in their city. It would be too simple to say that the wealthy lay elites and religious notables (who were often from wealthy prominent families) opposed the AIU and its schools, while a majority of middle and lower class individuals supported it. Some prominent families supported the AIU and sent their children there, including the prominent Daniel and Nourriel families, who were the largest landowners amongst Baghdad's Jews and whose dealings with the AIU and its Baghdad Director will be discussed later. Religious leaders such as the famed Talmudic scholar Abdullah Somekh sent their children to the schools, and many more in the rabbinical establishment supported the institutions in various ways, attending annual examinations or working as teachers of Hebrew or Jewish history. As noted above, Somekh's grandson Samuel was Director of the AIU's operations in Egypt beginning in 1894, and prior to this he attended the ENIO in Paris and taught in various AIU schools in the Ottoman Empire. The division of support versus opposition does not sit neatly over those lines dividing rich from poor, or religious from secular. Elie Kedourie's mention of the clash between "Traditionalists and innovators" is problematic and does not adequately explain the reality of this dynamic and complex relationship; or, perhaps more to the point, the categories traditionalist and innovator are not cleanly cut or easily arranged around individuals and groups in this context. As mentioned, the community was devoting 10% of its yearly revenues to the AIU school, while many prominent members of the local Jewish government were fighting legal battles with the organization and attempting to limit its influence in the community.
On the whole, however, the sources suggest that many lay and religious notables for various reasons throughout the period in question opposed the AIU. Chief amongst these was competition over political, social and religious authority in the community. The protection of local Jews and Jewish interests in the countries in which it operated was a major component of the AIU mandate, and the organization's functionaries in Baghdad utilized their international contacts to draw the attention of various authorities to a variety of issues affecting the community. The French consular officials in Baghdad were closely involved in the activities at the AIU's schools, attending ceremonies and annual examinations alongside the rabbis and the local Ottoman authorities. So were British consular officials such as Colonel Herbert, who was a valuable ally of the AIU in the city, acting in various roles as consular protector, contact to the wealthy ex-patriate Baghdadi community in India and East Asia, and a confidant of some school Directors during times of disagreement with the local committee and local authorities. The sources suggest that on several occasions, members of the lay and religious elite in Baghdad challenged the AIU's emerging role as protector and representative for Baghdad's Jews, opposition that ranged from simple threats of excommunication against students of the school to intricate legal challenges against the AIU's presence and its activities in the region and the Empire made to various levels of the Ottoman administration. The conflict between the local notables of Baghdad and the functionaries of the AIU has been portrayed as a battle between representatives of stifling tradition fostered in the isolation of the cultural backwater that was Ottoman Baghdad, and the civilizing missionaries of the modern Alliance Israélite Universelle, representing the hope of progress through education and protection of this persecuted community. There is no doubt some truth to this portrayal, for the AIU did offer important protections to the Jews of Baghdad, and the reaction of some local notables to the educational activities taking place in the schools was sometimes narrowly focused and cloaked in fervent religious language.

However, to cast the meeting of these French and Baghdadi Jews in this light alone is misleading and can obscure much important information that makes a study of this relationship
salient in the history of the region. How the representatives of local Jewish religious and political power protected their interests after the entrance of *L'Alliance Israélite Universelle* is an interesting study of the meeting of Ottoman-Iraqi and Western European Jewish cultures, and sheds light on the process whereby actors from two distinct cultures that shared ostensibly normative cultural institutions negotiated the definitions of said institutions within an environment characterized by Ottoman imperial reassertion, drastic economic and social change, and the European challenge. This negotiation included the process by which these local religious and political institutions would respond to changes in Jewish life in the region, how the community would be represented to Ottoman and international authorities, and how the community would be structured and would define itself, its faith and its Jewish character.

The early years of the AIU's experiment in Baghdad were chaotic and difficult in terms of staffing and finding a suitable facility. The school was located in a dilapidated building in the Jewish quarter of the city that lacked proper air circulation and lighting, and was poorly suited to the task of educating children. The students were hard to manage, the heat oppressive to the unconditioned European staff, and the hours of work long and hard. Aside from the obstacles of climate and poor facilities, perhaps the greatest difficulty came from the opposition to the AIU's mission in Baghdad from certain lay and rabbinical elements in the community. During Mr. Nerson's 22 months as director of the school, 1864-1866, opposition arose from within the community leadership to the activities at the school. It would seem that this initial opposition took the form of a rabbinical-led protest against the curriculum. In June 1868, after Nerson's departure, Baghdad's French consul-general Hadjoine Pellissier informed the President of the AIU that some of the AIU school's students had written to him for help over a disagreement they were having with rabbis within the community. It seems as if certain rabbis were threatening the students at the school with excommunication if they did not cease attending classes there.104 In September 1868, Isaac Lurion reported that the opposition had not stopped, and mentioned that

---

104 AIU I.C.I, French Consul to Cremieux, June 16th 1868.
another group - the “rich fanatics” of the community - had joined with the rabbis in their campaign against the school.\textsuperscript{105} It seems as if this opposition had an effect on parents of the students, and enrolment at the school decreased. This is the first mention in the source material of the major problem that would plague the AIU’s attempts to initiate and maintain a successful educational mission amongst the Jews of the city of Baghdad: the opposition of certain wealthy lay community leaders and their religious counterparts.

The rabbinical leaders of Baghdad might have threatened the students of the school with excommunication for a number of reasons. Primary among these would appear to be fear of the introduction of the modern curriculum to the students and its corrosive effect on traditional institutions, power structures and community leadership. Indeed, two letters written by the second director Maurice Marx to AIU President Adolphe Cremieux in 1872 mention that local members of the community leadership referred to the school as a “temple of false gods,” and that a rabbi employed at the school accused Marx’s teachings of shaking the foundations of the sacred law.\textsuperscript{106} Marx reported that the rabbi objected to those portions of the curriculum that concerned the planetary system, the interior heat of the earth, and the age of the ruins of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{107} This would seem to support the view that the opposition was a standard defense of faith in the face of contradictory scientific proofs, and this is certainly how Marx, French consul Pellissier, and many commentators on the AIU in Baghdad have interpreted the situation.

The letter that Hadjointe Pellissier received from the AIU students in June 1868 is worded carefully. The students refer to the “odious slander” that the rabbis aim at the school and its students, and write that this opposition is framed by “silent intrigues.”\textsuperscript{108} This phrase is the first indication that something other than strictly religious reasons lay behind the opposition to the school. Taken together with Lurion’s mention of the opposition of the “rich fanatics” of the

\textsuperscript{105}AIU I.C.3, Lurion to President Cremieux, September 16\textsuperscript{th}, 1868.
\textsuperscript{106}Marx to Cremieux, February 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1872, in Antebi, Les Missionnaires Juifs 221-223.
    Marx to Cremieux, August 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1872, in Antebi, Les Missionnaires Juifs, 221-223.
\textsuperscript{107}Marx to Cremieux, February 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1872, in Antebi, Les Missionnaires Juifs, 221-223.
\textsuperscript{108}AIU I.C.1, AIU Students to French Consul de Reynaud, June 16\textsuperscript{th}, 1868.
community, it seems reasonable to conclude that while religious reasons may have formed part of this opposition, wealthy lay elements in the community were also involved in the protest, and reasons other than the immediate religious justifications may have been at play.

In September 1868, while members of the wealthy and religious elite in Baghdad began openly agitating against the AIU school and its curriculum, and replacement Director Maurice Marx was journeying toward Aleppo from the Levantine coast, Isaac Lurion and the AIU sought assistance in many different places. First, they turned to the local provincial administration of the Ottoman Vali, Tuffeitin Pasha. Through the intercession of the Vali and the Sublime Porte, the rabbis of Baghdad were called before the provincial Grand Council and ordered to cease their public hostility toward the school and to attempt to reach an accommodation with the local committee.109

In addition, letters were sent from Abraham de Camondo, Ruben Sassoon and Adolphe Cremieux to the opponents of the school urging moderation. De Camondo, often called "The Rothschild of the East," was an immensely wealthy Jewish banker of Italian nationality who exercised great influence within the Empire and over Sultan 'Abd al-'Aziz; he was also President of the local AIU Committee in Istanbul. As one of the Francos, a group of the wealthiest Sephardi financiers in the Empire, de Camondo played the role of creditor to the Ottoman government before the creation of the Ottoman Bank in 1863.110 Sassoon was a member of the wealthy Sassoon family of Baghdad, Bombay and London. Lurion noted that the letter from Camondo had particular impact, due to the fact that the local Jewish notables feared his influence within the Ottoman government.111 These actions had a positive effect, and enrolments increased. Lurion's letters of early 1869 express great hope and optimism for the future of the school, the darkness of the past situation giving way to a "brilliant luminosity."112 This is evidence of the beginning of what might be termed a competition over community authority between the AIU and

109 AIU I.C.3, Lurion to Cremieux, September 16th, 1868.
110 For information on Abraham de Camondo, see Aron Rodrigue, French Jews, Turkish Jews, 40-48.
111 Aron Rodrigue, French Jews, Turkish Jews, 40-48
the local notables of the Jewish community. It is also the first instance of AIU functionaries attempting to use the organization's contacts in Europe, the Ottoman capital, and amongst local officials to further its cause against those elements in the community that sought to prevent it from becoming a main representative of Baghdad's Jews.

Writing in the course of the first stage of his journey to Baghdad from Marseilles, Maurice Marx stated that he saw his role in Baghdad not only as an educator, but as a missionary for the work of the AIU in Iraq. He hoped that his trip would help shed light on the moral and intellectual condition of his Baghdadi brethren, though his thoughts indicated that he had already largely decided these matters before he arrived; he mentioned that the small European expatriate community – about 100 individuals – were the only men of progress amongst the ignorant and seemingly useless masses there. Marx's further commentary included more in this vein: he saw his mission as making free men out of Baghdad's Jews; reasonable men who were not prone to dishonesty or despair, and above all men who would fight against the unjust rule of a shallow Ottoman government that viewed them as taxable material instead of human beings, abandoning them to the whims of the cruel Muslim majority. After three years, Marx wrote that the Jews of Baghdad were plunged into a moral and intellectual torpor that only time and education could cure. The individualistic avarice of the "Oriental" made the work of developing the school in Baghdad difficult, the local Jews were cheap, reluctant to see the benefits of education, and in a state of apathy and resignation after years of persecution.

In addition to surpassing some of the pejorative aspects of Leven's speech and his writings in terms of their rapacity, Marx's comments reveal that he saw himself as a missionary. Indeed, Elizabeth Antebi's book entitled Les Missionnaires Juifs de la France 1860-1939 suggests a useful way of viewing the project of the AIU and its army of central and local administrators,
educators, volunteers and supporters: namely as a liberal and largely secular Jewish missionary
organization. Most missionaries were not kindly regarded by the AIU due to the fact that they
were usually Catholic, were often earlier and better established than the AIU in many of the
communities in which both worked, were often French, and as such competed with the AIU for
French government support as well as the tuition fees and loyalties of Jewish youth and their
parents in these communities. However, the AIU was itself a missionary organization, one
devoted to spreading the principles of the European enlightenment and of modernity coupled with
a largely secular interpretation of Jewish identity.

Writing in 1872, Maurice Marx noted that many prejudices existed in Baghdad
against modern education, and that the European Jews who came to the city often helped to fuel
this through their own ignorance. These backward coreligionists from Europe (certainly a
reference to Isaac Lurion and Hermann Rosenfeld) were more ignorant than the indigenous Jews
they lived amongst and helped to spread hostility to modern progress and education. He also
complained about the opposition of certain rabbinical and lay traditionalists to his modern
teachings. In defense of these subversive ideas, Marx wrote that "scientific truths were as divine
as the prescriptions of our sacred books."118

This statement reveals an interesting point about the nature of the AIU's relationship
to Jewish identity in the context of its schools and curricula: the AIU cannot be termed a religious
organization. Although predicated on the ideal of enriching the connections between European
and Oriental Jews, the AIU took a very measured approach to religion in its schools. Conflict
between the religious authorities and the AIU often arose because the organization devoted a
much larger share of its material and temporal resources to the secular portions of the curriculum
- languages, science and mathematics, hygiene - than to more traditional Jewish subjects like the
Hebrew language and Biblical history, which were usually handled by members of the local
community. These local educators, usually rabbis, were far less trained and received less pay for

their services than their counterparts who had attended European schools or the ENIO in Paris and handled the secular portions of the curriculum.\textsuperscript{119} The AIU stressed a secular interpretation of Jewish identity through the "community of fate," the idea of an international Jewish community united by shared historical experience and culture.\textsuperscript{120} This concept was radical to many Ottoman Jews, where a fledgling process of Jewish political and social emancipation had only just begun.\textsuperscript{121} Although AIU administrators stressed the importance of Jewish history and the Hebrew language as pivotal aspects of the curriculum, these subjects were interpreted very differently by European-trained teachers than by local rabbis and community leaders. The functionaries of the Alliance tended toward a reading of the Jewish faith, language and history that concentrated on the "profound humanism" of the Biblical tradition and the synthesis of this tradition with the "occidental spirit".\textsuperscript{122} This value system can help define the AIU's social experiment amongst the Jews of the Middle East and North Africa. The educational project imagined a meeting between the emancipated Western European Jewish paradigm and the traditions, beliefs and environments that were the roots of Jewish existence, but had suffered under centuries of persecution and ignorance. The term "regeneration" in this sense can be applied to the entire world Jewish community. The ideal was the attainment of a new liberated Jewry - not isolated to the countries of Western Europe or North America - but spreading and uniting the new and ancient homes of the Jewish people under the banner of progress and modernity.

This philosophical base differed greatly from the perception of Jewish history and language that was held by many members of the Baghdad community. The local perception was much more rooted in particular regional traditions and beliefs that placed the interests of Baghdadi and Ottoman Jewry above an imagined world Jewry and the universal Jewish aspirations of the AIU. Many local Jewish leaders in Baghdad appear to have responded

\textsuperscript{118}Max to AIU, Feb. 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1872, in Antebi, Les Missionnaires Juifs, 221-222.
\textsuperscript{120}Andre Chouraqui, Cent Ans d'Histoire, 193.
\textsuperscript{121}Rodrigue, French Jews, Turkish Jews, 84.
negatively to any movement that posited the existence of a world Jewish community and the need for placing universal Jewish aspirations above those of the local community. Their opposition was grounded in the perceived need to maintain the delicate balance of communal interests that characterized Jewish life in the Muslim-dominated social and political milieux of Baghdad and the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{123}

There is little doubt that the difference between these positions would have eventually been noticed even if it had not been so marked because the educational precedent many measured the AIU school against was a religious education centered around the synagogue. In fact, the rabbinical opposition to certain aspects of the AIU’s curriculum was not particular to Baghdad. Michael Laskier notes that the AIU encountered fierce rabbinical opposition in the early stages of opening its schools in Tetuan and Tangier, where the rabbis accused the school’s director of “de-Judaizing” their youth through the introduction of European languages and certain modern scientific principles. Incidentally, the offensive portions of the curriculum were almost exactly the same in both cases - the rotation of the earth, orientation of the solar system, and causes of meteorological phenomena. In Morocco as in Baghdad, the rabbis threatened the students of the school with excommunication, and as had happened in Baghdad, enrolment dropped sharply.\textsuperscript{124} As could be expected, many large-scale differences between local and universal Jewish values often manifested themselves in the operations of the school. For example, though Jewish history received a central position in the curriculum, the teaching of this history using French Jewish texts such as H. Graetz’s \emph{History of the Jews} could provoke dispute. Graetz takes a notably scientific attitude toward the miraculous events of the Exodus in his text, claiming that the division of the Red Sea and the interruption of the Jordan’s flow could be attributed to

\textsuperscript{122}Chouraqui, \textit{Cent Ans d’Histoire}, 192.
\textsuperscript{123}An excellent illustration of such a position is the letter of Menachem Saleh Daniel to the World Zionist Organization in 1922. In this letter, Daniel complains that the activities of Zionist agents in Iraq have incited the lower classes of the Jewish community to agitate for a Jewish homeland, a proposition he finds extremely frightening and detrimental to the delicate balance of intercommunal interests in Baghdad’s society. 186 CZA Z 4/2101, reprinted in Norman S. Stillman, \textit{The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times}, (Philadelphia, 1991), 331-333.
geophysical causes.²⁵ Although the local leadership may have approved of the AIU's choice to concentrate on the Jewish community's historical experiences, the nature of the material used to teach this subject was certainly subject to dispute.

It is clear that one of the central factors that shaped the relationship between AIU functionaries and the local Jewish community in Baghdad was religion and the perception of Jewish identity. The traditional outlook of certain members of the Hakhaim such as the anonymous rabbinical employee who complained about the secular curriculum of Marx clearly contrast with the more secular and national definition of Jewish identity that is evident in the letters and speeches of Marx and Narcisse Leven. However, to view the relationship between these two groups of Jews as a model of tradition versus modernity or religiosity versus secularism is misleading. Such a diametric opposition obscures many important facts that contribute to the characterization of this relationship and does not fit once other sources of information are taken into consideration. The civilizing mission of the AIU and its functionaries in Baghdad certainly led to conflicts along the fault line of religion and a definition of what it meant to be Jewish, but just as important are other conflicts and accommodations that were negotiated along other such fault lines – linguistic, commercial and political.

One such fault line was the study of languages in the school. The growing disagreement between the AIU's central leadership and its representatives on the one hand, and the local committee and parents of students on the other over the issue of language instruction is an interesting and useful example of the dynamics of the relationship between local and universal interests in the field of community education in Baghdad. Isaac Lurion's existence in Baghdad's Jewish society was unique. Though a clockmaker by trade, his European background and interest in the fortunes of the city's Jewish community propelled him to the forefront of the AIU's early attempts at founding a school in Baghdad. Throughout his tenure as President of the local

²⁴ Laskier, The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 80-85.
For the use of Graetz's text in AIU schools, see Leven, Ciquante Ans d'Histoire, 339; 346.
Baghdad community of the AIU, Lurion was a European Jew representing the interests of the indigenous Jewish community to the Alliance, a French organization. Thus, Lurion and the members of the local AIU Committee occupy a special position in this study.

The attempts by Lurion and other members of the committee to advance the interests of modern Jewish education and the mission of the AIU in Baghdad are beyond question, but their actions and thoughts on behalf of the local population reveal some significant details about the process of negotiation between European and Baghdadi Jews. Although Lurion was the head representative of the AIU in Baghdad, he and his committee counterparts often disagreed with the Directors sent by the AIU and with the organization's center in Paris. As early as September, 1870, Lurion wrote to Adolphe Cremieux to suggest a new method for teaching Hebrew at the school.\textsuperscript{126} Two years later, in November 1872, he wrote again complaining that Marx opposed the reforms he wished to make to the teaching of Hebrew at the school. He believed it was necessary to concentrate on Hebrew instruction to improve the school curriculum, which was currently "without any importance," and to allow the children to study the Torah and speak the sacred language, a vital factor in dispelling fanaticism amongst the Jews in the city. Lurion thus wished to focus equally on Hebrew and French when the students entered the school.\textsuperscript{127} It is clear that a dispute was brewing between the local committee and Marx.

From the minutes of the local committee meeting of December 24\textsuperscript{th}, 1872, it is possible to assess the parameters of this conflict. In the meeting, the committee affirmed that language instruction at the school was currently unacceptable. Although the children were learning French, their skills in Hebrew, Arabic and Turkish were severely lacking, and French alone was not sufficient to make a living in Baghdad. The committee proposed several changes to the curriculum, including: arrangement of the students in classes according to their progress in Hebrew instead of French; more time for the study of Hebrew and Arabic before French; and the

\textsuperscript{126}AIU I.C.3, Lurion to Cremieux, September 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1870.
\textsuperscript{127}AIU I.C.3, Lurion to Cremieux, November 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1872.
hiring of a Turkish teacher.\textsuperscript{128} Lurion and Hermann Rosenfeld, as well as several notables of the Jewish community of Baghdad, including the famed Talmudist Abdullah Somekh, Nasi Menachem Saleh Daniel, and members of several other prominent families signed the French translation of the minutes. The last signature on the minutes is that of Maurice Marx, who no doubt signed in spite of less than full agreement with the proposed changes. As of the previous August, Marx's letters to Paris were describing the conflict between him and Lurion, and he complained about Lurion's lack of education, poor language skills and dictatorial leadership style.\textsuperscript{129}

By the next local committee meeting on the subject, on the 17\textsuperscript{th} of March, 1873, the conflict had worsened. Whether due to this conflict, community opposition to the school, or the faults in the curriculum as described by Lurion and the local committee, the school was losing students to the city's traditional hederim schools. Lurion complained that over 30 had left the AIU school for these local traditional schools, and that primary among them were the paying students, while the free students remained, cutting revenue. According to Lurion, the parents of these children had removed them because they felt their children were not receiving a proper grounding in local languages, although it would be hard to believe that the private hederim would offer an improvement in many cases.\textsuperscript{130} The committee decided in this meeting to impose the changes to the curriculum outlined in the minutes of the past December, and requested a new Director be sent from Paris. The fact that the committee requested one of its own students be sent from the ENIO to direct the school at Baghdad is significant. At that time, the ENIO had a few students enrolled from Baghdad. It is quite probable that this request was aimed at securing a local Director for the school who would share similar values and opinions with members of the local

\textsuperscript{128}AIU I.C.3, Local AIU Committee meeting minutes, Baghdad, December 24\textsuperscript{th}, 1872.
\textsuperscript{129}Marx to Cremieux, August 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1872, in Antebi, \textit{Les Missionaires Juifs}, 222-223.
\textsuperscript{130}AIU I.C.3, Lurion to Cremieux, March 19\textsuperscript{th}, 1873.
committee. This fact is underscored by the departure of Maurice Marx from the Director's post in Baghdad after the annual examinations that spring.131

This conflict over language instruction serves to highlight some important factors in the relationship between the AIU and the local Jewish community. First, it is clear that elements within the community who supported the school wished to see its curriculum reformed. Lurion's complaints that the over concentration on French damaged the effectiveness of the school, and his claims that many within the community wished to see greater emphasis placed upon languages such as Hebrew, Arabic and Turkish reveal that dissent came from within the ranks of AIU supporters - indeed its main supporters on the local committee - not only from the rabbinical or lay opposition of the community. This concern with languages is also evident in the Moroccan context; the rabbis of Tetuan and Tangier complained about the over concentration on European languages in addition to their complaints regarding specific scientific aspects of the curriculum.132

The tension between the universal Jewish focus of the AIU's curriculum and the particular needs and interests of the Baghdadi Jewish community as defined by the local committee and parents is palpable in the context of this conflict, and appears to have been an issue in other regions where the AIU operated schools. This tension is evident in the name Alliance Israelite Universelle, which attempts to reconcile a sense of the universal with one of the most particular religious and historical communities in human history. This contradiction in the ideology of the Alliance caused problems in the less cosmopolitan Jewish centres of North Africa and the Middle East, where the organization's universal European values collided with particularistic perceptions of Jewish identity.133

Second, it is clear that Maurice Marx disapproved of the proposed reorganization of the curriculum and sought to protect the French-centered curriculum through appeals to the Central Committee and the French consul. The French consular employees in Baghdad typically

131 AIU L.C.3, Local AIU Committee minutes, March 17th, 1873.
132 Laskier, The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 80-85
133 Rodrigue, French Jews, Turkish Jews, 83.
threw their support behind the school Director and the French centered curriculum against the interests of the local committee and its desire for language reform. A letter from the French consul L. Rogien to Adolphe Cremieux in 1873 defends Marx and the curriculum against the actions and interests of Lurion and the local committee. Writing after attending the annual examinations, Rogien claimed that Marx is a good educator who had to fight against the "narrow and ignorant" members of the local committee. These were incapable, intriguing, and timid of character like most Oriental Jews, and were led by an ignorant and presumptuous President.134

Rogien believed that the local committee hampered Marx and placed the blame for the paucity of Turkish in the curriculum on the local committee's refusal to hire a qualified teacher, claiming that the students performed admirably in their examinations on Arabic and Turkish, as well as English and French. To the consul-general and Marx, the curriculum and the language instruction at the school was on track and successful. This is no surprise given the attitude of the French government toward the spread of the French language and culture in AIU schools in other regions, notably Morocco, where the French colonial administration aided the organization with grants, government protection, and by hiring students as administrators after 1912.135

Third, the request made by the local committee for one of their own Baghdadi students at the ENIO for the school's Directorship (a request that was subsequently approved in Paris when Mr. Garat, a native of Baghdad, was dispatched from the ENIO to his home city to act as school director), may illustrate that the local committee felt they could pursue their own interests and goals at the school with a member of their own community at the helm, rather than a Frenchman. Finally, this disagreement reveals that the staunchest local supporters of the AIU – the members of the local committee – disagreed with the Central Committee of the AIU, its functionaries on the ground in Baghdad, as well as French consular employees on the form and content of an efficient school curriculum. This disagreement helps to place the entire project of

---

134AIU I.C.1, Rogien to Cremieux, April 17th, 1873.
the AIU in Baghdad into the context of a model of negotiation that is more accurate in representing the interaction of European and Baghdadi Jewish positions around concepts of education, modernity and progress. In short, if a conflict over the form and substance of education pitted the ranks of the converted against one another in a contest over the nature of the AIU's involvement in Baghdad, the politics of the AIU's presence there was certainly more complex than a model of modernity versus tradition would suggest.

The position of the native Baghdadi Jewish elite toward the AIU and its educational mission is not as clear as that of the AIU Central Committee and its local functionaries. The voices of local community leaders, both lay and religious, are not represented in the archives to the degree that internal AIU voices are, and most of those local voices that are represented are students of the school, members of the local committee, and Europeans living in Baghdad. Making creative use of interpretation with these sources, as well as utilizing the secondary literature on the Jewish community in Baghdad, is thus the best option for trying to reconstruct the opinions, positions and attitudes of local leaders toward the AIU and its mission.

Although Isaac Lurion was a European-born Jew who wholeheartedly supported the AIU's presence in Baghdad, the conflict over language instruction between his committee and Marx as mentioned above is a good example of one method of attempting to affect such a reconstruction. Dissent did not merely flow from a traditionalist camp toward the activities of modernists working on behalf of the AIU; dissent and negotiation also occurred within the ranks of the converted who supported the AIU's mission over issues such as language instruction. After the departure of Marx and the arrival of Garat to replace him in the summer of 1873, the conflict over language and curriculum did not abate and in fact intensified throughout the next twenty years. Morris Cohen, an English teacher hired by the Alliance who arrived in Baghdad in late 1879 and remained an employee of the school there until the mid-1890's, wrote several letters to Paris on this subject. Cohen believed the main problem of the school's curriculum was its

---

135Michael Laskier, The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 43.
attempts to do too much with too little resources. In Cohen's opinion, although the vernacular Arabic of the Ottoman-Iraqi provinces would be the natural choice as a base instructional language, the paucity of textbooks and teachers to properly instruct it was a problem. Furthermore, the instruction of formal literary Arabic was problematic for the same reasons as well as the difficulty of the language and its very limited use in the commerce and society of Baghdad and its neighbouring regions.\textsuperscript{136}

The answer for Cohen was obvious - concentrate on giving the students a strong base in one European language - in this case English, which was in his opinion widely used and needed due to British commercial penetration in the region and the importance of the trade with India. Such a concentration would solve the problem of a shallow curriculum and would better result in the achievement of the main goal of the school and the AIU's mission in Baghdad. Cohen saw this goal as the creation of a colony of Jews that all shared fluency in a major European language, working, writing and publishing in English. This would be a major step forward in the civilizing work of the AIU in the city and the region.\textsuperscript{137} Aside from the light this sheds on the variety of different individual perceptions of the AIU's civilizing mission and the issue of language instruction, this letter also reveals an important dynamic of the relationship between elements of the AIU's cadre of functionaries in the city. Cohen mentions at the close of the letter that despite his strong beliefs on the matter of language in the school, he has not made his ideas and convictions known to Isaac Lurion, who strongly supports the teaching of literary Arabic in the schools.\textsuperscript{138} Again in 1890, Cohen wrote to the AIU President, claiming that Arabic was a useless language and did nothing to help in the lifting and regeneration of the Jewish population in Baghdad.\textsuperscript{139} This time Cohen's tone is stronger in his rejection of French in favour of English, a language necessary for its commercial and political solvency in the region, and for

\textsuperscript{136}AIU IV.E.28, Cohen to Goldschmidt, November 20\textsuperscript{th}, 1890.
\textsuperscript{137}AIU 4. E. 28, Cohen to Loeb, April 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1881.
\textsuperscript{138}AIU 4. E. 28, Cohen to Loeb, April 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1881.
\textsuperscript{139}AIU 4. E. 28, Cohen to Loeb, April 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1881.
putting the Jews of the city and region into contact with the civilization of Europe. Cohen's use of the term "colony" to describe this imagined Jewish community is perhaps telling in and of itself.

The opinions of Morris Cohen reveal his position on the situation, a position that is informed by his belief in the mission of the AIU and the necessity of teaching the English language in assuring the success of that mission. The fact that Morris Cohen was an English teacher should also not be overlooked. His position can be related to that of Maurice Marx, who also supported the idea of a curriculum based on a European language – in his case French – and believed strongly in the ability of such a language to ameliorate the backward position of Baghdad's Jews and help the AIU succeed in its mission. Distinctions of francophone versus anglophone aside, these two men were quite similar in their perception of the AIU's mission and the necessity of a strong grounding in a European language curriculum. It is clear that Isaac Lurion and the local committee opposed the convictions of both of these men throughout the 1870's and 1880's on the issue of language curriculum, favoring the inclusion of the local languages such as Arabic and Turkish, as well as the supreme importance of Hebrew in the instruction at the school.

The strong desire of the local committee members and their President to defend the teaching of local languages is a key point in the process of negotiation that informed the relationship between the AIU and its functionaries and the local Jewish population. It constitutes such a point because it reveals the depth of difference that existed between pro-Alliance elements within Baghdad over important issues, and thus destabilizes the perception of this process as a dialogue between forces of tradition and modernity. Indeed, the "modern" actors of the AIU's mission - teachers, expatriate volunteers and others - could not agree on the form and content of the mission itself. This also destabilizes any attempt to position these actors as a homogeneous grouping or a seamless force of "modernity" and marks the transition to a need for a more

---

140AIU IV.E.28, Cohen to Goldschmidt, November 20th, 1890.
accurate model of negotiation that can help characterize the relationship between the AIU, the local Jewish community and its leaders.

The main point to be made here is that certain aspects of the AIU’s mission were met with favour by the “traditionalists” as long as these aspects did nothing to upset the prominence and security of these local leaders within their cultural and social world. Progress, modernity, education and perhaps even “regeneration” were fine with such notables, as long as the social and commercial institutions and conventions that supported their continued prominence and leadership were maintained. Although the lay and rabbinical leadership of Baghdad's Jewish community cooperated with certain aspects of the AIU’s mission, even sitting on the local AIU education committee in certain cases, the line was drawn at perceived challenges to traditional community leadership.

A letter to AIU President Adolphe Cremieux written by French Consul A. Peritie in May of 1879 adds depth to this picture of opposition. Peritie noted that AIU director Garat was facing continued pressure from the community leadership, specifically the religious and lay notables who were allied to guard their influence against the entrance of the AIU onto the scene.\textsuperscript{141} Peritie notes, quite astutely, that in the Middle East, and especially within the Jewish communities of the region, there are a group of wealthy lay notables and their allies on the rabbinical councils who control the political processes of the community. He believed that these notables felt threatened by the entrance of the AIU onto the scene; although they might have responded to innovation and modern education by stressing tradition and religion, what they really feared was an erosion of their influence in the community, not the forces of innovation themselves. They thus opposed the work of the Central Committee in the most effective way possible, by opposing its missionaries that come to the city to oversee its work.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{141} AIU I.C.I, Peritie to Cremieux, May 11th, 1879.
\textsuperscript{142} AIU I.C.I, Peritie to Cremieux, May 11th, 1879.
Peritie’s letter reveals an interesting aspect of the conflict between the community leadership and the school directors. His assertion that the local leaders challenge the director seems to suggest that certain members of this leadership sat on the local AIU committee, and attempted to derail the plans of the AIU from this position. There is evidence to support this view in a very well documented case from the AIU’s Baghdad archives in the 1890’s involving the institution of a waqf endowment by the Nourriel and Daniel families. Among the many community leaders who came to oppose the AIU through this conflict, some sat on the local AIU committee, namely Menachem Saleh Daniel, the Nasi and wealthy merchant whose signature had appeared alongside Lurion’s on committee documents for many years.

Perhaps the best example of the community’s response to the AIU’s work in Baghdad in the sources stems from the documentation of this situation involving the attempts of Madame Rebecca Nourriel and her daughter, Madame Farha Suliman Daniel, to donate a portion for the betterment of the AIU’s work. As mentioned in Chapter One, in a letter dated March 5th 1895, Farha Suliman Daniel wrote to the AIU President, declaring that she and her mother wished to incorporate their lands and estates into a waqf endowment that would be administered by the AIU whilst they were alive, and would be assumed by the AIU after their deaths. The prominent Daniel family were the only large landowners of note amongst Baghdadi Jews, and were a bastion of support for the AIU’s mission, sending their children to the school from an early date. The ownership of substantive lands around the town of Hilleh provided Farha and her mother with an annual income of 30,000 francs per year. The AIU was to be given an annual grant of 1,500 francs from this amount in exchange for administering the properties, and the AIU was required to open and fund a Jewish hospital in Baghdad with the land revenue after their deaths.

---

143 AIU I.B.5, Farha Suliman Daniel to Goldschimdt, March 5th, 1895.
145 AIU I.B.5, Farha Suliman Daniel to Goldschmidt, March 5th, 1895.
146 AIU I.B.5, Farha Suliman Daniel to Goldschmidt, March 5th, 1895.
AIU President Salomon Goldschmidt charged Joseph Danon, the AIU director and head of the local committee of Baghdad at this point, with securing the waqf through local and imperial Ottoman officials and working out the details of the endowment. Danon proceeded apace at this task until October of the same year, when certain notable members of the community began opposing the establishment of waqf. Thus began a conflict between the AIU and the community leadership that would last until well into the 1920's, involving the highest levels of the Ottoman imperial administration and the AIU's Parisian and Ottoman leadership. In the context of this battle over a waqf endowment, the community leadership in Baghdad challenged the scope of the AIU's activities in their community, making use of any and all legal ends available to them. The conflict is not only significant as a watershed in the relationship between the AIU and Baghdad's Jewish notables, but as an example of the ways in which the European challenge to Ottoman suzerainty over the lands of Iraq was resisted by elements of Baghdad's Jewish leadership.

Writing to President Solomon Goldschmidt on this matter, Danon reported that an issue had arisen that was complicating the establishment of the waqf. Menachem Saleh Daniel, who was related to Rivca Nouriel, was engaged in negotiations with her over rights he had to certain portions of her agricultural lands, which were valuable for their proximity to both the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers and their constant water supply. Danon's fears that this would become a protracted battle were realized in a follow-up letter. Danon reported that there had been a violent explosion of community opposition to the idea of the Nourriel waqf, and that the Nasi Abdullah Elias, the office of the Hakham Bashi, and Menachem Saleh Daniel were united in their opposition to the scheme and sought to sway the opinion of Madame Nourriel to their favour.

The office of the Hakham Bashi refused to sign the notice of sale that was necessary for the institution of the waqf, and levied an extra tax on the transfer of lands. When Danon complained to the lay community council at its meeting the next day, they refused his request and

---

147 AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, October 24th, 1895.
demanded a review of the *waqf* order. Danon called the actions "ignorant and grotesque," and complained that the community council and the office of the *Hakham Bashi* were surpassing their authority and were entering legal territory usually reserved for the Ottoman government. Danon warned Goldschmidt that their opponents would lose no time in petitioning the office of the *Vali* and urged the President to use the organization's contacts in Istanbul to obtain an order from the office of the Grand Vizier stopping this challenge to the *waqf*.

This challenge to the AIU's right to obtain the lands of Madame Nourriel quickly moved through the ranks of Ottoman bureaucracy and occupied the bulk of the communication between the Central Committee and Danon for the next three years. By November 7th, the *Defterdar* of Baghdad Vilayet was involved in examining the issue of the Daniel inheritance. The two sides competed for the support of local officials, and the Ottoman Minister of Interior had begun to pressure the *Vali* in favour of the AIU. While the decision of the *Defterdar* was secured in favour of the AIU with the Minister's help, Danon pressed Goldschmidt to lobby the *Shaykh al-Islam* in Istanbul for a document ensuring his support for the *waqf*. Danon felt that this would ensure the bypassing of difficulties with the Ottoman land administration in the *vilayet*.

The issue stalled there, eventually involving a *qadi* and the *moukhtar* of the district of Hilleh. The issue of foreign ownership was a primary stumbling block in the AIU's quest to institute the *waqf*, as local leaders challenged the endowment on these grounds, among others. The office of Ottoman Land Administration hesitated to approve the transfer of property because the recipient was French. By 1897, Danon was completely frustrated by the local politicking and what had become a tortuous legal process; he requested two assistants from President Goldschmidt, stressing that they must not be from Baghdad for obvious reasons. Danon obviously felt that sedition in the ranks was a definite possibility; or at the very least native employees would be too

---

148 AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, October 31st, 1895.
149 AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, October 31st, 1895.
150 AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, October 31st, 1895.
151 AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, October 31st, 1895.
152 AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, November 7th, 1895.
153 AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, December 12th, 1895.
enmeshed in the politics of the community to serve effectively.\footnote{155}{AIU I.B.5, Danon to Goldschmidt, July 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1897.} The AIU Director obviously felt overwhelmed by the level of organized opposition from powerful individuals in the community.

The tactics employed by Meir Elias, Menachem Suliman Daniel and other community leaders in the course of this protracted legal battle were intelligent and certainly modern. Making use of telegraph communications, a complex Ottoman bureaucracy that was relatively new to the Ottoman frontier of Baghdad, and a calculated strategy centered on the delicate and timely issue of foreign influence and ownership of lands within the Empire, these local notables mustered an effective defense of their positions in Baghdad's Jewish community that lasted well into the 1920's.\footnote{156}{A letter from the local committee in October, 1923 reveals that the issue of the Nourriel waqf remained unsettled at that date.} When compared with the activities of the AIU to secure the Nourriel waqf, the overwhelming sense is one of similarity.

The functionaries of the AIU petitioned the highest offices of the Ottoman government and the lowest ranks of the vilayet administration through its European diplomatic contacts and its powerful local committee in Istanbul, and made use of modern communications and bureaucratic structures to further its cause. The offices of the community president and the hakham bashi also attempted to use any and all political channels open to them to pursue their objectives. Such channels may have been numerous and effective in the 1890's, as Sultan Abdulhamid II sought to limit European interference in the Empire. Indeed, the Hamidian state opened several government primary and secondary schools in the lands of Iraq during the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. These schools served as indoctrination centres, disseminating the Ottoman and pan-Islamic values to the Arab population. They were also seen as bulwarks against foreign infiltration, both European and Shi'i.\footnote{157}{Deringil, The Well-Protected Domains, 100-101.} Viewed in this light, the AIU schools in Baghdad and throughout the Empire were divisive and potentially damaging to imperial attempts to strengthen
control over the provinces and minority populations of the empire. It is thus no surprise to see that the Ottoman bureaucracy often appeared biased in favour of the local Jewish leaders.

Although actors from both sides worked contemporaneously toward different goals, the conflict was not characterized by a defense of tradition against modern change. Instead, the conflict can be better understood as a negotiation of the terms by which the Jews of Baghdad would be represented to the Ottoman government, would structure their social programs, and how much power a foreign based organization would have within the milieu of Jewish life. The actors, whether local or French, were all anchored in the realities of their time, and made use of all available avenues to advance their respective causes. The fact that the local leadership managed to prevent the AIU from acquiring the *waqf* for such a long period of time reveals the effectiveness of their challenge and speaks to the fact that this was not a futile defense of empty tradition in the face of impending modernity, but an organized defense of local values and leadership making use of the same modern tools of communication, organization and legal action employed by the AIU and its functionaries.

The negotiation of modern education in Baghdad's Jewish community is only one piece of a much larger and more complex picture of the effects of change on Baghdad's economy, politics, and society. The larger-scale developments occurring in Iraq were closely tied to the expansion of commercial activity in the region, the growth of the European presence, and Ottoman attempts to control both while reasserting military and administrative control over its Iraqi provinces throughout the Tanzimat and Young Turk eras. Placing the contest over local Jewish education within the framework of commercial evolution and the struggle between competing imperial forces for control of the region aids in understanding the process whereby this contest occurred, and how it is connected to the larger and more complex events affecting Baghdad and its inhabitants in this period.
CHAPTER 3: THE CHANGING WORLD OF BAGHDAD’S JEWS

The development of the AIU’s mission and its schools in Baghdad during the period 1864-1914 is a micro-level history that allows insight into the changing nature of education, politics and identity within a specific community of Ottoman Jews. The specificity of the subject is useful as a case study of these changes, of European and Baghdadi Jewish relations, and of the growing presence of Europeans in the lands of Iraq and the Ottoman Empire. These factors are better understood by relating this micro-history to the larger regional historical context. That is the purpose of this chapter. The AIU’s presence in Baghdad was strongly informed by the changing political, economic and social landscape of the region and of the Ottoman Empire during the period in question. The focus of this chapter will be on four key developments that aid in the characterization and contextualizing of the AIU’s mission amongst the Jews of Baghdad: the Tanzimat reform period; the growing integration of Baghdad and Iraq into the world economy; the growing influence of Europe in the region and the Empire as a whole; and the changing nature of Jewish existence in Ottoman lands. The AIU’s mission was affected by all of these large scale developments, and in some cases provides an excellent illustration of such changes and their importance to Jewish Baghdad. Despite the ongoing challenges faced by the organization and its employees, the AIU’s mission during this period could ultimately be considered a success. This success was a direct function of the larger developments that occurred in Iraq and the Ottoman Empire.

The royal hatt promulgated in Istanbul’s Ghulhane Park in 1839 marked the beginning of the Tanzimat reform era, the name given to the period in which the highest Ottoman
functionaries attempted to redress serious external and internal challenges to the continued cohesion of the Empire. Through a program of concerted reforms aimed at the Ottoman military, bureaucracy and the notion of membership in the Ottoman polity itself, various Sultans, ministers and European advisers attempted to reverse both the growth of provincial power and the troubling loss of territory to European powers. The Iraqi provinces were not an exception to this rule. The importance of the Tanzimat for the Jews of Baghdad falls into three categories: the reassertion of centralized Ottoman rule over the city and its hinterland; official declarations of equality for all religious minorities in the Empire; and structural reform of the system of millets that governed Jewish and religious minorities within the Empire.

The Ottoman imperial hand had always lain upon the lands of Iraq relatively lightly due to the geographic remoteness of the region, its small population and its relative lack of major urban centres. Baghdad was distant from the metropole, and its final capture by Ottoman Sultan Murad IV from the Persian Safavid Empire in 1638 did not result in a stable direct Ottoman administration. For most of the period 1700-1831, Baghdad had a nominal Ottoman governor who was the member of a ruling Mamluk household. The Mamluks enjoyed relative autonomy from the Ottoman imperial centre and commanded a powerful army. Areas outside urban centres were dominated by powerful tribal confederations such as the Muntafiq and Shammar. The Jews enjoyed some protection in Baghdad, and traditionally a Jew held the post of financial adviser, or Nasi, to the Wali. The Ottoman reassertion began for Baghdad in 1831, when a devastating flood and plague allowed the Sultan Mahmud II to send an army from Syria to wrest control over the city from the final Mamluk Du'ad Pasha. The establishment of direct Ottoman control was not an absolute change, and Mamluks and other local notables continued to exercise influence in local politics that can be characterized by the model given by Albert Hourani in his famous

158 Sasoon, A History of the Jews of Baghdad, 122-123.
According to Hala Fattah, the Ottoman recentralization was a dynamic process of negotiation between the imperial center, desiring taxation revenue and efficient administration of the vilayet, and local forces who sought to maintain their traditional positions of power and privilege and the free passage of goods through the regional market. This revision in the portrayal of the centralization era has some common ground with the model used to characterize the relationship between the AIU and local Jewish notables in the previous chapter.

Though local interests maintained their presence in the face of the reasserted imperial challenge, the situation for the Jews in Baghdad had changed considerably. The reassertion of Ottoman control brought a measure of permanence and security to the position of the Jews that had been absent since the Mongol invasions that destroyed the Abbasid capital in 1258. The Jewish population grew and the increased security enriched the possibilities for trade and commerce. Soon after the Ottomans re-established direct control over the city, the full force of the Tanzimat reforms began to shape the Jewish community and the lives of its members. The promulgation of the Hatt-i Sharif of Ghulhane (1839) and the Hatt-i Sharif of Humayun (1856) marked drastic changes to both the Ottoman Government's official position on the status of minority religious communities and the concept of an individual's relationship to government. The two decrees proclaimed at once an end to Muslim superiority in the Empire and the equality of all Ottoman subjects in the eyes of the central Government, attitudes that were enshrined in the Ottoman Constitution of 1876. This marked an end to the position of Jews as dhimmis – protected peoples required to pay the jizyah poll tax as a client group within the Ottoman Muslim community – and ushered in a new era of citizenship, contact between the imperial government and the individual citizen, and opportunity for Ottoman Jews.


The historiography of the early modern Ottoman period had long been characterized by Turkish and Western scholars as a period of initial centralized control and a command economy dominated by a powerful Sultanate government in Istanbul, followed by a period of weakened state control and decentralization in the provinces of the Empire during the 18th century, and an imperial reassertion during the Tanzimat; a thesis that has been subject to revision of late. New studies focused on the connections between tax farming, economic change, and provincial notable power in the 18th century and the imperial government's attempt to create a provincial Ottoman gentry have stressed the links between this period and the 19th century reform period that followed in terms of state and provincial power relations. Dina Khoury has written that the Tanzimat period initiated immense change in Mosul because “it saw the effective liquidation of a form of Ottoman political hegemony associated with political household in the eighteenth century... (and) it ushered in a period during which a wider sector of the Mosuli gentry class became linked to the modernization efforts of the state.”

This can be applied to the situation in Baghdad during the Tanzimat and to the Jewish community there as well. The reform period ushered in new systems of social, political and economic organization that broadened the participation of Baghdad's Jews in civic and imperial life and changed the conditions of life for this religious minority community. Changes to the representative institutions of the Ottoman Jewish populations are illustrative of this process. The office of the Hakham Bashi, or Chief Rabbi, was created in the mid-19th century to provide a

---

162 See, for instance, Dina R. Khoury, State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul 1540-1834 (Cambridge, 1997); Ariel Salzmann, “An Ancien Régime revisited: privatization and political economy in the eighteenth century Ottoman Empire,” Politics and Society Vol.21 No.4 (1993); and Karl Barbir, Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758 (Princeton, 1980). Such studies have stressed that the period of Ottoman “decentralization,” was in fact a process of “Ottomanization” that stressed membership in the imperial polity and the participation of provincial elites in the imperial system. The goals of this process were remarkably similar to those of the Tanzimat period, but the means of attaining them were different. While the early modern period was characterized by provincial notable power and the delegation of imperial authority over taxation and economy, the later modern period was instead characterized by modern bureaucratic state structures and a the concept of state citizenship, influenced in large part by social and political theories popular in Europe.
163 Dina S. Khoury, State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire, 17-18.
focus for administration within the various Jewish communities of the Empire and to act as a liaison between the Jewish subjects and the imperial government. The Hakham Bashi's office was supported through the levying of taxes on meat (the gabelle), and by certain waqf revenues.\footnote{Deshen, "Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times," in Deshen and Zenner Eds., Jews Among Muslims, 192-193.} The system of millet organization was reformed, and representative councils, called majlis, were attached to the centres of religio-political authority within the community.\footnote{Deshen, "Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times," in Deshen and Zenner Eds., Jews Among Muslims, 192-193.} Greater numbers of Jews began to take an active interest in the political process within their respective communities, as is evinced by the opposition to taxation organized by the Rahema group as outlined in Chapter Two.

Although the degree of implementation of Tanzimat principles varied with the limitations of imperial power and attitudes of provincial governors and administrators, there is no doubt that the implementation of equal citizenship affected the attitudes of Baghdad's Jews toward the imperial government. The AIU sources provide ample evidence of the growing interaction between Baghdad's Jews and the Ottoman government. The Nourriel waqf affair demonstrates that the leaders of the Jewish community in Baghdad felt that their position was best served and defended by aligning themselves with the Ottoman government. The framing of their complaint as a defense of Ottoman territorial integrity in the face of European encroachment supports the observation that Baghdad's Jews were at least partially invested in the idea of their Ottoman citizenship. Furthermore, the local AIU committee's defense of the Turkish language as part of the curriculum also demonstrates that the imperial language was deemed vital to the correct education and development of the city's Jewish youth.

Other anecdotal evidence from the sources also attests to the growing integration of the city's Jews into the Ottoman imperial milieu, such as the rapid response of the provincial and central governments to complaints from the AIU and community leaders about anti-Semitic incidents in Baghdad and its environs, as well as the enthusiasm with which the most famed of
Ottoman modernizers, Midhat Pasha, was welcomed by the Jews of Baghdad as Vali in 1869. Called “The father of justice” by Baghdad’s Jews, Midhat’s close interaction with the school has been documented, and his support for Jewish education, his equal treatment of all religious groups, and his modern reforms instituted during his three year reign as Vali made him a figure of adoration amongst Baghdad’s Jewish population. Midhat’s interventions against anti-Semitic actors in Baghdad and Karadah received wide acclaim from Jews throughout the Iraqi provinces, and it was perceived amongst them that he would stop at nothing to ensure the equality of the Jews, even those living in the remote and mountainous Kurdish regions. This affection for Midhat and his policies supports the perception of a high level of Jewish support for the institutional and ideological changes of the Ottoman reform period.

The Tanzimat and the sweeping social and political changes wrought by the Ottoman reform period also opened heretofore-closed avenues of social mobility for Jewish individuals in Baghdad. The growth of centralized administration opened up bureaucratic positions that the educated Jews of the AIU schools were better able to fill than their Christian and Muslim counterparts. Baghdadi Jews entered the Ottoman Parliament in 1877 and 1908 as deputies, and many Jews profited from local positions in the administration of the vilayet. In sum, the Tanzimat not only ameliorated the AIU’s mission in Baghdad through enshrining the official equality of the Jewish population in Ottoman law and securing the city against anti-Semitic acts and tribal unrest; it also provided, through a concentration on fiscal and administrative centralization, opportunities for AIU graduates to move into the Ottoman civil service in clerical positions, as local administrators or even Parliamentary Deputies. The support of the Ottoman government was key to the success of the AIU’s mission in Baghdad, a fact supported by a glance at the changing fortunes of the school during the period of Midhat’s rule

166 Maurice Sawdayee, The Baghdad Connection, 31.
167 Andre Chouraqui, Cent Ans D’Histoire, 104.
and the limitations placed upon the organization and its mission during times of Ottoman opposition such as the dispute over the Nourriel waqf. The Tanzimat was one key factor in determining the success of the AIU’s mission, and is closely interrelated to two other key factors in this equation: commercial expansion and the growth of an active European presence in the region.

Baghdad had served as a centre for regional trade for centuries. The Ottoman Iraqi vilayets of Basra and Baghdad were integrated into the structure of an established regional market that included districts in Eastern Arabia, Southwest Persia, Kuwait and the Northern Gulf, and Baghdad was a natural staging point for goods coming to and from the regions as well as from the Indian Ocean trade.¹⁶⁹ This market changed considerably during the second half of the nineteenth century as economic expansion combined with growing Ottoman-British competition to forever alter the economic situation of Baghdad and the southern Iraq region. The expansion of trade occurred for a number of reasons, chief amongst them the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the resultant establishment of a shorter sea route connecting Basra with Europe. As such, the growth of trade in Baghdad and the Ottoman Iraqi provinces can best be understood when viewed in conjunction with the growth of a European presence in the region. Taken together, these two interrelated factors allow the further contextualization of the AIU’s mission amongst the Jews of Baghdad, as each spurred several local developments that contributed to the success of the endeavour. The growth in commerce and substantial Jewish participation in that trend provided the community with a new source of wealth and prestige, created a need for an educated workforce with an all-important knowledge of European languages, and fuelled the development of community and AIU infrastructure. At the same time, the growing European interest and presence in the region spurred French and British consular involvement, as well as European interest in the AIU’s mission and its schools in Baghdad.

The development of the Iraqi market for European goods and the growth of Iraqi exports to the world market experienced a massive expansion beginning in the mid-19th century. The improvement of river navigation was an early factor in this expansion. Year-round steamship navigation and passenger service on the Tigris between Basra and Baghdad was initiated by the Ottoman government in 1855, and the British Lynch Company founded the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company after receiving a concession from the Ottoman government to operate a freight service on the river in 1861. The Ottoman government followed suit in 1867, reducing the time for transport of people and goods between Baghdad and Basra from weeks to days. This allowed for the passage of goods more easily to Basra, and played a part in rejuvenating Iraq's ailing agricultural sector, fuelling exports to markets in Europe. The trade in dates, wheat, and barley increased exponentially between 1868 and 1913. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 established the first commercially viable sea route between Basra and the ports of Europe, and resulted in the shift of commercial priority away from the overland route through Syria to the sea route through the canal and to Basra. Goods destined for central and northern Iraq, north-eastern Arabia and Persia were then transported via the river route to Baghdad, which quickly became a storehouse of sorts for European goods destined for these markets. Iraq's foreign import trade increased from £294,000 in 1864 to £722,000 in 1880. Exports increased even more dramatically, from £89,000 to £1,275,000 during the same period. Imported British textiles alone increased from £51,000 in 1868-1870 to £1,128,000 in 1897-1899. The volume of trade clearly expanded at an astonishing rate, but the character of this trade was also changing, as Britain displaced India and the Ottoman Empire as the main trading partner of the southern Ottoman Iraqi provinces in this period. By the end of the period 1880-1914, Britain contributed half of all imports to the provinces of Iraq, and consumed half of all

172 Batatu, The Old Social Classes, 241.
173 Roger Owen, The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914, 182.
174 Roger Owen, The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914, 182.
175 Batatu, The Old Social Classes, 239-240.
Iraqi exports, far outstripping other European, Ottoman and Indian markets in this regard.\textsuperscript{176} The Capitulations regime removed virtually all barriers to trade for European merchants and allowed cheap British goods to flood the regional market.\textsuperscript{177} Much has been written about the decline of local production in various sectors of the Ottoman economy due to the influx of cheap European manufactured goods, but the increase in trade with Europe had many positive effects for the Iraqi economy and for the Jews of the Iraqi provinces in particular.

The Jews of Iraq benefited greatly from the expansion of European trade in the region, and the greatest number of these Jewish merchants was located in Baghdad and Basra. The former was the centre of the country's import trade, and the latter was the centre of the export trade. By 1879, almost the entirety of Baghdad's trade with England was in Jewish hands.\textsuperscript{178} The British Consul-General's report of 1910 noted that the Jews of Baghdad had monopolized the regional trade, and neither Muslim nor Christian merchants could adequately compete with Jewish mercantile power in the region.\textsuperscript{179} The report's author also noted that even Christian and Muslim merchants hired Jewish clerks because of their superior skills.\textsuperscript{180} The AIU sources illustrate this growing affluence amongst some members of Baghdad's Jewish community through the donation of substantial sums to the AIU by Albert David Sassoon in 1870 and Sir Eliezer Kedourie in 1903 for the construction of school buildings, and the attempted donations of the Nourriel and Daniel families in 1895. Furthermore, the growing commercial power of Jewish elites is also illustrated by the stiff opposition the AIU faced from other powerful Jewish merchants, including Abdullah Elias and Menachem Saleh Daniel, who used their Ottoman contacts to oppose the AIU. The power of the huge Jewish family trading dynasties of Sassoon, Kedourie, Yehuda, Ezra and others extended throughout the world. These Baghdadi merchants

\textsuperscript{176}Roger Owen, \textit{The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914}, 182.
\textsuperscript{177}Batatu, \textit{The Old Social Classes}, 237.
were active from Singapore and Hong Kong in the East, through the Middle East region to the 
manufacturing centres of Lancashire and Manchester.181

The expansion of trade in the southern Ottoman Iraqi provinces was accompanied by the 
expansion of European interest in the region. The founding of British and French consular 
missions in Basra and Baghdad demonstrates the new concern European governments had about 
Iraq. Serious British interest in the region began in the late eighteenth century due to concern with 
the security of the trade route to India and the threat of French interests in the area during the 
Napoleonic Wars. The British established a residency in Basra in the 1770's, which remained 
open permanently. The first British residency opened in Baghdad in 1798. It was closed in 1821 
after the victory over the French, reopening again in the 1830's as concern over Russian interests 
in the region grew.182 From the outset, the British Resident had considerable influence with the 
Mamluk pashas of Baghdad, often influencing decisions and giving advice. In addition, the 
Pashas hired British officers to captain their armed river vessels under the British flag.183

Britain continually struggled with the Ottoman government to remove traditional 
monopolies and other barriers to trade in various markets in the Empire throughout the 19th 
century. The Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1838 ostensibly affirmed the Ottoman commitment to 
free trade in return for British support against the military ambitions of the insubordinate 
Egyptian governor Muhammad Ali, but the practice of commercial monopoly-making by local 
governors and certain leading merchants allied with their administrations in Iraq continued well 
into the second half of the century. By the 1880's however, British trading power had bested these 
cabals and forced the region open to international trade.184

182 Fattah, The Politics of Regional Trade, 104-105.
183 Batatu, The Old Social Classes, 236.
The British presence in Baghdad was extremely useful for the AIU. British consular support for the school during the early period of its inception aided the organization's attempts to stave off community opposition and secure a funding base from wealthy elements of the large expatriate Jewish mercantile community in India, East Asia and Britain. The local AIU committee contacted the British and French consuls for support during several periods of conflict with elements of the local community leadership. Furthermore, the donations from Albert David Sassoon and Sir Eliezer Kedourie that facilitated the construction of school buildings were secured with the help of the British Consul-General in Baghdad. Most of the wealthy Jewish expatriate merchants were naturally aligned with British interest in the region and maintained British offices and warehouses, and often became British citizens. In 1910, as many as 20 firms owned by Baghdadi Jewish families conducted business in Manchester and London. The British consul therefore acted as an important link between these wealthy elements of the community overseas and the AIU's central and local leadership.

The British government took an interest in the Jews as a minority population in order to further its interests in the region. Jews acted as agents for British trading firms before the end of the East India Company's monopoly on British goods in 1813 and enjoyed protection as British protégés. The British were involved with the promulgation of the imperial decrees of 1839 and 1856, and pushed the Ottoman government to officially endorse the equality of its Christian and Jewish subjects, using military and economic aid as leverage. This process of European patronage of Ottoman Christian and Jewish populations in Iraq resembled the general process of minority-European interaction elsewhere in the Empire, with wealthy indigenous merchants gaining consular protections for their families and business interests and European passports in certain cases.

186Batatu, The Old Social Classes, 249.
The growth of commerce in Iraq had a direct effect on the job market in Baghdad, creating a need for educated clerks who not only demonstrated proficiency with numbers, reports and matters of business, but also English, the *lingua franca* of international trade. The AIU had made the English language a key component of its curriculum in Baghdad from the inception of the school in 1864, and concern for the teaching of English appears frequently in the sources. In certain cases, English even took precedence over French in the concerns of local AIU administrators, who were worried about future job prospects for AIU graduates. Acting Director Morris Cohen wished to change the basis of instruction from French to English in the 1880's, noting that the language was far more useful than French for young Jews attempting to obtain positions with local trading firms after graduation.188

The British consular report on the status of the Jewish community reported that the monopolization of trade by Jews extended to Muslim and Christian firms, which were forced to hire Jews as clerks because of their capable and industrious nature. The report's author also notes that due to their skill, these clerks were practically the managers of the firms that employed them.189 The success of the Jewish clerical class was due in large part to the advanced European language skills they had obtained from the AIU schools. The number of young Baghdadi Jews who spoke English was undoubtedly much higher than either their Muslim or even Christian counterparts, whose educational opportunities were much more limited in this regard. The same author claimed that the emancipation, prosperity and commercial success of the Jewish population in Baghdad were due to the work of the *Alliance* schools.190 A sermon delivered by Rabbi Shim'on Agassi around 1910 suggested that the popular perception amongst the Jews of the city was that graduates of the *Alliance* schools were far more educated and employable than their counterparts in the traditional *Midrasch*. Their literacy and knowledge of several languages made

them strong candidates for the best positions, and contributed to their growing prosperity. Though numerically inferior to those educated in community schools, many Alliance graduates possessed fluency in French, and some a working ability in English. This put the relatively small cadre of graduates into the highest educated stratum in their communities, and in turn magnified the influence of the Alliance. This was true for Istanbul as well, where Jewish graduates of the city's AIU schools delivered a “decisive stimulus” to their communities, despite their small numbers.

The growth of commerce and a European presence in the region also contributed to the process of change in Baghdadi Jewish social life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In their survey of the economic life of Jews in the Middle East, Michael Laskier and Reeva Spector Simon note that the Jewish participation in the booming eastern Mediterranean trade resulted in the “creation of a Jewish middle class, educated in Alliance schools, that was prepared to take the white-collar jobs available in both the European-based firms and the colonial bureaucracies,” beginning in Egypt and Iraq.

A similar model could be applied to the situation in Baghdad during the late 19th and early 20th centuries as the AIU churned out increasing numbers of graduates who sought employment in Jewish or Arab trading firms, in the ranks of Ottoman officialdom, or in the banking, credit and transport industries that grew up to support the burgeoning flow of goods and individuals through the city. There is some indication that the job market was extremely competitive. AIU functionaries expressed constant concern with their graduates finding adequate employment in Baghdad and the reflection that this would have on the school.

Despite some early obstacles to finding steady and profitable employment, the impact of this growing group of educated young Jews on their community and its institutions

---

191 Deshen, “Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times,” 194.
should not be underestimated. Shlomo Deshen notes that the late nineteenth century political life of Baghdad's Jews was unique in the scope of public participation and the amount of public discourse that surrounded various political issues.\textsuperscript{194} He cites the circulation of petitions against high taxation rates and the appointment of an unpopular candidate for Hakham Bashi as evidence of this behaviour, which was exceptional because political participation was broadening to include more than just hereditary notables.\textsuperscript{195} Deshen also mentions the growing evidence of class-consciousness in the Hebrew language sources from the period, and the tension between a mostly wealthy lay and rabbinical elite and other individuals within the community who were increasingly identifying themselves in terms of economic class rather than by ethnicity or genealogy.\textsuperscript{196} In his book \textit{A History of the Jews in Baghdad}, David Solomon Sassoon mentions a popular movement to remove Sassoon Ibn Elijah Smooha from the office of Hakham Bashi, observing that the "whole population" of Jewish Baghdad rose up to demand his removal from the post, accusing him of embezzlement of the \textit{bedel askeri} military exemption tax.\textsuperscript{197}

The subsequent defense of the Rabbi by none other than Menachem Saleh Daniel and other notables is recounted, as is the attempt by a group of prominent secular authorities to wrest control over taxation and finance from the \textit{hakham bashi}'s office led by Joseph Gourji.\textsuperscript{198} Gourji, a leading merchant in Baghdad, was very supportive of the AIU schools and was one of the few notables to send his children to the Albert Sassoon College.\textsuperscript{199} The above-mentioned sermon delivered by Rabbi Shim'on Agassi circa 1910 mentions the desire of a group within the community to take control of education from the traditional community notables and to turn it over to the \textit{Alliance}, a suggestion that the rabbi found repugnant and vowed he and other notables would fight with all their resources.\textsuperscript{200} These are different readings of the conflict between local

\textsuperscript{194} Shlomo Deshen, "Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times," 188-189.
\textsuperscript{195} Shlomo Deshen, "Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times," 188-189.
\textsuperscript{196} Deshen, "Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times," 194-196.
\textsuperscript{197} Sassoon, \textit{A History of the Jews of Baghdad}, 157.
\textsuperscript{198} Sassoon, \textit{A History of the Jews of Baghdad}, 158-164.
\textsuperscript{199} Elizabeth Antebi, \textit{Les Missionaires Juifs de la France}, 219.
\textsuperscript{200} Deshen, "Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times," 194.
notables and the *Rahema* group that was mentioned in Chapter One.\(^\text{201}\) The group's demand for more representation and transparency in community government was supported by AIU Director Nissim Albala and resulted in the creation of the elected *Majlis al-Jismani*, the council that oversaw taxation and management of community revenues. The change placed community fiscal affairs under the direction of elected laypersons from the community after years of rabbinical control. The AIU was a central force in this conflict, and was not a neutral, openly supporting the reformers. Through its position as the primary bearer of modern secular education, its opposition to some community leaders, and its open designs to assume control over the *Midrasch*, the AIU schools became focal points of social and political change. The community meeting at which the new *Majlis* was created was held at the Albert Sassoon College and was chaired by Albala, who brought the groups together to seek a solution. The school was clearly an important institution in the community, and the support its staff leant to the reformist cause was valuable.

In his work on the relationship between nationalism and the Ottoman *millets*, Kemal H. Karpat notes the structure of the entire *millet* system was changing during the 17\(^\text{th}\) and 18\(^\text{th}\) centuries, and that these changes helped engender the nationalist movements that arose within the Empire in the 19\(^\text{th}\) century.\(^\text{202}\) Although writing about the Greek Orthodox *millet* using Balkan sources, his theses are valuable for picturing the process of reform in all Ottoman minority communities. He traces the source of *millet* reform to the rise of new "entrepreneurial-commercial elites" and a "secular intelligentsia" amongst the non-Muslim population.\(^\text{203}\) The former pushed for *millet* reform and challenged the power of the religious leadership, using their wealth and social position to lobby the Ottoman government. In this category we can no doubt place men such as Menachem Saleh and Meir Elias, the wealthy leaders of the lay council. Although Karpat stresses competition between the new mercantile classes and the religious

\(^{201}\) The conflict was mentioned as an aspect of school Director Nissim Albala's letter to the Chief Rabbi of Istanbul Nahum Solokow. AIU I.C.2, Nissim Albala to Nahum Solokow, September 21\(^\text{st}\), 1908.


leadership as the main theme of their interaction, the Alliance data from Baghdad reveals that common interests often drew the lay and rabbinical leaders in the community together. This is perfectly illustrated by the reaction of the communal authorities during the Nourriel affair.

The “secular intelligentsia” on the other hand, were often from privileged families and studied abroad, or at the new modern schools opening in cities throughout the Empire. Karpat notes that this group's taste for French ideas, especially the idea of the secular nationalist state, brought them into conflict with the religious and lay leadership of the community, who were hostile to non-confessional forms of communal identity.\textsuperscript{204} The intelligentsia were the vanguard of the nationalist movement within the Ottoman millet communities, and pushed for a new definition of community based on ethnic and cultural distinctiveness. Their influence was nonetheless widespread due to the important professional positions they occupied by virtue of their education and social standing. This model fits the situation in Baghdad perfectly. The French-educated Jewish professional class, which was growing more prosperous and influential within the community with the help of the Alliance, challenged the lay and religious leadership on financial and political issues.

There can be little doubt that the AIU schools played an important part in the changing nature of political and social life in Jewish Baghdad. The school had been producing a growing cadre of young graduates who were increasingly finding employment in the booming economy and in the Ottoman administration. These young, middle-class Jews were becoming politically active. AIU functionaries had aligned the organization with certain members of the notable class, often against the majority of those notables holding religious and political power, and the organization's participation in community affairs is demonstrated by consistent mention of these activities in the AIU sources.

Furthermore, the organization fought its own battles with entrenched notable interests, and was therefore both a perfect locus for growing dissent with the traditional
leadership, and the source of education and ideas that helped to spur that very dissent. The AIU and its functionaries were naturally allied with the elements of the notable and middle class population who sought to see more consultation and public input in the affairs of the community; an agenda that was suited to the AIU's ambitions to enlarge its presence at the expense of the established elite. One would suspect that a good number of those who signed petitions and agitated for reform in the community were the same individuals who filled desks in the classrooms of the AIU's schools.

Despite the apparent clarity of these aspects in the history of Baghdad's Jewish community, the simple interpretation of this process - using traditional and modern, lay and rabbinical, light and dark - does not work in many cases. Some rabbis and merchants supported the schools and the presence of the AIU in their city enough to send their children there. Others fought the organization at every step. Their reasons for doing so were made on an individual basis and cannot be attributed to a central factor such as wealth, status or occupation. There can be no doubt that men such as community President Meir Elias or Rabbi Maalem Nissim viewed the AIU with trepidation and sought to contain its activities and the threat they posed to their own leadership in the community. This was a standard response of a notable class of elites who drew their power from their positions as representatives of the community in the Ottoman system. As such, they played the game of notable politics, and sought to preserve their own power bases whenever possible. The sources seem to suggest that by the beginning of the First World War, they were fighting a losing battle against an increasingly powerful middle class that was supported by certain notable elements and the AIU. This opposition to the community leadership manifested itself in protests against financial mismanagement, ineffectual governance and poor community education. The AIU administrators wanted to see a change in the community political structure that would allow them to strengthen their position in the city, and as such they were natural allies of the middle-class reformers. Furthermore, many of the reformers were

204 Kemal H. Karpat, "Milletts and Nationality," 158-159.
undoubtedly graduates of the AIU schools and may have structured their demands for change according to the ideals and values instilled in them by their education.

An additional factor that impacted the world of Baghdad's Jews in this time period illustrates the pattern of social change. Secularism was a by-product of the change in the community in the late 19th and early 20th century, and most Jewish communities in North Africa and the Middle East were not exempted from this development. The interesting thing about secularism is how the group of notables most affected by its appearance – the rabbinical establishment – responded to this challenge. Many leading rabbis in Baghdad were not unduly alarmed at the prospect of transgression of the law. The rabbis tended to view secularism as the product of certain wayward individuals who posed no direct threat to the future of their positions in society, or the religious base of the society itself. Indeed, even though the rabbis protested against the secular curriculum of the AIU on more than one occasion, scholars have noted that the AIU schools were not seen as a direct threat to the interests of the rabbinical establishment or the world that they inhabited. Furthermore, this establishment responded differently to the changes that modernity introduced into their societies than did their Ashkenazi counterparts.

The Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, that began in Europe in the mid-19th century was different in form and substance than the experience of modernity in the Middle East and North Africa. Zvi Zohar notes in his exploration of Sephardi responses to modernity that modern change in the Jewish communities of the Middle East involved no organized anti-clerical movement as it did in Europe. This lack of anti-clericalism meant that most Middle Eastern rabbis welcomed many modern changes and did not resort to the formation of a defensive orthodox position as their European counterparts did. The assertion, "Torah prohibits the new," that was developed by rabbinical opponents of Haskalah in Europe had no analogue in Baghdad, Cairo or Istanbul.

205Deshen, "Baghdad Jewry in Late Ottoman Times," 196.
Zohar mentions the moderate rulings of rabbis like Joseph Hayyim and Abdallah Somekh on issues of modern technology, secular education and relations with non-Jews in the Tanzimat era, illustrating the openness of rabbis to the changes the modern era brought to Baghdad. Zohar’s example of Hakham Joseph Hayyim includes his support for the introduction of secular subjects into the curriculum of the Midrasch. Hayyim and Somekh, the most luminous of Baghdad’s rabbis, were supportive of the school and of many current developments in Baghdad and were not engaged in a narrow defense of tradition and observance. This seems to support the earlier assertion that this conflict cannot be characterized as one of modernity versus tradition; instead it was a disputation over the perceived challenge of a European Jewish organization to established leadership of Jewish Baghdad.

This similarity is most striking when one considers the way in which notables in Baghdad must have perceived these movements and their impact on the Jewish community. Both threatened to change the way in which the community was organized, what it meant to be Jewish, how the community would interact with non-Jews, and most importantly, how the community should be led. There can be no doubt that certain elites opposed the AIU’s mission in Baghdad in order to defend their own power, position and wealth, but perhaps it should be added that these individuals also had a personal investment in the structure of their own community that transcended considerations of power or status, an investment that was built on personal experience and genuine affection for their community and its way of life.

While some welcomed the changes the AIU schools represented, others like Menachem Saleh Daniel decided that they would rather defend their communities from this perceived threat. They considered certain aspects of the AIU’s mission erosive in terms of community structure and their own power. Many factors informed the decision of some lay and rabbinical notables to oppose the AIU and certain aspects of change in Baghdad, but the overriding factor may have been the level to which a given notable felt personally invested in not

---

Zvi Zohar, “Sephardic Rabbinic Responses to Modernity: Some Central Characteristics,” in Deshen and
only the political and social structures of his community, but the degree to which he felt these structures must be maintained in the face of external and internal challenges to their then-present form.

The power of the local Jewish leadership and the structure of Baghdad's society were each defined by particular institutions and conventions through which the community governed itself and interacted with the Muslim and Christian communities. The universal Jewish values of the Alliance brought the organization into conflict with the leadership over local issues on many occasions. In this way, the AIU and the Zionist movement both represented a challenge to the particular interests of Baghdadi Jewish society. The idea of a universal Jewish community, Zionist or not, raised fears amongst the leaders of the community who drew much of their authority from maintaining the delicate intercommunal balance between the Jewish minority and the Muslim majority in their particular region of the Ottoman Empire. The fact that the Jewish community grew wealthier, more numerous and more prominent than ever before between 1864 and 1914 complicated matters. It is useful to note that Arab Muslims faced this same problem during the Ottoman period, when allegiance to a universal Islamic Empire with a ethnically varied population was challenged by a nascent Arab nationalism. The post-Ottoman period has also contained evidence of this conflict between the local and universal in Baghdad. The resistance to the Mandatory British occupation of Iraq was not only grounded in local notable attempts to preserve their privileges, but on opposition to a very real threat posed by perceived imperial aggressors. It would seem this also holds true for the current insurgency against American dominance in the country. The key factor in both cases has not been resistance to change itself, but the forced application of change by outside forces promoting universal ideals like regional and international stability, human rights and access to resources. In many ways, this is the same situation that underpinned the conflict between AIU functionaries and local notables in Baghdad.

Zenner Eds., Jews Among Muslims. Communities in the Precolonial Middle East, 71-76.
CONCLUSION

The advent of the First World War interrupted the AIU’s mission in Baghdad. The Ottoman government closed the schools, deported European staff members, and conscripted many of the city’s Jews into the armed forces. Many did not return from their period of service on various battlefronts. When the schools re-opened, it was under a completely different set of circumstances. The British had occupied the city, and the era of Ottoman control over Baghdad was at an end. The Alliance nevertheless remained a fixture in the community until the 1950s, when the mass exodus of Iraqi Jews to Israel made its work in the Jewish communities of Iraq moot. The schools of the AIU in Baghdad operated for some ninety years, educating thousands of students and spreading the influence of French culture, language and thought throughout the region. The legacy of these schools was strong in the minds of those who had attended them. Elie Kedourie wrote of his Alliance schoolmaster “Rigour and clarity of thought, and a spare and elegant style in which to express it: these were the hallmarks of his teaching, and its beneficent influence is always apparent to me whenever I have occasion to put pen to paper.”

These words reveal the depth to which modern education and the staff that bore it to the Jewish children in Baghdad penetrated the consciousness of those they taught; the mission did not end happily, nor did some twenty five hundred years of Jewish residence in the lands of Iraq. However, the mission must be considered a success in light of the goals articulated by representatives of the organization. The pupils of the AIU were instrumental in changing the tenor of life in their communities in numerous ways; through political participation, secular beliefs and behaviours, participation in the economy, or re-imagination of the self, these Jews were the force that created the conditions for change in Jewish Baghdad. The growing wealth and
influence of Jewish merchants in Baghdad must be seen in part as a product of the educational opportunities offered by the AIU, and as means for sustaining these opportunities through the expansion of employment, wealth and population, all which could be considered aspects of the modern era.

However, the representatives of the AIU did not import the conditions for modernity to Baghdad. These conditions were created by the combination of modern educational methods and a challenging and practical curriculum with the pupils who absorbed, replicated and in the case of those who went on to the ENIO and to teach for the Alliance, redistributed these methods and ideas throughout the community. Indeed, any AIU graduate can be seen in this way; this replication and redistribution would occur within his or her own home, as the values of a modern education would have most likely been imparted in the children of the household. Other aspects of modernity, such as newspapers, nationalist sentiment and perceptions of the political community were enabled in part by the AIU. Al-Misbāh, the first Jewish newspaper published in Baghdad, was printed from 1924-1929; Solomon S. Shina, a member of the local Zionist organization, published the newspaper. Nationalist sentiment grew in different forms; although Zionism was prevalent amongst the poor and middle classes beginning in the 1920's, the leaders of the community tended to view it with trepidation, as the comments of Menachem Saleh Daniel in Chapter 3 illustrate. Daniel served as a Senator in the Iraqi Parliament during the Mandate era, and can be characterized as an Iraqi nationalist through his remarks on the future of Jewish participation in the Iraqi state and the threat posed to this by Zionism. These remarks illustrate nicely the idea that although local notables may have opposed the AIU (none more so than Saleh), their concept of Jewish life in Baghdad was not divorced from modernity in any way: they merely conceived of it differently. Rather than viewing the Jewish people as a nation without a home, or as a nation united by a scriptural humanist tradition, Saleh viewed the Jewish position in post-war Iraq thusly: “The country is now trying to build up a future of its own, in which the Jew

is expected to play a prominent part. The task will be of extreme difficulty and will need a strained effort on the part of every inhabitant. Any failing on the part of the Jew will be most detrimental to his future."

The AIU contributed to this modernity, certainly, but the ultimate forms it took were not a product of imported knowledge or traditions. Modernity arose in the conditions created by these Jews as they encountered and dealt with modern education, international markets, foreign peoples and languages, and new forms of social organization in their community. Although the AIU students may have been influenced by their experiences in the classrooms of the Albert Sassoon College or the Laura Kedourie School for Girls, their modernity should be no more privileged than that of a wealthy merchant like Menachem Saleh Daniel, who had different ideas about how the Jews should be organized and represented but was no less modern than the pupils in question. To position the story of the AIU’s mission in Baghdad as one of tradition versus innovation is to do just that; by identifying the AIU as the bearer of modernity, the implicit suggestion is made that real modernity was French, and flowed from Europe into the region. The creation of modernity did not merely take place in the Paris of the French Revolution or the Lancashire mills of the Industrial Revolution, but in the growing interconnectedness of the world market in places like Iraq, Indonesia and the Caribbean, and in the spread of new conceptions of community, representation and self throughout many areas of the world.

Scholars of non-European histories have displaced the location of European modernity. The impact of the colonial venture on the creation of the modern subject and social discourses on race, gender and sexuality is the focus of much contemporary scholarship on the Middle East, India and Asia during this period. This study aims at providing a case history whereby the entrance of modern education affected the world of Jewish Baghdad, contributing to an environment characterized by economic growth, the Tanzimat reforms, and political change. The story of the AIU’s mission in Baghdad, its relationship with local Jewish notables, and the

effect the organization had on Baghdad's Jews is only part of the equation of modernity in the city and region. The negotiation of the complex issues at stake by the AIU's functionaries and the local elites of the Jewish community offers insight into the process whereby the conditions of modernity were created. The complexity of the positions taken by various groups and actors at various times emphasizes the folly of categorizing change in as simple a manner as modernity versus tradition. To do so not only ignores the complex relationship of individuals as outlined in the chapters above, but places the responsibility for modern change in the region squarely on the shoulders of those men and women who journeyed from Europe to teach at the AIU schools. This is a mistake that in turn ignores the large-scale developments of the time, as well as the growing relationship of humanity around the world within matrixes of trade, migration and social discourse. Only one small part of this process concerns Baghdad, an even smaller part the schools and instructors of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. 
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle: Paris, France

Files on Iraq
I.B.5 (Joseph Danon, Rivca Nouriel, Farha Sulman Daniel)
I.C.1-3 (Consular Agents,
I.E.2-3 Isaac Lurion
II.E.3 John Muattar/AIU Students
IV.E.28 Morris Cohen
VII.E.75 Jacques Louria

AIU Publications


Secondary Sources

A. Books


B. Articles & Book Chapters: