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ARTICLE

Making an Arab-Muslim Elite in Paris: The Pan-Maghrib Student Movement of the 1930s

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Abstract

This paper aims to clarify the scope and limitations of the ideals of Pan-Maghrib nationalism as developed by the Association of North African Muslim Students in France (AEMNAF) in the 1930s. The AEMNAF members' inclination toward sciences and technology and their emphasis on conserving their mother culture made them consider Arabism and Islam their most important identity markers. Moreover, the AEMNAF created a sense of solidarity among Maghribi students in France and extended its social influence by cooperating with French and Mashriqi opinion leaders in Europe. However, the AEMNAF's narrow definition of Muslim-ness and its elitist nature led to the exclusion of Maghribis with French citizenship from the organization. The dualistic view of technology and culture in Maghribi nationalist thought also contributed to prioritizing Francophones over Arabophones, Muslims over non-Muslims, men over women, and students in the sciences over those in humanities.

Keywords: 1930s; Maghrib; nationalism; France; student politics

This paper examines a Pan-Maghrib solidarity movement by the Association of North African Muslim Students in France (Jamʿiyyat Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin bi-Faransa; Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-Africains en France; AEMNAF), which was founded in Paris in 1927, as an example of metropole-based activism of young Maghribi nationalists during the interwar period.[1] Although Paris was an important center of anti-colonial activism in the interwar period for not only Maghribis but also other Asians and Africans, the city held exceptional status for the AEMNAF as the capital of the French colonial empire and the source of cultural capital.[2] Moreover, their status as students of higher education, and not workers or businessmen, determined how AEMNAF members tackled cultural and political issues within their own societies. Consequently, the AEMNAF ended up remaining relatively autonomous from outside political organizations such as the French Communist Party (CPF) and the Étoile Nord-Africaine (ENA), an association for Maghribi migrants in France founded in 1926.[3] Moreover, after their return, ex-members of the AEMNAF would become principal actors of the nationalist movement in the three Maghribi countries from which they hailed (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco); they also would be prominent leaders of the postcolonial Maghribi nation-building process. By analyzing

[1]Founded in France as the *Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-Africains*, the association added "en France" to its name officially in 1937. See Charles-Robert Ageron, "L'Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-africains en France durant l'entre-deux-guerres. Contribution à l'étude des nationalismes maghrébins," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 70, no. 258/259 (1983): 25. In this paper, the association is abbreviated as AEMNAF, even for the period prior to 1937.

[2]For the role of global megacities in the formation of anti-colonial movements during the interwar period, see Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015). For Moroccan nationalists' activities in global cities, see David Stenner, *Globalizing Morocco: Transnational Activism and the Postcolonial State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019).

[3]The ENA embraced anti-imperialism and produced Maghribi nationalist leaders such as the Algerian Messali Hadj (1898–1974).

the ideological orientations of the AEMNAF, I suggest that many cultural and social issues that Maghribi governments have dealt with in the postcolonial period—institutional reforms for national education, religion as national identity, and the promotion of science for development—had long been discussed by the AEMNAF. I argue that in the general approach of AEMNAF members toward these issues a certain continuity can be observed between the interwar period and the postcolonial period, despite many contextual differences. At the same time, the study shows that students of different cultural backgrounds were divided when they debated controversial subjects (such as the status of Islamic educational institutions in the Maghrib). This reflected discursive competitions to define national culture and identity among Maghribis.

Scholars of the Maghrib, like those of Middle East studies in general, have seen an evolution in their concept of nationalism. In classic studies of nationalism in the Maghrib, the historical development from reformism toward radicalism or revolutionary nationalism was taken for granted.[4] Contrary to this teleological view, recent studies have focused on a variety of political agendas promoted by different types of anti-colonial movements. Some have focused on apolitical as well as culturalist types of nationalism (e.g., Islamic reform movements) and legalist nationalism, which have survived and developed even after the emergence of radical nationalism.[5] Others broadened the analytical range of nationalist ideas by showing the compatibility and mutually interactive relationship among different scopes of national consciousness, such as regional identity, one-state nationalism, Pan-Maghrib nationalism, Pan-Arabism, and Pan-Islamism.[6] These different ideologies and cultural inspirations have coexisted, associated with one another, and sometimes competed over representation of the nation.[7] This paper contributes to the studies of nationalism in the Maghrib by examining how Arabism and Islam emerged as essential identity components for the young French-educated Maghribi nationalists and how their presence in France affected their political options. It also suggests how the views on science of the AEMNAF students differed from those of graduates from Maghribi Islamic institutions (such as the al-Zaytuna and al-Qarawiyyin mosques).

Scholars have already studied the AEMNAF as a hub of an anti-colonial nationalist movement, despite its officially apolitical nature, by emphasizing that it ended up harboring and forming young activists who would later become members of Maghribi nationalist parties, such as Algeria's Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (MTLD), Tunisia's Néo-Destour party, and Morocco's al-Istiqlal party.[8] Charles-Robert Ageron, a leading scholar of French colonial history, even referred to the AEMNAF as the "Gotha of Maghribi nationalism."[9] However, the AEMNAF students' modernizing project has not been fully analyzed. For instance, Ageron referred to a potential contradiction between the anti-French attitude the AEMNAF students expressed in their attachment to the Arab language and Islam as well as their refusal of political and cultural assimilation to the French, and their encouragement for

[4]See John Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912–1944* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Ali Mahjoubi, *Les origins du movement national en Tunisie, 1904–1934* (Tunis: Publications de l'Université de Tunis, 1982); and Mahfoud Kaddache, *Histoire du nationalisme algérien*, 2 vols. (Algiers: EDIF 2000, 2003). For a critique of the natural transition theory, see Adria Lawrence, *Imperial Rule and the Politics of Nationalism: Anti-Colonial Protest in the French Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[5]Mukhtar al-ʿAyyashi, *al-Zaytuna wa-l-Zaytuniyyun: Fi Taʾrikh Tunis al-Muʿasir, 1883–1958* (Tunis: Markaz al-Nashr al-Jamiʿi, 2003); James McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Malika Rahal, *L'UDMA et les Udmistes: Contribution à l'histoire du nationalisme algérien* (Algiers: Barzakh, 2017).

[6]James McDougall, "Dream of Exile, Promise of Home: Language, Education, and Arabism in Algeria," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 2 (2011): 251–70; Jonathan Wyrtzen, *Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); Amal Ghazal, "Tensions of Nationalism: The Mzabi Student Missions in Tunis and the Politics of Anticolonialism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, no. 1 (2015): 47–63; Amal Ghazal, "Counter-Currents: Mzabi Independence, Pan-Ottomanism and WWI in the Maghrib," *First World War Studies* 7, no. 1 (2016): 81–96.

[7]McDougall, *History*, 9.

[8]The MTLD (Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques, 1946–54) was a political party founded by Messali Hadj to succeed the Parti Populaire Algérien (1937–39). They represented radical nationalism in Algeria, which produced future leaders of the Front de Libération Nationale (1954–). The Néo-Destour party (founded in 1934) and the al-Istiqlal party (founded in 1943) were the leading nationalist parties in Tunisia and Morocco, respectively.

[9]Ageron, "L'Association," 27.

Maghribi youth to receive higher education in France.[10] On this point, Michael Goebel, a historian of anti-imperialism in the third world, rightly argued that young students from Asia and Africa in Paris shared the idea that they should learn from Western nations for the national salvation of their own countries.[11] To further analyze the ideological scope as well as the limits of the AEMNAF, this paper focuses on its crucial role as an association with a particular group consciousness, which defended its own material and moral interests. It addresses how AEMNAF members shaped conservative ideas on nation and society in light of historical contexts encompassing the Maghrib and France. It argues that the AEMNAF sought to cultivate a common social development project for the three Maghribi nations. This project was to be based on a common model inspired by European technological experiences and later applied in their homelands. The social project contained ideas and worldviews that would provide moral authority, especially to the French-educated elite in the Maghrib. Despite further transformations in the ideologies and activities of Maghribi nationalist movements, the essence of this social project survived in nationalist thought, surpassing differences between reformist and radical nationalisms.

This research is primarily based on sources published by the AEMNAF during the 1920s and the 1930s, including proceedings of the annual Pan-Maghrib student conventions between 1931 and 1935, as well as the association's annual bulletins, covering its activities between 1928 and 1932. I have limited my analysis to the period before World War II because the AEMNAF's activities were interrupted by the war.[12]

ISLAM, ARABISM, AND PAN-MAGHRIB SOLIDARITY

The idea of founding a student association for Maghribi students in France drew inspiration from Vietnamese students , who founded the General Association of Indochinese Students in March 1927.[13] During this period between the two world wars, anti-colonialism and transnational solidarity movements attracted students from Asia and Africa. Goebel described the AEMNAF as "typical of the various anti-imperialist student organizations," similar to those run by Chinese, Latin American, and Vietnamese students, although he admitted that the AEMNAF was more inclined toward Arab nationalism than the Comintern.[14] The difference between Maghribi students and students from these other regions resided in the former's preference for religious definitions of national consciousness (i.e., their emphasis on Islam as the essential national identity and the Arabic language as a reference of Islamic civilization), rather than secular ideologies such as class consciousness, anti-racism, or transnational solidarity among oppressed peoples.

Sliman ben Sliman (1905–86), a Tunisian medical student and a future member of the Néo-Destour party, mentions in his memoirs the enthusiasm expressed by many Maghribi students for the new, promising notion of a Pan-Maghrib union.[15] In their speeches and writings, AEMNAF leaders talked about a united North Africa based on a common history and culture. The Pan-Maghrib student conventions, organized five times following the AEMNAF's initiation during the 1930s, became opportunities for young Maghribi students to develop this natural nexus into an institutional one.[16] At the 1935 student convention in Tlemcen, the AEMNAF president, al-Habib Thamir (1909–49), a Tunisian medical student, gave an opening speech in which he characterized the Maghrib as "one country (*waṭan wāḥid*)."[17] Moreover, the AEMNAF embraced Arabism and Islam as indigenous identities of the Maghribi nations and factors of their mutual solidarity. The AEMNAF students' understanding of being Muslim was quite narrowly defined, especially after 1930. In the AEMNAF's annual bulletin

[10]Ibid., 46.

[11]Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*, 147.

[12]When the AEMNAF resumed its activities after the war, its nature was altered from that of a spontaneous student movement to that of a satellite organization of Maghribi political parties. See Mohammed Harbi, *Une vie debout: Mémoires politiques*, vol. 1, *1945–1962* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), 98–104.

[13]AEMNAF, *al-Nashriyya al-Sanawiyya, 1928–1929* (Tunis: al-Matbaʿa al-Tunisiyya, 1929), French, 3; Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*, 136–48.

[14]Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*, 142–48.

[15]Sliman ben Sliman, *Souvenirs politiques* (Tunis: Nirvana, 2017), 49–50.

[16]The conventions took place in Tunis (1931), Algiers (1932), Paris (1933), Tunis (1934), and Tlemcen (1935).

[17]AEMNAF, *Nashrat al-Muʾtamar al-Khamis, Tilimsan fi Sibtambir 1935* (Tunis: al-Matbaʿa al-Tunisiyya), 4–7.

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published in 1929, Tahar Sfar (1903–42), a Tunisian student of law and then-president of the AEMNAF, stated that the association was for Muslims simply because Maghribi Jews already had their own organizations of mutual aid, and that the appellation did not suggest any religious nature of the association.[18] Nevertheless, in 1930, the AEMNAF began to exclude Maghribis holding French citizenship from membership following a request from Moroccan and Tunisian members, on the pretext that such people were not Muslims.[19] This measure dissatisfied some Algerian members who were excluded because of their French citizenship, such as ʿAmar Naroun (1906–88) and Ahmed Boumendjel (1906–82), who joined another, nonreligious association, the Association des Étudiants Musulmans Algériens en France. The AEMNAF also warned that some Maghribi students in France were believed to have completely frenchified their lifestyle by advocating for secularism or marrying French women. The AEMNAF deemed these attitudes to be a denial of the mother culture and a loss of the Muslim faith; it spoke on behalf of people in their homelands who hesitated to send their children to France for fear of seeing them transformed into strangers upon returning to their native societies. At the third student convention in 1933, held in Paris, a report by Mongi Slim (1908–69), a Tunisian student of law and a member of the AEMNAF, discouraged Tunisian students abroad from abandoning their studies or marrying foreign (especially French) women and encouraged them to work for their countries once they returned home. The same report argued that marrying foreign women was just like naturalization as Frenchmen, which was considered an act against Islam and patriotism.[20]

The AEMNAF's exclusiveness as an organization for Muslims only, especially after 1930, was associated with the political activism of Moroccan students in this period. In 1930, the so-called Berber Decree (*ẓahīr*), which placed the Berber tribes under customary law, was promulgated in French Morocco. Moroccan students criticized the decree as a tool of French colonial policy to separate Berbers from Arabs in Morocco; they further argued that it violated Islamic legal principles.[21] When Moroccan nationalists inside the country protested against the decree, Moroccan students in Paris launched a campaign to sway global public opinion by appealing to the foreign press, with support from influential protagonists such as Shakib Arslan (1869–1946), the prominent Lebanese Arab nationalist who lived in Geneva. The Moroccan students, the majority of them from urban Arab families, referred to Muslim legal status (rather than a particular legal status for Berbers) and the Arabic language (versus the French and Berber languages) as factors unifying all Moroccan nationals against colonial plots for divide and rule.[22] In this context of globalizing protests against colonial policies, the AEMNAF students embraced Muslim identity and Arabism as symbols of national culture for all Maghribis.

The AEMNAF's categorical refusal of naturalized Maghribis and Maghribis married to European women also should be understood in light of the fear shared by AEMNAF members of how the Maghribi general public perceived their presence in France. There were suspicions of cultural corruption through excessive acculturation and loss of one's cultural identity as a Maghribi or a Muslim during one's stay in France. To dispel fears of cultural betrayal, AEMNAF students needed to demonstrate that they were not in France for individual academic achievement, but rather for the future progress of their homelands. Thus, being a student in France required a sort of apology: students should maintain their original culture in the purest form and prove their patriotic intentions. The AEMNAF members condemned culturally frenchified students for not protecting their own cultural authenticity. In Paris, the AEMNAF taught its students Arab and Islamic culture through public conferences and evening Arabic language classes in a room owned by the Paris mosque.[23] The AEMNAF advocated for national (*qawmī*) education for Maghribi students in France to avoid producing students who knew more about Jeanne d'Arc better

[18]AEMNAF, *al-Nashriyya al-Sanawiyya, 1928–1929*, French, 15.

[19]"Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-africains de Paris (1 Avril 1935)," report, Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris (hereafter APPP), BA 2172, ASS 857–6; Ageron, "L'Association," 32; Guy Pervillé, *Les étudiants algériens de l'université française, 1880–1962* (Paris: Édition du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984), 91–92.

[20]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith li-Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin, Baris, Sanat 1933* (Tunis: Matbaʿat al-Ittihad), 110–14.

[21]Wyrtzen, *Making Morocco*, 138–48.

[22]Ibid., 138–50.

[23]"A.s. de l'Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-africains en France: Activité politique (18 Juillet 1931)," report, APPP, BA 2172, ASS 857–6.

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than Muʿawiya.[24] In a report presented at the 1933 student convention, al-Habib Thamir even suggested making it compulsory for Tunisian students abroad to learn Arabic (*al-Fuṣḥā*) and Arab history.[25] As will be described, the AEMNAF claimed that Arab history was an essential part of "national education" to teach the Maghribi masses their authentic culture. They claimed the same for the French-educated elite in France. Thus, the students who gathered at the AEMNAF attempted to establish their credibility and moral authority in the eyes of the Maghribi public.

The AEMNAF definition of its members' Muslim identity was determined by the particular relationship between the legal status of the natives and the Muslim religion in colonial Maghrib. In the colonial Maghrib, native Muslims did not enjoy legal rights attached to French citizenship, whereas French settlers in the Maghrib were guaranteed these rights.[26] Religious attributes of the Muslims were reduced to a particular legal status called Muslim personal status, under which they were subject to "Islamic law" as defined by the colonial powers. The Muslims who individually claimed French citizenship (the "naturalized") had to renounce their Muslim personal status, along with fulfilling various conditions. Thus, Muslim scholars accused Muslims with French citizenship of apostasy. Moreover, in the Tunisian and Moroccan protectorates, Muslim personal status was attached to Tunisian and Moroccan nationality, respectively; Muslims who abandoned their Muslim personal status to obtain French citizenship were considered not only apostates but also unpatriotic.[27] Unlike in Tunisia and Morocco, where Maghribis held Tunisian or Moroccan nationality, Algerian Muslims did not hold local nationality since Algeria was part of France and Algerian Muslims were French subjects without French citizenship. Therefore in Algeria the question of naturalization was understood as that of access to rights that accompanied French citizenship, rather than a political choice between Tunisian or Moroccan citizenship and French citizenship. Although naturalization technically raised the issue of apostasy in Algeria, Algerians did not necessarily deem naturalized Algerians traitors to the Algerian nation.

The difference in the situation between Algerians and Moroccans or Tunisians was ignored by the AEMNAF leadership. At the 1933 student convention in Paris, the naturalized Algerian Boumendjel recommended dividing the AEMNAF into Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan branches and including naturalized Algerian students in the Algerian branch. This suggestion stirred negative reactions among Tunisian and Moroccan members and was eventually rejected. Muhammad al-Fasi (1908–91), a Moroccan student of literature and then-president of the AEMNAF, affirmed that he would not allow any divisions among the members and that naturalized Algerians could participate in the AEMNAF only as sympathizers.[28]

The exclusion of naturalized Algerians happened partly because the association's leadership was dominated by Moroccan and Tunisian students, who combined were more numerous than the Algerians, and partly due to the differences in the students' social backgrounds. Many AEMNAF members witnessed social class differences between (and among) Moroccan, Tunisian, and Algerian students. The Tunisian Ben Sliman testified that the Moroccan AEMNAF members were sons of grand bourgeois, and there were fewer Algerian students in France than Tunisians.[29] He also stated that Tunisians were divided between those who came from Tunis and those from inland towns. Coming from a modest family in Zaghouan, a mountainous town in northern Tunisia, Ben Sliman was among the latter group, along with his fellow members, who were graduates from the al-Sadiqi school.[30] According to a report

[24]AEMNAF, *al-Nashra al-Sanawiyya 1929–1930* (Tétouan: al-Matbaʿa al-Mahdiyya, 1930), Arabic, 7–8.

[25]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 114–16. In the original wording, Thamir stated "his [the student's] language (*lughat-hu*)" to mean *al-fuṣḥā*.

[26]Patrick Weil, *Qu'est-ce qu'un Français: Histoire de la nationalité française depuis la Révolution* (Paris: Grasset, 2002), 225–44.

[27]The nationalists' condemnation of naturalized Maghribis was expressed in campaigns against burials of the latter in Muslim graveyards. See Mary Dewhurst Lewis, "Necropoles and Nationality: Land Rights, Burial Rites and the Development of Tunisian National Consciousness in the 1930s," *Past and Present* 205, no. 1 (2009), 105–41.

[28]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 93–94.

[29]The reason for the scarcity of Algerian students in France was the very limited availability of scholarships for Algerian Muslims, based on the pretext of the existence of Algiers university. See AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 121; AEMNAF, *Nashrat al-Muʾtamar al-Khamis*, 17–18.

[30]Ben Sliman, *Souvenirs*, 48–49. Al-Sadiqi school was a modern school for secondary education established in 1875 in Tunisia. Although students from Tunis and the Sahel, the country's wealthiest regions, comprised the majority of al-Sadiqi students, modest families from northern, central, and southern parts of the nation could send their children to the school thanks to

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submitted to the third student convention in 1933, all of the fifty Algerian students in Paris suffered from material hardship.[31] Mohammed Harbi (1933–), a future historian and an AEMNAF member at the beginning of the 1950s, also described the poverty of the Algerian students, who did not have their own student housing, although Moroccans and Tunisians did by this time.[32] A report from the archives of the Paris Prefecture of Police indicates the housing rent of some board members elected in January 1930. Muhammad al-Saqqa, the AEMNAF president, was a Tunisian medical student and a son of a qadi in Sousse; he paid 800 francs yearly for his room in Paris.[33] The assistant secretary, Ahmed ben Milad, another Tunisian medical student, paid 650 francs yearly. Moroccan members on the board seemed much wealthier. The vice-president, Muhammad al-Fasi, rented a room for 400 francs monthly; Ahmed Balafrej, a Moroccan student of literature and then secretary-general, also paid 400 francs per month for his accommodation.[34] Such data reveal socioeconomic stratification among very wealthy Moroccan students, upper-middle-class Tunisians from Tunis and the Sahel (which likely included al-Saqqa), lower-middle-class Tunisians from rural towns (such as Ben Sliman), and Algerians who were deprived of the equivalent of Tunisian or Moroccan governmental support meant for Muslim students abroad.

The AEMNAF leadership resorted to the idea of Maghribi unity to help conceal such social splits among members. In 1928, Ben Sliman, along with his colleague Bahri Guiga (1904–95), an al-Sadiqi graduate from the Berber village of Takrouna, suggested that the AEMNAF should be divided into three separate student associations for the three Maghribi countries. However, other students, fascinated by Pan-Maghrib ideology, insisted on maintaining a united association for the three countries.[35] Students of modest social origins, who had asked for three different associations to be created, probably did so because they could not identify with members who came from more advantageous backgrounds, such as the Moroccan students. The 1928 incident is significant, especially when we consider the future position of Sliman ben Sliman. During his stay in Paris, he became a sympathizer of Indochinese students who were engaged in anti-colonial political activism. Being close to the communist movement in the Cold War context, he was excluded in 1950 from the Néo-Destour party led by Habib Bourguiba (1901–2000).[36] Ben Sliman's support for revolutionary, supra-Maghribi anti-colonialism seems to have annoyed both the AEMNAF leadership and that of the Néo-Destour.

In both cases—the exclusion of naturalized Algerians and the 1928 protest by Tunisian students from more modest social backgrounds who proposed dividing the association—AEMNAF leaders resolved to maintain one united Pan-Maghrib association. AEMNAF leadership prior to World War II, rooted in an elitism, downplayed social cleavages to maintain a narrow definition of Muslim identity via Muslim personal status and to presume the cultural and social homogeneity of the Maghribi students.

THE STUDENTS' GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS AND THEIR DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY

The elitist nature of the AEMNAF leadership is closely related to the group consciousness that the organization wanted to forge among Maghribi students in France. The leadership defined the movement as an association for self-help and exchange between future elites in the three Maghribi countries, who were willing to introduce necessary reforms to the existing regimes. The Tunisian, Tahar Sfar, explained in the AEMNAF bulletin why Maghribi students required a united association. He declared that future Maghribi elites would *not* need a politically united Maghribi state, but rather a mutual aid group where they could discuss common social issues faced by their respective countries, and exchange

scholarships. See Noureddine Sraïeb, *Le collège Sadiki de Tunis, 1875–1956: Enseignement et nationalisme* (Paris: CNRS, 1995), 202–3, 210.

[31]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 92.

[32]Harbi, *Une vie*, 103. Unlike Tunisian and Moroccan students who enjoyed material support (including housing) from their own governments, Algerians, who were considered French, rarely had access to French governmental aid. See also note 29.

[33]The al-Saqqa family was a wealthy family from the Sahel region. See Khalifa Chater, "Les élites du pouvoir et de l'argent: Le cas de la Tunisie aux XIXe–XXe siècles," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, nos. 46–47 (1993), 162–64.

[34]Directeur des renseignements généraux et des jeux, Préfecture de police de Paris au préfet de police, Paris, 10 Février 1930, APPP, BA 2172, ASS 857–5.

[35]Ben Sliman, *Souvenirs*, 49–50.

[36]Ibid., 51–54, 250–72.

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opinions to enable action on the same principles in the future.[37] The AEMNAF leaders were aware that they were privileged elites who, they presumed, deserved to become leaders of their countries once they returned home. After returning home, ex-AEMNAF members, finding that the colonial regimes would not allow them to seize control of national politics, turned against the colonial regimes, especially following World War II. Despite their changed relationship with colonial regimes, the Pan-Maghrib group consciousness would remain within the Maghribi nationalist elite.[38]

AEMNAF's annual student conventions dealt with topics directly related to educational reform (Table 1). After each convention, the participants submitted resolutions to the Moroccan, Tunisian, and Algerian governments on projects for reform. Their efforts highlight the degree to which the movement aimed for these governments to reform—rather than separate from—their respective colonial regimes. Far from revolutionary activism, the AEMNAF's regular activities in France aimed to help Maghribis study in France through various measures. It provided student members in need with loans from its treasury; it also informed Maghribi youth about different schools and universities, as well as student life in France, through its bulletins.[39] It created a club (*nādī*) for students in Paris where cultural conferences were held. It even opened a student restaurant in the club for a certain period. It collected books—from school textbooks to books on Arab history and culture—and Arabic periodicals from different countries to make them available in the library attached to the club. The AEMNAF repeatedly asked Maghribi and French authorities to expand scholarships for sending more students to France, as well as to extend student discounts for transport.[40] Contrary to Vietnamese or Cuban students, who claimed that the construction of a Maison Indochinoise or Maison Cubaine at the Cité Universitaire in Paris was an act of colonial paternalism, the AEMNAF petitioned French authorities to found a North African House in the Cité to benefit students.[41] The AEMNAF bylaws declared material aids and mutual exchanges among students as its goals. In the bulletin of the year 1931–32, al-Habib Thamir, the Tunisian who was the AEMNAF's secretary-general at that time, reviewed the association's activities and stated that one of its contributions was to get people from the Maghrib to recognize the importance of higher education and reassure anxious parents who were sending their children to France with practical information.[42] A short report on statistical facts about Maghribi students in France, published in the same bulletin, said: "We hope that the number of our students [in France] increases in the near future so that the renaissance of our country will come rapidly."[43]

The AEMNAF students shared the belief that material and civilizational progress in their countries depended on the expertise and skills they could acquire from education in France, especially when Morocco and Tunisia lacked universities and Algiers University only had a limited number of Muslim students.[44] For this reason, and from an evolutionist perspective of civilization, AEMNAF members thought that sending more students from the Maghrib to France for higher education was an urgent issue, to bring the Maghrib up to the level of developed European countries. The need to learn modern sciences and technology from Western countries for the "renaissance" of the Arab world had already been emphasized by the 19th-century Nahda movement as well as the Islamic reform movement led by the Egyptian Muhammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905).[45] The AEMNAF repeated the same claims about

[37]AEMNAF, *al-Nashriyya al-Sanawiyya, 1928–1929*, French, 14; Arabic, 16–17, 20.

[38]On colonial policies for the educated Tunisians and Moroccans, see Pierre Vermeren, *La formation des élites marocaines et tunisiennes* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), 118–22; and Mohammed Bekraoui, "Les étudiants marocains en France à l'époque du protectorat 1927–1939," in *Présences et images franco-marocaines au temps du protectorat*, ed. Jean-Claude Allain (Paris: Harmattan, 2003), 89–111.

[39]AEMNAF, *al-Nashriyya al-Sanawiyya, 1928–1929*, French, 7; Arabic, 23–26, 37–38; *Nashrat al-Jamʿiyyat li-ʿAmay 1931–1932* (Tunis: Matbaʿat al-Ittihad), 6.

[40]AEMNAF, *al-Nashra al-Sanawiyya 1929–1930*, French, 1–2; Arabic, 3–4; *Nashrat al-Jamʿiyyat li-ʿAmay 1931–1932*, 8, 14–21.

[41]See an article by Ahmed ben Milad in AEMNAF, *al-Nashriyya al-Sanawiyya, 1928–1929*, French, 17–20; Arabic, 27–34. See also Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*, 140–42, 145.

[42]AEMNAF, *Nashrat al-Jamʿiyyat li-ʿAmay 1931–1932*, 9–10.

[43]Ibid., 28.

[44]There were ninety-two Algerian Muslim students registered at Algiers University in the year 1930–31, or 4.5 percent of all students. See Pervillé, *Les étudiants*, 29–30.

[45]Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1789–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 81, 90; Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 76, 122.

Table 1. Subjects Discussed at the First Five AEMNAF Annual Conventions (1931–1935)

Convention	Theme of Session	Reports
1st	Higher Education	Tunisian Students in Higher Education
(Tunis, 1931)		Moroccan Students in Higher Education
	Situation of Arab Education in North Africa	al-Zaytuna (Tunisia)
		al-Qarawiyyin and Religious Institutes in Morocco
		Arab Education in Algeria
	Industrial Education	Tunisian Industrial Education
	Education of Women	Education of Women in North Africa (Especially Tunisia)
2nd	Arabic Language Education	Arab Education in Algeria
(Algiers, 1932)		Education of the Arabic Language in the Rif Region (Morocco)
		Education of the Arabic Language in Tunisia
	Job Opportunities for Graduates	Job Opportunities for Tunisian Students
		Job Opportunities for Algerian Diploma Holders
		Engineers and Entrepreneurs (Tunisia)
		Job Opportunities for al-Zaytuna Students (Tunisia)
	Education of Arab History	History Education in Morocco
		History Education in Tunisia
		History Education in Algeria
	Arab Primary Education	Primary Education in Morocco
		Situation of Primary Education in Tunisia
3rd	Training of Teachers and Professors	Training of Teachers and Professors in Tunisia
(Paris, 1933)[a]		Training of Teachers and Professors in Algeria
		Training of Teachers and Professors in Morocco
	Improving the Situation of Students in Higher Education in North Africa and Abroad	Situation of Moroccan Students in Higher Education
		Situation of Algerian Students in Higher Education
		Improving the Situation of Tunisian Students in France
	Sending Students to Europe and the Mashriq	Sending Tunisian Students to Europe and the Mashriq
		Sending Moroccan Students to Europe and the Mashriq
		Sending Algerian Students to France
	New Regimes in al-Zaytuna and al-Qarawiyyin	al-Qarawiyyin and the New Regime (Morocco)
		Ben Yusuf Institute in Marrakech (Morocco)
		The New Regime of al-Zaytuna (Tunisia)
	Primary Education in Morocco	Traditional Primary Education for Boys
		al-Qur'anic Schools for Girls
		Modern Primary Education for Boys

(*Continued*)

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Table 1. (*Continued.*)

Convention	Theme of Session	Reports
	Arabic Language Education in Algeria	Arabic Language in Algerian Education
4th	Free Muslim Education	Free Muslim Education in Algeria
(Tunis, 1934)		Arab Education for Tunisian Girls
		al-Qurʾanic Schools in Morocco
		Free Muslim Education in Tunisia
	Improving the Material Situation of Students in Muslim Education	Tunisian Students in Muslim Education
	Modern Secondary Education	Secondary Education in al-Zaytuna (Tunisia)
		Secondary Education in Tunisian Modern Schools
5th	*École unique*[b] in Algeria	*École unique* and Its Application in Algeria
(Tlemcen, 1935)	Arabic Language Education in Algeria	Suggestions for the Algerian Government
	The Unification of Moral Education (*al-tarbiya*) in North Africa	Unified National Education (*al-tarbiya al-qawmiyya*) in North Africa
	The Fight against Illiteracy in North Africa	The Fight against Illiteracy in North Africa
	Questions Unique to Algeria	The Material Situation of Algerian Students; Job Opportunities for Algerian Students; Algerian Students in al-Zaytuna; Algerian Students' Military Service

Source: Table compiled by the author based on AEMNAF proceedings.
[a]Although the bylaws of the convention prescribed that the three Maghribi countries should host annual conventions in turn, the third convention, in 1933, initially planned for Fès, was eventually held in Paris due to a ban by protectorate authorities in Morocco.
[b]*École unique* is a schooling system that accepts students according to their intellectual level, regardless of age or diploma.

scientific progress and cultural authenticity. However, unlike the Arab elite during the Nahda era, AEMNAF students had to resort to both Maghribi and French public opinion to have their voices heard: their future status as national leaders in the Maghrib was not guaranteed by the colonial regimes, and they had to find allies to enhance their social influence.

One of their allies was the emerging Maghribi emigrants' movement. The AEMNAF developed a relationship with the ENA, situated in Paris.[46] In 1933, the AEMNAF invited Messali Hadj, the ENA leader, to the closing dinner of the student convention in Paris.[47] The organ of the ENA, *El Ouma* (The Nation) also influenced the creation of a magazine, *Maghreb,* by some Moroccan members of the AEMNAF.[48] However, despite such diplomatic relationships with the emigrant organization, the AEMNAF's activities as a student organization seem to have become autonomous from the ENA by the time the student conventions started in 1931.

The bylaws of the Pan-Maghrib student conventions, drafted by the AEMNAF, divided participants into three categories: (1) active members, composed of students in higher education (including European-style universities and Islamic institutions such as al-Zaytuna and al-Qarawiyyin); (2) assistant members, who were secondary education students; and (3) advisory members, comprised of teachers, professors, board members of civil society educational associations, and technical advisors invited by the organizing group of each convention. Only active members could submit reports, participate in

[46]Ageron believes that the ENA and the French Communist Party were involved in the creation of the AEMNAF. See Ageron "L'Association," 28–29; Vermeren, *La formation,* 97–98.

[47]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 166; "Discours prononcés au cours du banquet organisé par les Étudiants Musulmans Nord-africains au Palais de la Mutualité, Salle E, le 29 Décembre 1933 à 21 heures," report, APPP, BA 2172, ASS 857–5.

[48]Guillaume Denglos, *La revue Maghreb (1932–1936): Une publication franco-marocaine engagée* (Paris: Harmattan, 2015), 65.

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discussions, and vote for resolutions; participants of the other two categories could only attend meetings and speak with special permission from the president of the convention, who was president of the AEMNAF.[49] In reality, teachers and professors were actively involved in the discussion, but the rule was applied to those who were not engaged in education. Mufdi Zakaria, an Algerian graduate of al-Zaytuna and a poet, expressed his dissatisfaction when his candidacy for a committee to evaluate al-Zaytuna's education was rejected at the 1932 convention in Algiers because he was no longer a student.[50] Zakaria complained publicly that it was unfair to exclude ex-students who were engaged in activities other than education from the convention's membership.[51] The exclusivity of participation, which was reserved for current students, suggests that the AEMNAF intended to make the annual conventions represent the interests of young students, staying away from any political parties or older generations. Similar to its mutual aid activities for students in Paris, the AEMNAF attempted to foster group consciousness and protect the common interests of Maghribi students.

The AEMNAF had its own networks to effectively make its voice heard by the public. Its audience included not only Maghribis and people from the wider Arab world; it also sought to influence French public opinion. The authors of the congratulatory letters sent to the third student convention in Paris (1933) included Andrien Marquet, socialist and mayor of Bordeaux; Felicien Challaye, a philosopher and human rights activist; Francis Jourdain, an artist and left-wing activist; Eugène Jung, a writer and colonial affairs expert; Louis Roubaud, a journalist; and the renowned novelist and future minister of culture, André Malraux. General Édouard Brémond, who was a supporter of the Arab revolt in the Hijaz (1916–18), attended both the inauguration and closing meetings.[52] The list suggests that the AEMNAF attempted to co-opt French colonial policy through influential political and cultural figures in France. The movement also maintained a friendship with Shakib Arslan, the Arab nationalist in Switzerland, as mentioned above.

The scope of the diplomatic networks of the AEMNAF indicates that it hoped to gain as much social influence as possible in both Europe and the Maghrib while maintaining its relative autonomy as an organization to protect students' interests. Its location in Paris enabled it to create these global networks.

MEDICINE AND LITERATURE: BETWEEN THE SCIENCES AND NATIONAL CULTURE

Another feature of AEMNAF ideology was that its members established a division (if not a hierarchy) between technological sciences and culture. First, it is important to note that the majority of Maghribi students in France in the 1930s majored in the sciences. In the academic year 1931–32, of the 151 students in France (among whom 119 were Tunisians, 21 were Algerians, and 11 were Moroccans), 56 studied medicine, 37 engineering, 10 pharmacology, 8 dentistry, and 4 natural sciences, versus 26 in law and 10 in literature.[53] These figures represent the students' inclination toward professions such as medicine and law. In the interwar period, an increasing number of Maghribi youth preferred politically neutral, socially privileged liberal professions to scarce jobs in public administration.[54] Moreover, AEMNAF students considered the sciences to be a sign of advanced civilization. In 1930, the association organized a ceremony in Paris to celebrate the 1,000-year anniversary of the death of Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi (d. 925 or 935), the famous 9th–10th-century Muslim physician and alchemist. The event included a French speaker, a professor of history of medicine in Paris, and was attended by Maghribi, French, and other participants. The student participants, such as Ahmed ben Milad and Ahmed Balafrej, emphasized the prosperity of medieval "Arab" medicine, which surpassed European medicine at the time.[55] Through its bulletins, the AEMNAF led a campaign to promote the sciences (medicine, pharmacology,

[49]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 167.

[50]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thani li-Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin, al-Jazaʾir, Sanat 1932* (Tunis: Matbaʿat al-Ittihad), 58.

[51]Ibid., 85–86. In reply to the inquiry, the president of the convention confirmed that those who had expertise but currently were engaged in activities other than education could become (technical) advisors.

[52]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 15–16.

[53]AEMNAF, *Nashrat al-Jamʿiyyat li-ʿAmay 1931–1932*, 29–30.

[54]Vermeren, *La formation*, 87.

[55]AEMNAF, *Nashrat al-Jamʿiyyat li-ʿAmay 1931–1932*, 22–26.

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engineering, and agriculture) and practical social sciences (commerce and economics) as majors for Maghribi students for the sake of material development in the Maghrib nations.[56]

Although the value of technology and the sciences was considered universal, that of humanities (such as language and literature) was regarded as unique to each nation. Arab literature and language were deemed a field of study that could never be mastered by Western scholars. At the 1933 annual student convention, ʿAbd al-Rahman Yasin, an Algiers University student of literature and secretary of the Association des Étudiants Musulmans d'Algérie, harshly criticized the competence of European professors at Algiers University.[57] He asserted that they rarely knew Arabic and provided only elementary-level teaching for a few selected literary texts.[58] He pointed out that such education was only adequate for training Arabic interpreters, not Arabic professors. At the same convention, Muhammad al-Fasi, then-president of the AEMNAF, shared with ʿAllal al-Fasi (1910–74), an al-Qarawiyyin student and future al-Istiqlal leader, a similar claim regarding French orientalists' competence in teaching Arabic to Maghribis. However, al-Fasi opined that the pedagogy was better in French institutions than in Maghribi ones.[59] These discourses suggest that Arab literature and language were considered areas in which Maghribis could compete with European scholars. The belief that French scholars knew Arab culture only at a superficial level involved technical questions but also was based on the idea that Arab culture embodied a spiritual value. Arabic language and literature represented Maghribis' authentic native culture; only they could possess the highest knowledge in these fields.

As stated above, the AEMNAF regarded Arabism and Islam as essential parts of Maghribi national identity. Thus, the AEMNAF made *al-Fuṣḥā* the official language at its annual student conventions and repeatedly stressed that Arabic education should be strengthened in public school curricula. The reporters of the session on Arab history education at the 1932 student convention in Algiers criticized public school curricula, which centered on French history. They claimed that Maghribis had the right to learn about their own heritage, which was part of Arab and Islamic history.[60] At the 1935 student convention in Tlemcen, the education in Arabic language and literature, as well as Islamic religion and civilization, was promoted as "national education" (*al-tarbiya al-qawmiyya*) for the Maghribi public. Sadiq al-Muqaddim, a Tunisian medical student and reporter at the session concerning unified national education in the Maghrib, declared that public primary schools in the entire Maghrib should set aside time to teach North African history and the Arabic language. He also suggested that at the societal level the Maghribi ʿulamaʾ and cultural associations should make efforts to spread Islamic instruction by organizing public conferences or lectures. For al-Muqaddim, these measures were meant to restore self-confidence and nationalism (*qawmiyya*) based on Arabism and Islam in a united way in North Africa.[61]

In this way, the AEMNAF had two stated goals for learning: (1) to boost the economies and material development of Maghribi nations and catch up to Western countries (this mainly involved the technical sciences); and (2) to preserve national culture (this referred to Islamic sciences, history, and the Arabic language).[62] Regarding the former objective, the AEMNAF believed that France and Europe had an overwhelming advantage over Maghribi countries. For the latter goal, the AEMNAF envisioned Maghribis themselves developing the essence of their authentic culture and spreading it to the masses. The public should learn about and support the Maghribi "national" culture (symbolized by Arabism and Islam). The

[56]Ibid., 31–32.

[57]Founded in 1919 in Algiers as the Amicale des Étudiants Musulmans de l'Afrique du Nord, the association represented Algerian Muslims among university students in Algeria and had Ferhat ʿAbbas (1899–1985) as one of its leaders. See Pervillé, *Les étudiants*, 89.

[58]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 162–63.

[59]Ibid., 50–51.

[60]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thani,* 85–109.

[61]AEMNAF, *Nashrat al-Muʾtamar al-Khamis,* 13–15.

[62]See AEMNAF, *Nashrat Mahadir Jalsat Muʾtamar Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin, Tunis, Sanat 1931* (Tunis: al-Matbaʿa al-Ahliyya), 23–24. Such division between old and new sciences also has been discussed regarding the Mashriqi countries. See Hoda A.Yousef, "Reassessing Egypt's Dual System of Education under Ismaʿil: Growing ʿIlm and Shifting Ground in Egypt's First Educational Journal, *Rawdat Al-Madaris*, 1870–77," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 1 (2008): 109–30; Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), ch. 6.

claim for utilitarian values of Western technology, which paralleled the spiritual values of authentic culture, also was observed in the Islamic reform movement in the Maghrib.[63] Effectively, the AEMNAF had a close relationship with Maghribi Islamic reformists such as the Moroccan ʿAllal al-Fasi, Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani (1889–1984) from Algeria, and al-Fadil ben ʿAshur (1909–70) from Tunisia.[64] However, the AEMNAF as a student organization in France had its own ideological inclinations.

First, AEMNAF members supposed a hierarchy, not only a division of labor, between European and Arab educational institutions that those educated in Arab institutions did not necessarily defer to. For the AEMNAF, the division between the sciences and culture, which included a division of labor between elites and the masses, effectively brought about a certain hierarchization of the sciences and their exponents. Only upper and middle class males trained in institutions of higher education, especially those in Europe, could assume the burden of importing the fruits of the technical sciences into their native countries. Other categories of people, such as the general public, women, and students at Islamic institutions in the Maghrib, did not deserve the role of leading material development in the region. Second, AEMNAF members, who wished to participate in national policies in the Maghrib that had been controlled by the French, did not suppose any radical bottom-up social changes. This made them different from the workers' movements in the Maghrib. This avoidance of radical social changes persisted until they realized that they would not be able to become policymakers as long as the French monopolized power. To replace the older elite or the French administrators who dominated the countries, ex-AEMNAF members began to claim their legitimate rights to determine their countries' policies.[65] Even after their engagement in more radical (independentist) forms of nationalism, the French-educated elites, especially those of Morocco and Tunisia, supported the elite status of science to prevail over other groups of nationalists.

The AEMNAF's attitude toward women's education illustrated this hierarchized view of science quite clearly. First, no women seem to have attended the annual student conventions. Only one woman wrote in the AEMNAF's annual bulletin. Tawhida ben Shaykh, a Tunisian medical student who would become the first female physician in Tunisia, published an article in the bulletin in 1928–29 on the international residence for female students where she lived in Paris.[66] Despite the absence of women's participation, women's education in the Maghrib was repeatedly discussed at the annual student conventions (1931, 1933, and 1934). Al-Sadiq Bousifara, a Tunisian medical student and a member of the AEMNAF, reported on female education in Tunisia during the 1931 convention in Tunis.[67] Bousifara emphasized that French education for girls would result in moral corruption because French-educated women would only know about French history and geography, ignoring their own history, and would desire physical freedom (to travel, hang around cities, or visit cafeterias). He defined women's roles in society as giving birth to children and bringing them up. From this perspective, girls should only be educated in Arabic, the language of the nation. One resolution at the session stated that the purpose of girls' education was to enhance girls' intelligence, preparing them for raising children, housekeeping, and some manufacturing skills in case they needed to help their households in a material sense. Another resolution called for creating national (*qawmī*) schools for educating girls in Arabic, which were to be distinguished from French-style public schools.[68] For the Tunisian al-Habib Thamir, women should be educated because they would pass on the ethics (*akhlāq*) of society (*umma*) to future generations, and because without educated women educated Maghribi men would choose European women as their companions.[69] In this way, the AEMNAF students agreed that women only needed Arabic and spiritual (i.e., religious) education, not education in technological sciences that would enable them to realize professional

[63]McDougall, *History*, 113; al-ʿAyyashi, *al-Zaytuna*, 54–67.

[64]Al-Madani was a member of the Association of Algerian Muslim ʿUlamaʾ, a journalist and historian. Al-Fadil ben ʿAshur was a son of Muhammad al-Tahir ben ʿAshur and a scholar from al-Zaytuna.

[65]Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830–1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 167–77; Bekraoui, "Les étudiants," 109.

[66]AEMNAF, *al-Nashriyya al-Sanawiyya, 1928–1929*, French, 21–23; Arabic, 35–36.

[67]For Bousifara, see "A.s. de l'Association des Étudiants," APPP, BA 2172, ASS 857–6.

[68]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Mahadir Jalsat Muʾtamar Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin, Tunis, Sanat 1931*, 100–108. Here, *qawmī* schools refers to private schools created by Maghribi Muslims.

[69]AEMNAF, *al-Nashra al-Sanawiyya 1929–1930*, Arabic, 10–16.

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activities outside the household. The only profession they recognized for women was that of teaching female students, but this also was limited to teaching girls about religion, Arabic, and patriotism.[70]

This conservatism that the AEMNAF expressed toward women's education reflects what Partha Chatterjee called the "women's question."[71] According to Chatterjee, nationalist elites in Asia and Africa considered women to be part of their spiritual tradition, or "an inner domain of sovereignty," which should be distinguished from the material side of life. In this way, nationalist elites—dominated by middle-class men—rejected the cultural Westernization of women and confined women's roles to the spiritual and symbolic life of the nation.[72] This patriarchal aspect of nationalism has been criticized not only by postcolonial theorists but also by Arab feminists.[73] The point here is that the AEMNAF members conceived of the dichotomy between the inner and outer domains of education as a linguistic one. As they charged Arabic education with the role of fulfilling the nation's spiritual needs, not practical ones, they agreed that women's education should be conducted only in Arabic. Such a narrow definition of the inner and outer domains did not represent the voices of women themselves, nor did it gain a full consensus from Arabophone students. In the end, the status of Islamic educational institutions became a focus of controversy among students.

THE STATUS OF ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS

The division that the AEMNAF established among different sciences and the social roles it attributed to each field reflected the vision of Maghribi elite students toward their society and the social roles they tried to fulfill. The majority of these students in France, who majored in science or law, shared a sense of a mission for bringing progress and prosperity to their own countries through their expertise in foreign languages and technology. Those who studied the Arabic language, literature, and religion should contribute to the creation and promotion of national identity in Maghribi society. This mission should be achieved in Arabic because it was considered to be the only national tongue. Although the AEMNAF students tried to introduce modernizing reforms to Arabic education in the Maghrib, they never expected it to replace French education in technology and the sciences. Some students, who were educated in Maghribi Islamic institutions, admitted the incapability of such institutions to integrate modern sciences. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Yaʿalawi, an al-Zaytuna graduate of Algerian background and a Tunisian Old-Destour party activist, stated at the 1933 Paris student convention that the goal of education in al-Zaytuna was teaching Arabic (*al-lugha al-ʿArabiyya*, meaning *al-Fuṣḥā*) and Islamic sciences, thus imparting a particular culture to its graduates.[74] He added, "We do not require that al-Zaytuna train scholars in chemistry, math, or other fields."[75] However, others aimed at realizing a culturally equal status between Arab and French education in the Maghrib. Thus, Muhammad al-Tahir ben ʿAshur, the rector of al-Zaytuna in 1933 and from 1945–56, would try to make it a school of higher education that taught both technical and Islamic sciences in Arabic.[76] More traditionalist people from Islamic institutions simply deemed modernizing reforms as unnecessary and disturbing.[77]

[70]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Mahadir Jalsat Muʾtamar Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin, Tunis, Sanat 1931*, 107.

[71]Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), ch. 6.

[72]Ibid., 117–21.

[73]See Leila Ahmed's criticism on Qasim Amin's *Liberation of Women* (1899) in *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 162–63. See also Omnia El Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 129–30; Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Marriage of Feminism and Islamism in Egypt: Selective Repudiation as a Dynamic of Postcolonial Cultural Politics," in *Remaking Women,* 243.

[74]Al-Yaʿalawi was an Algerian who grew up in Tunisia. He was already known in Tunisia for his political articles in the 1920s. See Muhammad Butayyibi, *Dawr al-Muthaqqafin al-Jazaʾiriyyin fi al-Haraka al-Wataniyya al-Tunisiyya ma bayna 1900–1930* (ʿAin Mlila: Dar al-Huda, 2012), 110–14.

[75]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 51.

[76]The modern section of al-Zaytuna was created in 1950 and introduced a curriculum comprising religious sciences, history and geography, Arabic literature, philosophy, mathematics, and physics in Arabic. It also included classes on French and English. See ʿAli al-Zidi, *Taʾrikh al-Nizam al-Tarbawi li-l-Shuʿba al-ʿAsriyya al-Zaytuniyya, 1951–1965* (Tunis: Manshurat al-Markaz al-Buhuth fi ʿUlum al-Maktabat wa-l-Maʿlumat, 1986), 165–375.

[77]Modernizing reforms introduced in al-Qarawiyyin in the 1930s were met with resistance by students, especially those from rural areas. See Geoff Porter, "The Qarawiyin Mosque Student Strike of 1937," *Journal of North African Studies* 15, no. 4 (2010): 557–72.

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The hidden hierarchy of the sciences and the humanities continued to haunt elite Maghribi nationalists postindependence, promoting conflict among them. Ex-AEMNAF members who became ministers during the postcolonial period pursued the Arabization of education. Muhammad al-Fasi, nominated in 1955 to be the minister of education for the first all-Moroccan government, led the policy. Al-Fasi Arabized the first grade in primary schools as early as 1957, one year after Morocco's independence.[78] In Tunisia, Mahmud al-Masaʿdi (1911–2004) was charged with the Arabization when he was minister (secrétaire d'état) of education between 1958 and 1968.[79] He abolished French-language education in the first two grades in primary schools in 1958 and modernized Arabic education. Al-Masaʿdi was known for having advocated bilingualism; that is to say, the use of French starting in secondary education, in addition to Arabic, which was the national language. He considered that being bilingual would allow the Tunisian national identity to "regenerate, blossom, and develop in tune with the modern world."[80] A similar philosophy of bilingualism already had been expressed at the AEMNAF's fourth student convention in Tunis in 1934. One of the Tunisian reporters, whose name is printed as Mahmud al-Saʿdi (probably al-Masaʿdi), presented a report on modern secondary education in Tunisia. He emphasized the danger of French schools assimilating Tunisians to be culturally French, but he also advocated for bilingual education based on the model of al-Sadiqi school in Tunis. He claimed that "today we are facing a degree of civilization that obliges us to adopt from the West" and that intellectuals' purpose was to serve as mediators between the Tunisian people and Western civilization.[81] In Algeria, al-Madani would represent its ʿulamaʾ, who contributed to defining cultural identities for postcolonial Algeria as Arabic and Islamic, although they surrendered real political power to militaries and politicians.[82]

In this way, ideas about the association between Arabic and national identity, Islam as the national religion, and civic values (as national ethics to be taught in primary education to the masses), were perpetuated in the postcolonial Maghrib. On the other hand, French remained the language of technology, progress, and civilization, as affirmed by al-Masaʿdi. Even today, Maghribi industries favor French-educated youth, despite the increasing number of Arabic-educated youth.[83]

In this context, the conflict observed in the 1930s between students who had been educated in Islamic institutions in the Maghrib and some AEMNAF members regarding necessary reforms in these institutions and the evaluation of educational institutions in the Mashriq is important to analyze. During the 1931 student convention, an al-Zaytuna graduate, al-Fadil ben ʿAshur, proposed sending Tunisian delegates to universities in Egypt and Syria, in addition to Europe, to improve the pedagogy of al-Zaytuna professors.[84] In 1931, an al-Qarawiyyin student, ʿAllal al-Fasi, asserted that Mashriqi professors should be invited to al-Qarawiyyin, or al-Qarawiyyin students should be sent abroad to become future al-Qarawiyyin professors.[85] These two participants in the 1931 convention were graduates from Maghribi Islamic institutions, not regular members of the AEMNAF. Their propositions indicate that students and professors of Islamic institutions in the Maghrib regarded their Mashriqi counterparts a model to follow for pedagogy and scientific knowledge.

[78]Gilbert Grandguillaume, *Arabisation et politique linguistique au Maghreb* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1983), 71, 89. For Muhammad al-Fasi's coherence of ideas on education from the colonial period to the time of his service as minister of education, see John Damis, "The Free-School Movement in Morocco, 1919–1970," (PhD thesis, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1970), 193–204.

[79]Grandguillaume, *Arabisation*, 46–47.

[80]Ibid., 64.

[81]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Rabiʿ li-Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin, Tunis ʿAm 1934* (Tunis: al-Matbaʿa al-Tunisiyya), 16.

[82]McDougall, *History*. Algerian Arabization was different from that in Tunisia and Morocco because of more severe exclusion of Arabic from public education during the colonial period and a greater role of private schools in Arabic education. However, even in the Algerian social movement for spreading private Arabic education, there was spontaneous acceptance of the prestige of French public education. See Ouanassa Siari Tengour, "Les écoles coraniques (1930–1950): Portée et signification," *Insaniyat,* no. 6 (1998): 85–95.

[83]Charis Boutieri, "In Two Speeds (À Deux Vitesses): Linguistic Pluralism and Educational Anxiety in Contemporary Morocco," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44, no. 3 (2012): 443–64.

[84]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Mahadir Jalsat Muʾtamar Talabat Shamal Ifriqiya al-Muslimin, Tunis, Sanat 1931*, 46.

[85]Ibid., 66–67.

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When it comes to evaluating educational institutions in the Mashriq, the AEMNAF members disagreed with graduates from Islamic institutions. At the 1933 convention in Paris, the first session on the training of teachers and professors divided the participants into two camps. Some advocated for inviting Mashriqi teachers or sending students to the Mashriq to train future educators; others opposed these ideas, stating that the Mashriqi countries did not have the same degree of civilizational progress as did Europe, or were not even as advanced as those in the Maghrib. Those who represented the latter opinion included ʿAli Belhawan and Salih ben Yusuf, Tunisians who studied in French higher education institutions and were AEMNAF members.[86] These two future leaders of the Néo-Destour party claimed that sending students to European universities was a better choice than inviting Mashriqi teachers to the Maghrib.[87]

The AEMNAF members who studied in French institutions underestimated Islamic institutions inside the Maghrib. ʿAli Belhawan harshly criticized the education provided in al-Zaytuna in his report, submitted to the 1932 student convention in Algiers. He contended that no modernizing reforms had been realized in al-Zaytuna, and that its pedagogy, which centered on memorization, remained archaic. Belhawan deplored the decline of Arab culture in the Maghrib and called for following a Mashriqi model for the study of modern Arabic literature.[88] He faced immediate backlash from al-Zaytuna graduates and professors such as Tawfiq al-Madani, Muhammad Salih al-Nayfar, Mufdi Zakaria, and Basaʿid ʿAdwan ibn Bakir, who stressed al-Zaytuna's cultural productivity. In the end, Belhawan admitted that his criticism had been excessive. Session participants agreed to rewrite Belhawan's report on Arabic education in Tunisia.[89] From these two episodes we can understand that, for French school graduates of the AEMNAF, the Mashriqi countries occupied an ambiguous place: they could offer a potential model for development in the Maghrib, but only in the field of Arabic and Islamic education, and never in the sciences or pedagogy. Moreover, their perception of the "crisis" of Arab culture in the Maghrib was based on very scarce knowledge of that field.

If the AEMNAF students were inclined toward a Eurocentric worldview, which took European superiority in technology, the sciences, and pedagogy for granted, those who were from the two grand mosques in the Maghrib highly estimated the Mashriqi institutions and tried to cooperate with their Mashriqi counterparts to preserve the mosques' social prestige. In this way, potential rivalry between the elite educated in France and those educated in Arab and Islamic institutions started to appear in the 1930s. I argue that this rivalry was not only about the intellectual capacity of Mashriqi educational institutions, but also about the future status of Arab or Islamic education in the Maghrib. Later, the competition between the two elites would intensify in Tunisia. In the 1950s al-Zaytuna students launched an organization to defend their own interests, faced with the economic advantages of French-style-school graduates.[90] In Morocco, where the social status of al-Qarawiyyin graduates and their autonomy from the state were better preserved, resistance against al-Qarawiyyin reforms among its students was so great that Muhammad al-Fasi, the ex-AEMNAF president and a Sorbonne graduate, was nominated by the sultan in 1942 to take up the reforms as the rector.[91]

CONCLUSION

As a gradualist nationalist organization, the AEMNAF aimed in the 1930s to modernize the Maghribi countries so they might rival "advanced" European ones. Its nationalism constituted the attempt to absorb European technology and sciences to contribute to the modernization of the Maghrib back home. Despite its promotion of sending students to France, the AEMNAF created a collective identity based on Arabism and Islamic culture among these Maghribi elites so that they could maintain their authority over the masses. It also tried to shape a sense of solidarity that would allow Maghribi elites to harmoniously deal with the heavy task of modernization.

[86]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thalith*, 49–52, 81–82.
[87]Ibid., 81.
[88]AEMNAF, *Nashrat Aʿmal al-Muʾtamar al-Thani*, 41–45.
[89]Ibid., 49–59.
[90]ʿAbd al-Basit al-Ghabiri, *Sawt al-Talib al-Zaytuni: Haraka Thaqafiyya Siyasiyya* (Tunis: Markaz al-Nashr al-Jamiʿi, 2011).
[91]Lucien Paye, *Introduction et évolution de l'enseignement moderne au Maroc* (Rabat: Arrissala, 1992), 444–58.

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But the attractiveness of the Pan-Maghrib ideology was promoted at the cost of ignoring internal divides among Maghribi elites. The AEMNAF excluded non-Muslim religious minorities, French nationality holders, and most women. It also marginalized those who were educated in Islamic and Arabic educational institutions by prioritizing European universities (especially French ones) and practical sciences such as medicine, pharmacology, and law. Thus, the AEMNAF prepared what would finally be concretized in Arabization policies in the postcolonial Maghrib: a hierarchical perception of the practical sciences and spiritual culture, and the attribution of different languages (French and Arabic, respectively) to each domain. Although the context differs from the 1930s, the division between the French and Arabic languages is observed in educational institutions in the Maghrib today, and the hierarchy of the languages has been contested, especially in Algeria, where Arabophone youth, the product of the country's Arabization policy, challenge the dominance of the privileged Francophone elites.[92] The rivalry between the AEMNAF's French-educated elite and the elite instructed in Islamic institutions was not yet obvious in the 1930s, but their different evaluations of Maghribi Islamic institutions suggests that, in the competition for modernizing the Maghrib, the AEMNAF represented a particularly influential wing of the elite based in Paris. Their articulation of national identity and cultural authenticity, as well as their powerful strategy for mobilization, contributed to the development of nationalist movements in the Maghrib, but they never resolved the historical competition among different discourses on Maghribi modernity.

[92]Mohamed Benrabah, *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence* (Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2013), 67. For the preference of Algeria's industrial sectors for French-educated youth, see ibid., 63, and Abdelhamid Mansouri, "Algeria between Tradition and Modernity: The Question of Language," (PhD thesis, Department of Political Science, The Nelson A. Rockefellor College of Public Affairs and Policy, State University of New York, 1991), 141.

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