
PART III
THE RANGE OF POLITICAL CHOICES

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MIDDLE EASTERN MAN is freeing himself, or is being torn from, his traditional system of relationships to confront profound risks and great freedom. At a moment of history when the social and moral constraints of the past are dying and the bonds among individuals are more uncertain than ever before, he is being compelled to ask himself all over again: Who am I? Whom and what can I trust? As a result, for the first time in Middle Eastern history, all strata of society are becoming involved in politics. No one can any longer take for granted his status in life, or the share of material rewards he will get. Everyone is now concerned about where he goes from here, and in whose company.

The spectrum of political alternatives we present here lacks the familiar progression from "left" to "right." It derives from an unusual history and exhibits an unusual world. In the Middle East, a military dictatorship may turn out to be the first step toward democracy. A regime that does not encourage innovation may not be conservative: by its very caution it may fail to conserve anything. In the midst of rapid and uncontrolled social change, even a regime that would ordinarily be called radical in the West may be moving too slowly. The very rate at which ideologies develop and change in the Middle East is extraordinary. Before 1951, no regime in this area was at once neutralist, socialist, and authoritarian. By now, these views characterize the majority of governments, and in Algeria, opposition and government alike already accept these sentiments as a framework within which they will fight out their differences.

We have not included tradition in this spectrum of choices. To be traditional (a style of life now being challenged even in the Arabian Peninsula) is to remain unrelated to modern political choices.¹ The traditionalist tends to re-

¹ There are fewer untouched traditionalists left than one might suppose. "The Iraq which came to the forefront of world attention on July 14 [1958] and the Iraq in which I spent almost two years are two totally different things," writes Malcolm N. Quint. In the village of Umm al-Nahr, "one might well believe that time had gotten turned around and that he had somehow returned to some remote period before the birth of Christ. . . . The rice cultivators of Umm al-Nahr and of 'Amarah province in general are perhaps the most 'backward' of Iraq's peasants."

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gard his social, political, and economic environment as part of the natural order of things. If this “natural order” permits him to speak of the pre-Islamic era as the Age of Ignorance, it does little toward helping him cope with the modern world that threatens his undoing. Those who try by force and terror to resurrect Islam succeed only, as we shall see, in transforming a traditional way of life into an extremist modern ideology. Those who break with traditional Islam altogether must henceforth be their own prophets in reconstructing relationships between the sacred and the secular.

If it is too late for traditionalism, it is too early for conservatism. Not enough of the past is left sufficiently viable to be conserved. Much already has come into being (from the area’s artificial frontiers to its extensive social security laws) that a conservative would not necessarily want to conserve. Much is of such uncertain value that conservatives cannot yet play their customary role of confining politics to the realization of advantages within the limits of the prevailing consensus. No part of the political spectrum in the Middle East today holds conspiracy, subversion, coups, and revolution in ill repute.

The premature conservative in the Middle East therefore tends to engage in ritualistic behavior—elaborately copying, while he can, the manner of the nouveaux riches of the West. Or else, defending the present as a mere speculator in vested interests, he tends to make the suppression of his competitors the principal task of government. (Not a few of the leading conservative politicians achieved their sudden yet insecure status and wealth by shrewd political rather than economic investments.) Being on the defensive, Middle Eastern conservatives also usually tend to ally themselves with the remaining traditionalist forces. They seem unaware that un-

Yet even in this remote area, Quint finds it possible, in the best scientific spirit, to define “backward” without imposing his own standards: “I use the word here as one of the clan leaders of Umm al-Nahr uses it (*mut’akhkir*) to mean isolated from Western innovations and institutions.” How backward are peasants who already know themselves to be backwards? (“The Idea of Progress in an Iraqi Village,” *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 1958, pp. 369-70.)

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controlled (no less than deliberate) social change will soon doom traditionalism entirely, or that the right kind of controlled change could give them their only real chance to achieve stability with resilience.

The largest group of political leaders in the Middle East are moderates. It may not be easy for the West to recognize them as such. The attitude of moderates in the Middle East is similar to that of moderates the world over. What is different are the issues and problems they can be moderate about. The imbalances created by a far-reaching social revolution demand a gradualism relevant to telescoped time.

Even the more conservative moderates, devoting themselves to keeping the inherited past alive by adapting it to the changing present, make use of immoderate methods. Thus General Abboud (Sudan) and General Ayub (Pakistan), during 1958, used extralegal or non-legal methods to re-establish a more stable social and political equilibrium in their countries.

There have been moderates in the Middle East who in many respects resembled the secular liberals of Western Europe, but their numbers have dwindled greatly. They did not understand that theirs was a different problem. They did not recognize that they would first have to reduce their problems to moderate proportions and create within their society a strong vested interest in liberty before moderation could become more than a distant goal.

Those who would prefer to call the present moderates of the Middle East extremists and radicals will have no terms left when they encounter extremists and radicals. In this analysis, extremists are defined as people who are impelled to turn all problems of life into issues of dogma and power and whose political alternatives therefore include (though expediency may suspend their use) conversion or death. Communists, ultra-nationalists, and neo-Islamic totalitarians are thus extremists. Radicals are all those whose concern is, not a priori with Islam or any established ideology, but with how man might strike permanent roots amid the Middle East's permanently continuing transformation. Unlike moderates,

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radicals would not merely adjust to social change in order to reduce frustration; they believe that it is better and easier to transform all aspects of society deliberately and quickly than to be burdened continually with partial change. They are persuaded that remnants of the past tend "to reinstate the rest, and so continually act as a drag on the establishment of new habits. . . . While it is dreadfully difficult to graft one foreign habit on a set of old habits, it is much easier and highly exhilarating to learn a whole new set of habits, each reinforcing the other as one moves . . . with as little reminder of the past as possible to slow down the new learning, or make that learning incomplete and maladaptive."² Radicals, including those who would establish the conditions in which democracy could prosper, are, however, still scarce in the Middle East. Nasser and Bourguiba are among the moderates who are recent converts to domestic radicalism; Ataturk was one of the first.

A new kind of society is emerging among Moslems, and with it the need to make new choices. Most scholars in the West believe that this is a question involving the Reformation of Islam. In fact, the great change proceeding apace in the Middle East is not the deliberate reformation of Islam as a religious system but the transformation of Moslems as individuals and as members of a new society. All choices that Moslems may make will be deeply influenced by the fact that the Middle East has been an Islamic community for thirteen centuries, but the range of choices is no different now from that facing Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, or perhaps even Americans. Those who concentrate on the reform of Islam today are offering only one particular alternative for the reform of Moslems.

Choices will not come easily. The searching, detached, yet concerned intellectual is still a new and rare individual in the Moslem Middle East.³ The great majority of the polit-

² Margaret Mead, *New Lives for Old, Cultural Transformation—Manus, 1928-1953*, New York, 1956, pp. 447 and 451.

³ This point is cogently argued by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in "The Intellectuals in the Modern Development of the Islamic World," in *Social Forces in the Middle East*, pp. 190-204.

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ically active desire the fruits of modernization, but few understand the methods or appreciate the costs of producing such a harvest. In some Middle Eastern countries, this contrast between reach and grasp also characterizes the ruling elite. Yet in each country, one can already point to individuals and small groups—and in this part of the world, the minority invariably rules—who are intent upon becoming organizers rather than victims of social change, and who are therefore deeply concerned about political means and ends. Most of them lack the self-assurance that marked the founding fathers of the United States. The new leaders of the Middle East cannot build upon inherited philosophy, customs, or institutions; nor is there, as yet, any consensus on how to alter the legacy of Islamic tradition. Commitment to various ideologies thus usually takes the place of inherited, inner-directed certainty, both as the frame of analysis and as the inspiration of action.

In the seven chapters that follow, the role and content of ideologies in the Middle East have been stated with greater precision than they have yet been articulated by Middle Easterners. This has been accomplished by analyzing and interpreting the actions of Middle Eastern leaders; by bringing to the surface the latent implications of their public statements; and by reviewing critically the ideologies that have emerged in response to forces and needs already in being. The ideologies which concern us here are those most likely to attract the important decision-making groups during the next decade. These groups are drawn from the various strata of the new middle class.

CHAPTER 7

AMENDING THE PAST: REFORMIST ISLAM



The Failure of the Reformers of Islam¹

ISLAMIC HISTORY, from the perspective of the ulema, is the history of a community in process of realizing a divinely ordained pattern of society.² To pursue righteousness, however, means resolving the conflicts of existence or, at least, learning how to live with them with dignity, patience, and compassion. As we have seen, this was not infeasible during those centuries when Moslems had few new problems to solve, or else allowed practice to sanctify submission not only to God, but also to tyranny and community consensus. The practices thus ordained, however, belong to the pre-scientific, pre-industrial, pre-nationalist age. The principles belong to the tenth century, when the ulema set limits to the debate of basic questions. Although H. A. R. Gibb argues that "the future of Islam rests where it has rested in the past—on the insight of the orthodox leaders and their capacity to resolve the new tensions as they arise by a positive doctrine,"³ he acknowledges that "in the attitude and outlook of the ulema and their followers there is a disturbing weakness. They are losing touch with the thought of the age. Their arguments, however just, fail to carry conviction because they are expressed in thought-forms

¹ The discussion of this topic, although our conclusions may differ, draws especially upon Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History*; and *Modern Islam in India*, London, 1946; H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, Chicago, 1947; Gustave von Grunebaum, *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*.

² See Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 16-18 and 28n.

³ And Smith agrees, at least for the Arab world, in his *Islam in Modern History*, p. 152.

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which arouse no response in the minds of educated men. Even the very language which they generally use has an antiquarian flavor that strikes curiously upon the ear and eye and strengthens the feeling that they have no message for today. Above all, their public pronouncements display a rigid formalism and reliance upon authority which, as the modernists see truly, are but feeble weapons. . . .⁴"

The reformist ulema are trying to respond to the challenge of Western civilization at a time when orthodox Islam has already lost its fervor, influence, and clarity. "In accord with God's command . . . Muslim society once erected a great civilization; but now this is seen as being attacked, without and within, and perhaps superseded, by a new power based not on God's ordinance . . . a new society more successful, and perhaps in some aspects even more attractive. Islamic backwardness implies that something has gone wrong not only with the Muslim's own development but with the governance of the universe. . . . The challenge is no longer simply that the [Islamic] dream is unrealized. The new challenge . . . is in the fear of the recognition that the dream may be invalid, [that] even if implemented, [it] would . . . be too weak in the world of today.⁵"

The attempt of the ulema to reform Islam has met with difficulties. Like their predecessors in the first centuries of Islam, they acknowledge the usefulness of reason, provided, however, that it is employed in the service of dogma.⁶ Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Mohammed Abduh, among the greatest thinkers of reformist Islam, were prepared near the turn of the century to accept the scientific theories of the nineteenth century. They departed far enough from orthodox Islam to welcome the idea that laws control the universe of nature. They objected only to science's mechanistic concepts of causation and in their own works reassured Moslems that God was the author of these scientific laws.

⁴ Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 122-123.

⁵ Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 111-112.

⁶ Only the reformist ulema go that far. Others continue to say, "Islam is not our property for us to offer it to others, with alterations suitable to the requirements of the market." (Maulana Maudoodi, as quoted by J. W. Sweetman, "View Points in Pakistan. I," *The Muslim World*, April 1957, p. 115.)

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They felt that they were simply acknowledging that the world had become more comprehensible, while preserving their own religion since it now appeared that the whole universe was Islamic in character: everything, even the stars, must submit to the laws of God.

Rereading the Koran, they discovered a verse that has since been quoted more often by Moslem reformers, both secular and religious, than perhaps any other, commanding initiative and self-help: "Verily, God changes not what a people has until they change it for themselves."⁷ But this verse continues in quite a different vein, and the reformers do not quote its remainder: "And when God wishes evil to a people there is no averting it, nor have they a protector beside Him." Careful reinterpretation of the Koran also seemed to suggest to the reformers of Islam that the most modern discoveries had long been foreshadowed in it. The verse, "He has created you by steps," for example, was thought to anticipate the theory of evolution.⁸ The Koranic permission to marry four women, but to treat them with impartial justice, was interpreted by some Islamic reformers to mean the contrary of what had always been assumed: since no man can treat four women with equal justice, the Koran in fact commands monogamy. Unfortunately, the reinterpretation frequently sounded more incredible to modern ears than the original gloss. Even so, one cannot help feeling that the reformers were driven more by reason than by faith. Mohammed Abduh, for example, was capable of writing, "If the reformers appeals directly to a morality or to a wisdom deprived of all religious character, he will have to build a new edifice for which there is neither material nor labor. But if religion is able to raise the level of morality, . . . if the adepts of this religion are very attached to it, if finally one has less difficulty in bringing them back to this religion than in creating something new of which they are not

⁷ Sura XIII, Verse 12, in Palmer translation, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

⁸ Sura LXXI, Verses 12-19 read: "What ails you that ye hope not for something serious from God, when He has created you by steps? Do ye not see how God has created the seven heavens in stories, and has set the moon therein for light, and set the sun for a lamp? and God has made you grow out of the earth, and then He will make you return thereto, and will make you come forth therefrom; and God has made for you the earth a carpet that ye may walk therein in broad paths." (Palmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 501-502.)

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clearly conscious, why not have recourse to the religion, and why seek other less effective means?"⁹

More serious is the fact that since Jamal ad-Din (died 1897) and Mohammed Abduh (died 1905), there have been almost no reformist ulema or popularizers of equal stature or influence anywhere in the Islamic world. In the Arab world, the successors of these two reformers became increasingly divided among conservatives, extremists, and radicals.¹⁰ In Moslem India and now Pakistan, the brilliantly poetic philosophy of Mohammed Iqbal (1876-1938), reconstructing Sufism rather than orthodox Islam along modern lines, has remained an inspiration to many, but a practical guide to very few.¹¹

The reformist ulema have not altogether won the battle even among their own group. Education, as far as it is under the control of the ulema, is still bound up with authoritarianism, rote learning, and a rigid devotion to ancient authorities—providing only already known solutions to already formulated problems. Where education is under secular control, religion is either neglected or enlisted in the service of the state. Where the influence of the ulema lingers, religion and science are still at odds, since even reformist Islam countenances only those scientific hypotheses that are consonant with revealed truth. Indeed, the ulema have no idea how great the issue really is since none of them have studied any of the major sciences of the twentieth century.¹² As the Arab demand for social and physical science increases, most Arab intellectuals will be increasingly drawn to

⁹ Quoted by Osman Amin, "The Modernist Movement in Egypt," in *Islam and the West*, edited by Richard N. Frye, The Hague, 1957, p. 177.

¹⁰ Compare the views of the successive editors of the journal of the religious reformist movement in Egypt in Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, pp. 115-156. See also the recent discussion between Khalid Muhammad Khalid, *From Here We Start*, translated by Isma'il al-Faruqi, Washington, 1953; Muhammad al-Ghazzali, *Our Beginning in Wisdom*, translated by Isma'il al-Faruqi, Washington, 1953; Sayed Kotb, *Social Justice in Islam*, Washington, 1953.

¹¹ His most significant work is *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Oxford, 1934. Among the most rewarding Western discussions of Iqbal are Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, pp. 98-127, 132-151; and Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, pp. 74-84.

¹² However, the work of a small number of outstanding young Moslem scholars trained in modern science and history, and inspired both by their faith and their critical mind may well be creating new foundations for Islamic reform. Among these university scholars may be mentioned Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an Iranian Shia Moslem, and Dr. Yusif Ibish, a Syrian Sunni Moslem.

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its pursuit—at the cost of ignoring a reformist Islam which has so far failed to relate itself to the modern world.

Like orthodox Islam, its reformist offshoot is directly concerned with the social and economic problems of daily existence.¹³ It formulates its attitude with awareness, though seldom with a thorough understanding, of capitalist, socialist, and communist alternatives. Reformist Islam proposes its system as a middle road between communism and capitalism, without the excesses of either. Its theories appear in a number of different forms.

One school quotes the Koran to show that while private property, unequal social status, and the accumulation though not the hoarding of wealth are justified,¹⁴ in reality these are not important, for the treasures of earth ultimately belong to God,¹⁵ and none are to be regarded as highly as God's mercy.¹⁶ Wealth must be spent with neither extravagance nor waste, and above all, with compassion for those in need.¹⁷ Usury (interest in any amount) is forbidden.¹⁸ This school tends at times to assume a passive, defensive stand, asserting that since Islam already includes the best of other economic systems, there is no need to tamper with it; that in fact, communism, socialism, and capitalism must be fought as perversions of ideal Islam. It supports the inherited system of landowning, whether it is based on the traditional political power of large landlords, on the fragmentation of lands brought about by the strict application of Islamic inheritance laws, or on lands divided only in usufruct under the same laws and leaving hundreds of heirs for each lot with little opportunity for enterprising management. It relies on philanthropy and the *zakat*, a religious levy of about 2.5 percent on annual revenues, in lieu of taxes for social welfare. In short reformist Islam sometimes substitutes religious piety for economic reform.

There are times when reformist Islam sounds as if it were a dynamic program for the modern welfare state. Consider a

¹³ See the Koran, Sura II, Verses 278-285 for a characteristic example of the Prophet's interest in the economic details of daily life.

¹⁴ Koran, VI, 165; XIII, 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, XV, 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, XLIII, 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, IX, 34; XVII, 29; XVII, 29; LXX, 24-25; LVII, 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 275-280.

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Ramadan sermon on "Islam and Communism" by Abd al-Azia ben Abdallah, republished on June 27, 1951, in *Al-Alam* (Rabat), the newspaper of Morocco's then leading nationalist party, Istiqlal: "Islam guaranteed the workingman's living conditions before communism ever existed on earth. . . . Islam, however, not only encourages the people to demand and struggle for their rights, but even prescribes in its holy verses that those who give up their natural rights expose themselves to severe chastisement! . . . Islam has given to the poor liens both on capital and on the rich. It has guaranteed to all social classes equity in the field of life. Islam protects the whole of the people from hunger and nakedness. Islam has condemned the monopoly of wealth in the hands of any group to the prejudice of others. Islam has recommended liveliness and hard work and prescribed that no harvest can be obtained without tilling, no wealth without toil." When it speaks in such a fashion, one can only conclude that reformist Islam has severed all connection with orthodoxy except that of language.

Orthodox Islam looks upon the universe as a sacred unity of man and nature, reality and idea, consciousness and existence. Reformist Islam perceives a conflict between man and uncontrolled nature, secular reality and religious truth, man's humanity and the increasing atomization of his social relations. It hopes to recapture Islam's lost unity by a philosophic reconstruction of revealed truth. By shifting the emphasis from the letter to the spirit of the Koran, it seeks to convert Islam into a set of broad formulas that make for pleasant social relations and emotional comfort. At worst, reformist Islam sometimes gives the impression of being at work to save not the world or men, but itself.¹⁹ Reformist Islam's present formulations lack one important attribute of a living religion—immediacy of assent. Reformists, for all their explaining and justifying, cannot yet offer a restatement of Islam that strikes a balance between "the broad and deep currents of a people's psychology and the inescapable forces of social evolution."²⁰

The reformist ulema are unlikely to succeed. From the Prophet

¹⁹ Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, p. 84.

²⁰ Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, p. 113.

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Mohammed forward, the orthodox interpreters of Islam have made themselves acceptable to the community by allying themselves with existing social institutions and so enlarging the consensus of belief. Indeed, the special strength of Islam's orthodox and even its heretics has always been that for them all things—sacred, secular, legal, ethical, intellectual, emotional, political, social, economic—are and ought to be related. Today, social institutions are in conflict and the consensus is broken. From an Islamic perspective, the failure of the reformist ulema is that they have managed no better than secular reformers in putting the pieces together again.

The failure of the ulema to produce a new intellectual synthesis stems in part from an endemic weakness of orthodox Islam. Analytical philosophy has always seemed impious to the orthodox Moslem—a sacrilegious and ultimately doomed effort to lay bare God's essence, meaning, and purpose. In the relatively static world of the past, this weakness in philosophical inquiry made Islam more tolerant than Christianity of theological differences within (and often even outside) the Moslem world, and thereby contributed to the stability and, within limits, the flexibility of the community. In the search for God, practice counted for more than reason. Now that practices, theories, and faiths are in conflict in the Middle East, the ulema, even when they consent to use reason, can only contribute additional opinions to the broken consensus.

By continuing to be tolerant as long as Islamic dogma is not explicitly denied, the largest proportion of the ulema in the Middle East are likely to acquiesce, as they always have, in the policies of their secular rulers, but this time with uprooting and irreversible consequences.

The Successful Reform of the Law of the Moslems

As the ulema stand aside, whether by choice or necessity, the very center of orthodox Islam—*Shari'a* law—is slipping beyond the control of its guardians. Majid Khadduri has outlined the initial steps leading toward the secularization of Islamic law: "First, the adoption of Western legal rules and principles which

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are either not adequately covered by the *Shari'a* or not mentioned at all by the *Shari'a*; second, the adoption of Western law which is in principle in conformity with the *Shari'a* but is not dealt with in such detail as would fit the conditions of modern life as influenced by the West . . . ; third, the adoption of Western law which may take the place of certain *Shari'a* rules that have become obsolete; fourth, the separation of the devotional and religious provisions of the *Shari'a* from those regulating daily life.”²¹

The spirit with which secular law is being assimilated is even more significant than its structural form. Khadduri attributes the success of one of the leading architects of secular law, Abd al-Rassaq al-Sanhuri—the principal author of recent Egyptian, Syrian, and Iraqi civil codes—to the fact that al-Sanhuri “wisely abstained from discussing controversial issues that might have brought him into conflict with the ulema and interrupted his work.” He proceeded “without going into a theoretical discussion on how the *Shari'a* generally should be modernized, or even trying to give a rationale to his scheme. . . .”²² His is a revolutionary work which is conservative in intent and style. He dares to revise revealed law by individual judgment, but he seeks to maintain respect for law by artfully sustaining at least the verisimilitude of historical continuity.

By avoiding a discussion of principles, however, the conservative modernists have not only succeeded in quietly imposing their own revisions, but have failed to set clear limits to the revolution they began. In a community originally founded to perpetuate a revealed code of conduct as defined by the *Shari'a*, the *Shari'a* has by now ceased to be the primary source of ethics, and insofar as its rules survive in modern laws, it has ceased to be either divine or final. Even the last and strongest fortress of the original code—family law—has already yielded. By now, there are few Middle Eastern countries in which the laws bearing on polygamy, divorce, child-marriage, private religious endowments (*waqf*), and inheritance have not been decisively altered.

²¹ Majid Khadduri, “From Religious to National Law,” in *Mid-East: World Center*, edited by Ruth N. Anshen, New York, 1956, p. 232.

²² *Ibid.*

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Once everyone was free to make judgments, it was clear that the *Shari'a* would have to give way. There was no longer a single highway into the future. The Turks did not bother to retain any part of the *Shari'a*. In 1959, at a congress of Arab lawyers for studying the unification of civil codes in Arab countries, the delegates at times differed so sharply among themselves that the Beirut police were called in to restore order.²³ Even at the Arab citadel of *Shari'a* traditionalism, al-Azhar University in Cairo, Shaikh Khallaf could write ". . . the goal of the Law is only the welfare of men, and wheresoever lies the welfare of men, there is the Law of God."²⁴

Thus divine law yields to man-made law, which is enacted not for a community of believers but for nations that neglect the traditional Islamic distinction among subjects on the basis of creed. At that point, the old relationship between the sacred and the secular, the expedient and the metaphysical, is forever shattered and must be built anew. Without the *Shari'a*, Islam possesses an all-powerful God without adequate guidance concerning his will, a holy book without agreed-upon interpretations, a religious emotion without clear ethical and social consequences, and authority in the community without traditional legitimacy.

Those who would reform Islam strictly within the framework of the past lost their first and decisive battle when they themselves amended the past, and thus opened the door to innovation. By now, enough change has taken place so that even the ulema are no longer agreed on what constitutes an Islamic state. Islam, never the single vision posited by the ulema, has by now almost as many faces (and many of these, new) as there are Moslems. Today, any attempt to assert one interpretation of Islam, however hallowed by the past or sensitively reconstructed, as binding on all cannot help but become merely a partisan effort. Insofar as Moslems who have broken with the consensus of kin and tra-

²³ *New York Times*, September 7, 1959.

²⁴ Quoted by Richard H. Nolte, "The Rule of Law in the Arab Middle East," *The Muslim World*, October 1958, p. 306. In a similar spirit, Sheikh Muhib al-Din al-Khatib writes that if the just and pious second Caliph of Islam, Umar ibn al-Khattab, were alive today, he would devote himself to enlarging the middle classes. "Thawratuna al-ijtima'iyah" ("Our Social Revolution") *Majallat al-Azhar*, Cairo, December 1957, pp. 481-487.

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dition still acknowledge each other as "Moslems," it is by a common act of individual wills.²⁵

Certainly far more educated Middle Easterners than Western orientalists have, proportionately, become indifferent to traditional Islam.²⁶ Middle Eastern leaders may still use, although with diminishing frequency, an Islamic vocabulary as the most widely understood and least controversial means of communication.²⁷ But Islam—not as political patter, but as a unique and ordained pattern for politics, economics, and society—is no longer practiced anywhere in the Middle East except in portions of the Arabian Peninsula. Even here, the substance, if not the form, is increasingly being diluted.

The division among Moslems has gone so far that even those who still employ an Islamic vocabulary often can no longer understand each other. The delegates who arrived at the Islamic Colloquium at Lahore, Pakistan, in December 1957 found a leaflet in their mail which read: "Dear Delegates to the Islamic Colloquium. . . . You are already aware that this is an Islamic country and our Constitution is based on the Holy Quran and Sunna. Kindly therefore take care not to injure the feelings of the Muslims of this Islamic country, in any way, by saying things against Islam, its history, its culture, and its law."²⁸

On the following day, the President of Pakistan, General Iskander Mirza, in welcoming the delegates, declared: "Islam is too dynamic and too eternal to be imprisoned in the requirements of a passing age. As the intellect of man develops into new dimen-

²⁵ A point made by Gustave von Grunebaum in a paper presented to the Islamic Colloquium at Lahore, December 1957.

It is characteristic of the modern situation that in India, which then contained at least 100,000,000 Moslems, and still contains about 40,000,000, "the most important and far-reaching enactment passed within the last half century is the Shariat Act, 1937, [which] is applicable to every Muslim, regardless of the school to which he belongs, but there is no definition of what, for the purposes of the administration of justice, is the definition of a Muslim." A. A. A. Fyze, "Major Developments in Muhammadan Law in India, 1850-1950," an unpublished manuscript of a talk presented to a Conference on Islamic Law, Princeton University, November 1958.

²⁶ Thus Professor James Kritzeck, in "Portrait of Ahmad: A Report on a Typical Member of Egypt's Rising New Middle Class," writes, "Generally speaking, Ahmad is intellectually curious, but his lack of intellectual curiosity about his religion is sometimes exasperating." (*Commonweal*, December 11, 1959, p. 320.)

²⁷ When President Nasser in December 1958 decided to warn Iraq, whose

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sions with the discoveries of new avenues of knowledge and science, his understanding of life and religion is bound to grow in similar proportions. . . . It is an irony of history that, while rejecting the institutions of organized priesthood, Islam has often fallen into the hands of priests. . . . On the one hand, the Mullah has woven into Islam a crazy network of fantasy and fanaticism. On the other, he has often tried to use it as an elastic cloak for political power and expediencies.”²⁹ Since then, it must be added, General Mirza has been ousted from the Presidency by another general who thought him not radical enough in dealing with Pakistan’s problem and who abolished the constitution that had made Pakistan at that time the only formally designated “Islamic Republic” in the Middle East.

The Triumph of Secular Leadership

For the Moslems who are now taking the leading roles in Middle Eastern life, the battle has moved from the realm of religion into the realm of politics. “Relief of distress is sought not in a revision of doctrine but in a redressing of history.”³⁰ No one attacks Islam. Ataturk, the most far-reaching of the secularists, did not challenge the Islamic faith, nor did any of the political leaders who came after him. There was no need to challenge it. Reformist Islam opened the sluice gate and was swamped by the deluge. Traditional Islam still has many adherents among the peasant majority and not a few townsmen. No political leader is likely to outrage their sensibilities by deliberately speaking ill of

secular-minded leadership shares with him common origins and goals, that its neutralism was leaning too far toward the Sino-Soviet bloc, he declared that their attitude was contrary to the spirit of Islam. When references to Islam did not change Iraq’s policy, Nasser did not, however, deem it useful to enlarge on this theme. A real debate could only be supported on modern ideological grounds.

²⁸ Rudi Paret, “Das Islamische Colloquium in Lahore: 29. Dezember 1957-8. Januar 1958,” *Die Welt des Islams*, N.S. Vol. v, No. 3-4, 1958, p. 229.

²⁹ *Ibid.* “Mullah” is another term to designate one of the ulema.

³⁰ Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, p. 111. Kenneth Cragg writes in a similar vein: “Islam has always believed that the individual, not the community, is the source of ‘heresy.’ It is a corollary of this that social changes, not intellectual enterprise, must be the proper origin of religious redefinition.” (“The Modernist Movement in Egypt,” in *Islam and the West*, p. 160.)

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Islam. Almost all of them concentrate instead on eliminating particular Islamic institutions and customs that bar the way to the modern age. Their methods are many: financing secular schools and neglecting Koranic schools, favoring men with secular outlook in all government appointments, enlarging opportunities for women, making no allowance for easier working hours during the fasting month of Ramadan, generally rewarding new types of knowledge, values, and performance.³¹ When traditional Islam reacts by transforming itself into a religio-political totalitarian party, it can safely be challenged as a novel ideology rather than as a hallowed way of life.³² There will still be battles, but this particular war is over in the great majority of Middle Eastern states.

The secularization of political leadership turned out unexpectedly to be even easier in the Middle East than in Western Europe, where the distinction between the things of Caesar and those of God did not prevent Christians from fighting each other long and fiercely. The secularization of the masses remains the great unfinished business in the Middle East. Perhaps the speed of secularization among the decision makers should not have been unexpected. Few Moslem rulers in history have made it the main business of state, as the Koran had intended, to enforce God's eternal laws. Administrative, criminal, civil, and commercial law had almost from the beginning of the Islamic community been separated from the domain of the *Shari'a*, though this separation was not formally and explicitly codified until the nineteenth century. Islam had also early reconciled itself to the separation between religion and the conduct of the state in foreign affairs once it acquiesced in the peaceful coexistence of orthodox Islamic states with Christian and heterodox Islamic nations.³³ Most Moslems have therefore long been accustomed

³¹ Even changes in clothes have consequences for Islam. When Ataturk in 1925 compelled Turks to adopt the hat, he made prayer more difficult since a headcover is mandatory and the worshipper's head must bend over to touch the ground, and also made it harder to distinguish Moslem from non-Moslem.

³² See the next chapter.

³³ The "principle of the peaceful relationship among nations of different religions, . . . perhaps the most revolutionary in Islamic legal theory, was for the first time embodied in a treaty signed in 1535 between Francis I of France and Sulayman the Magnificent, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire." (Majid Khad-

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to obey secular-minded rulers, or to avoid the law of sultans and ulema by frequently resorting to private vengeance, arbitration by tribal chiefs, and the subversion of justice through nepotism, bribery, personal influence, and casuistry.

The ulema have always been steadfast, but unheroic.³⁴ Many mosques have endowments, but there is no central churchly control over large properties to give added strength to a defense of sacred institutions. And not only the frequency of heresies and the popularity of non-orthodox mystic orders, but the very autonomy of social structures and functions discussed in the first chapter suggest that the Islamic community of the past was more united in the style of its certainties than in their substance.

Yet even the end of certainty was eased by a number of historical factors. Few Moslems thoroughly understood the choices to be made between traditional past and modern present since in fact they were ill-informed about either. Islam had fallen into political, economic, and spiritual decay prior to the arrival of Western imperialism.³⁵ (Witness the efforts of Ottoman, Wahhabi, and Sanusi reformers, each in their own way, to rescue their own society.) As against such a way of life—the days of greatest Islamic unfolding had passed centuries earlier—modernity often offered immediate advantages. Certainly, the great majority of Moslems had neither liberty nor property to lose in the death of the past.

duri, "The Islamic System: Its Competition and Coexistence with Western Systems," *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law*, 1959, p. 51. See also his fundamental study, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, Baltimore, 1955, demonstrating that coexistence had been accepted in practice centuries earlier.)

³⁴ Mohammed Abduh, for example, the founder of the Egyptian Islamic reform movement, said in 1905, when Egypt was still under British occupation, "but the matter of the government and the governed I abandoned to the decision of fate, and to the hand thereafter to arrange." (Quoted by Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt*, London, 1933, pp. 63-64.) As a result, Egypt's largest nationalist party, then led by Mustapha Kamil, went its separate way. See also H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 72.

³⁵ "The Kingdoms and crowns that the Moslems have lost in the course of history," Pakistan's President Ayub told his audience when he accepted an honorary doctorate of philosophy at Cairo University, "are far less important than the kingdom of the free and searching mind, which they lost in the process of intellectual stagnation." (*New York Times*, November 11, 1960.)

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Men who were born in the twentieth century grew up in an Islamic society that had already begun to question its verities. They no longer faced the same conflicts of adjustment that confronted their fathers.³⁶ In "the constant invasion of the barbarians," that is, the continual generation of the young learning much about their world but little about this region's own heritage, there lie many opportunities for startling individual transformations in the midst of rapid social change.

For Arabs probably more than for other Moslems, many Islamic memories remain precious for being also specifically Arab memories—perhaps the grandest of Arab memories. Nonetheless, it has become easier for all Moslems to discover and admire what other Asians and Africans and Latin Americans are doing in quickly changing their traditional way of life.³⁷ Of the entire social and political inheritance of Islam, it is the force of consensus which has remained the strongest moral imperative in the Middle East. It still holds sway over many through the compulsion of family or village opinion, reinforced by faith in the infallibility of the consensus (*ijma*) of the charismatic Community of Believers.³⁸ Increasingly, however, this insistence on the hallowed consensus is itself becoming a force for change as the pressure for conformity comes no longer from one's ancestors but from one's peers. Novel ideas can be accepted in the name of national unity.

These new guides to conformity may now lead either toward

See the analysis of the causes and consequences of that decay by various authors in *Classicisme et déclin culturel dans l'histoire de l'Islam, Actes du Symposium International d'Histoire de la Civilisation Musulmane* (Bordeaux, June 25-29, 1956) organized by R. Brunschvig and G. E. von Grunebaum, Paris, 1957.

³⁶ For some men, the conflict ceased even earlier. Steppat remarks concerning the founder of Egypt's first nationalist party, Mustapha Kamil (died 1907) that he "did not need to move away from Islam in order to turn toward nationalism since he had never really submitted himself to Islam." Mustapha Kamil was the grandson of a wealthy grain merchant, the son of a construction engineer trained in Mohammad Ali's occidental schools; his mother was the daughter of an army captain. Although his father still hoped Mustapha might study at Al-Azhar, he did not oppose his son's decision to study at a French law school instead. (Fritz Steppat, "Nationalismus und Islam bei Mustāfa Kāmil," *Die Welt des Islams*, N.S. Vol. iv, No. 4, 1956, pp. 333 and 242-243.

³⁷ It is characteristic of that new spirit that while in the 1960's, 600,000 among the 430,000,000 Moslems of the world continue to go to Mecca on

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responsible freedom or away from it. In any event, the most active politically are aware that Moslems, like their neighbors, have many new alternatives before them. To these choices we now attend.

pilgrimage each year (only 200,000 of these, however, coming from countries beyond the Arabian Peninsula), the gatherings that excite the public imagination and help to shape history are secular affairs like the Bandung Conference of 29 Afro-Asian nations in April 1955.

³⁸ A concept explored by W. Montgomery Watt in *Islam and the Integration of Society*, London, 1961.

CHAPTER 8

RESURRECTING THE PAST: NEO-ISLAMIC TOTALITARIANISM



Native Totalitarianism: the Sources of its Appeal

MANY MOSLEMS have been disenchanted by the twentieth century. Amulets and local saints have waned in popularity, religious brotherhoods and guilds have lost in solidarity, and the thoughts of reformist ulema have become less relevant. But the needs and emotions which inspired these expressions of Islam are not dead. They reappear in twisted form in the various movements of neo-Islamic totalitarianism. In Egypt, the largest Arab state, such a movement has for decades been far more powerful and disciplined than the communist party. In 1948,¹ the Moslem Brotherhood assassinated Egyptian Premier Mahmud Nuqrashi; in 1952, it was the only political party to avoid being immediately outlawed by the new military regime; and in 1954, its bullets missed in an attempt to assassinate President Nasser.

Neo-Islamic totalitarian movements have played an important role elsewhere in the Middle East as well. The Fadayan Islam assassinated Iranian Premier Razmara in 1951; the Khaksar movement assassinated Pakistani Premier Liaqat Ali Khan in 1951. A similar Pakistani group, the Jama'at-i-Islam, in April 1958 won a majority of seats in the Karachi municipal assembly. Between 1953 and 1958, while Syrian stability wobbled under the pressure of the great powers and rival Arab states, the local Moslem Brotherhood alternately joined and fought pro-Soviet

¹ When the movement had close to a million members, as contrasted with about 5,000 for the Egyptian Communist Party.

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elements.² In Jordan, at different times during 1958, it both defended and opposed the King. Until Nasser and the Arab Socialist Resurrection (*Ba'th*) Party each began in the 1950's to fashion organizational links among groups in the various Middle Eastern states, these Islamic movements formed the only political groups other than the communists that were in area-wide communication with each other.

To call them "fanatics"—for in their concern for Islam they do not hesitate to kill fellow Moslems—is to indicate primarily that we cannot fathom their ambiguous, destructive intensity. To call them "extreme nationalists" is to mistake them for secular politicians. No nationalist in the Middle East, however extreme, is likely to join the leaders of Islamic totalitarian movements in saying that "my religion is dearer to me than my family and clan. My religion is the first country that I take shelter in," or to assert that nations have become "idols," and that national unity should never be purchased at the expense of religion.³ To say that they advocate "the application of religious precepts in the government of Moslem countries"⁴ is to confuse them with moral reformers. An acknowledgment of their anti-communism must not lead to the conclusion that they have chosen sides in the cold war; they are anti-communist because they are anti-Western; they reject communism as a creation of the Westernized modern world.

The neo-Islamic totalitarian movements are essentially fascist movements. They concentrate on mobilizing passion and violence to enlarge the power of their charismatic leader and the solidarity of the movement. They view material progress primarily as a

² During this period it reportedly had about 10,000-12,000 members, or twice as many as the Syrian Communist Party (*New York Times*, February 20, 1955).

³ These thoughts were expressed by a leading member of the Moslem Brotherhood, Sa'id Ramadan, in "Al-watan lillah" ("The Fatherland Belongs to God"), *Al-Muslimun*, Cairo, June 1953, pp. 30-32.

⁴ A frequent designation, here taken from an Associated Press dispatch from Cairo, November 28, 1954, *New York Times*, November 29, 1954. For an illuminating discussion by a member of the Moslem Brotherhood of how sharply the rule of the Brotherhood would differ from the practice of both contemporary and traditional Moslem states, see Muhib al-Din al-Khatib, "Mata wa kayfa yaqumu al-hukmu al-islamy" ("When and How Islamic Rule Takes Place"), *Al-Muslimun*, Cairo, November 1952, pp. 44-47.

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means for accumulating strength for political expansion, and entirely deny individual and social freedom. They champion the values and emotions of a heroic past, but repress all free critical analysis of either past roots or present problems.

As a movement resisting the changes of a multiple revolution in telescoped time, this Middle Eastern version of fascism is also stamped, however, by a kinship with certain religio-political movements which spread in Western Europe at the beginning of its modern age. In the fifteenth century in Europe, as in modern Islam, groups arose which joined in the call for a religious Reformation, but opposed the alliance of the leading reformers with established secular authority. Instead, they adopted a militant social chiliasm—that is, they organized themselves for an immediate leap into the promised millennium.⁵

Islam shares with Christianity the sense of an inherent, pre-ordained purpose in history ending in a cataclysmic judgment day. Moslems have indeed held to the vision of the millennium more constantly and deeply than most Christians, for Islam's code of righteousness promises the good society here and now. Moslems have been perennially ready for the mahdi, the messenger of God, who would lead the community in a religio-political leap into immediate fulfillment of all spiritual and material needs even before judgment day. The reconstruction of society through the "spiritualization of politics"⁶ has been a permanent theme of opposition politics in Islam. While European fascism was compelled to propagandize myths that were new to the majority of the population, neo-Islamic totalitarianism simply exploits the tradition of converting Islam in times of crisis into an apocalyptic vision of spiritual and political redemption. The Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood, for example, calls itself simultaneously "a reformist movement, an orthodox path, a mystic reality, a political society, an athletic group, a scientific and cultural organization, an economic corporation, and a social idea."⁷

⁵ For a detailed exploration of such movements in Europe, see Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, London, 1957.

⁶ The phrase quoted is from Karl Mannheim (*Ideology and Utopia*, London, 1952, p. 191), who laid most useful conceptual foundations for a discussion of such movements. Opposition movements in traditional Islam have been explored in Chapter 1.

⁷ Anwar al-Jundi, *Min Khutab Hasan al-Banna* (From the Speeches of Hasan al-Banna), First Series, Damascus, 1938, pp. 14-15. Such a formulation

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Hasan al-Banna, the leader of the Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood until his death in 1949, embodied the principal elements that have shaped the neo-Islamic totalitarian movement. He was a product of reformist Islam. He memorized the Koran, worked as Imam and preacher for the village mosque, edited religious texts, and finally graduated first in his class in religion and Arabic studies from Dar al-Ulum, a relatively modern religious school, in 1927. He was a product of sufi (mystic) Islam. In his youth he fasted in months additional to Ramadan, founded the Society for the Prevention of Sin, regularly attended meetings of the Hasafiyah sufi order, and at the age of 16 was admitted to its ranks. Born in 1906, he was a modern man uprooted but unable and unwilling to accept his new freedom. He began as an apprentice to his father, repairing that characteristically modern machine for measuring efficiency and routinization, the watch.⁸ As he continued his education, however, he attended a school which, unlike other Egyptian schools at that level, taught no foreign language. Despite his higher education, therefore, the role of clerk or bureaucrat was bound to be closed to al-Banna in his country, where both business and government required English. Able, intelligent, and vigorous, he became a teacher of Arabic and, in his spare time, of religion. He lived in Ismailia, a town in the Suez Canal Zone. Also there were the headquarters of the foreign-owned Suez Canal Company and a base from which British military power could radiate through his country.⁹

Within Hasan al-Banna, the chiliastic, reformist, and uprooted modern elements were all transmuted into the ideology of a modern political movement. The Moslem Brotherhood rejects sufism's superstitions and corruptions, its reflection of social class divisions, its assumed un-Islamic origins, its factionalism, and its current acceptance of fatalism.¹⁰ Yet the Brotherhood

made it easy for the Brotherhood to live at the same time in the traditional and the modern world. Whenever it was threatened by repression, it replied that it would confine itself to religious issues, meaning its propagandizing mission. Whenever it felt free to act, it declared it was concerned only with religion, since in Islamic tradition, religion comprehends all things.

⁸ His father belonged to an earlier generation of Islamic reform: he had been educated at al-Azhar at the time of Mohammed Abduh.

⁹ Hasan al-Banna, *Mudhakkarāt al-da'wah w-al-dā'iyyah*, Cairo, 1957, pp. 5-82, *passim*.

¹⁰ Richard P. Mitchell, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, an unpublished doctoral

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retains sufism's striving for the millennium, and many of its organizational forms. The Brotherhood rejects reform Islam for its arid rationalism, yet accepts any of its arguments that would purify Islam from the accretions of its decadence and show it thus to be better than the most modern of ideas. The Brotherhood is itself a symptom of uprootedness, yet cannot accept modern uprootedness as the precondition of modern liberation.

Such an ideology, based on an immediate acceptance of the distant past and the distant future, but not of the present, appeals to a particular surplus in the population: the peasant, with only a peasant's skill and opinion, but no longer with any land; workers already replaced or easily replaceable by other workers; students without jobs; ulema, Koran-reciters, and other religious officials whose status and opportunities are contracting under the impact of secularization; above all, as its hard core, white collar workers and members of the lower middle class who resent the monopoly of power and wealth of those who dominate the state, and who, without influence upon existing cliques and parties, are keenly sensitive to the pressure for social and economic space among the masses below them.

All of these groups share a deep concern for improving their lot within the traditional framework of status and values rather than within the freedom of a changing society. Some are fundamentalists by conviction who hold that anything new or strange is by nature wicked. The great majority, however—and that is why this movement has such great propulsion—has had no chance to acquire a stake in the modern world, and hence makes a virtue of their necessity.

For many Moslems, especially in provincial towns, modernization in fact provides the first opportunity to turn to the past. The spread of literacy and communication gives a larger number than ever before the chance to read the traditional literature—and so grow attached to pre-modern ideas and values. As a result, theirs becomes a desperate attempt to gain upward mobility in a decaying social structure instead of the newly emerging so-

dissertation presented to the Department of Oriental Studies, Princeton University, December 30, 1959, (pp. 356-357), the most thorough first-hand and documentary exploration and analysis of this movement in any language.

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society.¹¹ In a modern social structure, individuals can hope to raise or maintain their status only as individuals. Neo-Islamic totalitarian movements instead seem to offer the individual the chance to rise, indeed to find salvation, by merging his fate entirely with that of a group striving to resurrect an idealized past.

Neo-Islamic totalitarian movements have also won support on other grounds. They are admired as rare among Middle Eastern parties for the consistency of their programs and the apparent honesty and sincerity of their leaders.¹² Their opportunistic drive for power has allowed them to offer or accept temporary alliances with opponents with whom they share common enemies—for example, the Egyptian Brotherhood's alliance with King Farouk in 1946 and 1951, with factions of the anti-Farouk Wafd Party in 1950, and in 1954 with General Nagib, who had earlier triumphed over both King Farouk and the Wafd Party. They have won adherents among Moslems frustrated by the failure of more liberal efforts to reform and maintain Islam and who, in fear of secularism and modernism, endorse the movement's puritanical intent to rescue a desecrated tradition. Some of the newly rich, and there were not a few who profited from the scarcity and inflation that followed World War II, have sought to purify and strengthen their social status by financing such movements of piety. Neo-Islamic totalitarianism have also won support from conservative politicians fearful of growing

¹¹ Such a belated rekindling of tradition has also been observed elsewhere. In India, for example, the upper castes are becoming more and more Westernized and other castes are becoming more and more sanscritized; that is, they try to rise by accepting an idealized and puritan image of what good and proper people traditionally did. (See M. N. Srinivas, "Sanskritization and Westernization," in *Society in India*, edited by A. Aiyyappan and L. K. Bala Ratnam, Madras, 1956.) In India, too, movements akin to the Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood—the Hindu Mahasabha and the SSR—turn this quest in an unpropitious environment into extremist political movements. In Ceylon, Buddhism has inspired similar movements which came to the fore in the 1956 elections.

¹² "However we may differ in opinion with them . . . can anyone forget that the Moslem Brotherhood more than any other party saturated the soil of Palestine with sweat and blood? Can anyone forget that it is the Moslem Brotherhood which today is raising the flag of *jihād* against the English in the Suez Canal Zone?" (The newspaper *Beirut*, January 22, 1952, cited by Ishak Musa Husaini, *The Moslem Brethren: The Greatest of Modern Islamic Movements*, Beirut, 1956, a valuable study.)

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pressures from the left and intrigued by the notion that the brotherhood's organization of trade unions and students would at least serve to split these discontented segments of society. It has the same attraction that the National Socialist party held for despairing conservatives in Germany—seemingly the last available remedy that would change many things in a crisis except the established social structure. Also, mere membership can offer the boom of solidarity; mere power to obstruct, as through sabotage, can offer reassurance of strength to affect reality; mere adventurism can be a way of life.

Variations among neo-Islamic totalitarian movements, and conflicts for control within them, thus often arise between those who prefer the tension of absolute order to the tension of absolute struggle, or between those who would assure popular docility through social welfare rather than through the fear of foreign enemies.

Tactics

This analysis of neo-Islamic totalitarianism began with a study of the mood and circumstances which are far more responsible for its growth than the appeal of its program. Indeed, the program is the symptom of a mood rather than a carefully planned resolution. Most of the program is concerned with tactics that express its mood. That is why tactics, too, deserve exploration before we enter upon the substantive aspects of this movement's program.

Like fascism, neo-Islamic totalitarianism represents the institutionalization of struggle, tension, and violence. Unable to solve the basic public issues of modern life—intellectual and technological progress, the reconciliation of freedom and security, and peaceful relations among rival sovereignties—the movement is forced by its own logic and dynamics to pursue its vision through nihilistic terror, cunning, and passion. An efficient state administration is seen only as an additional powerful tool for controlling the community. The locus of power and the focus of devotion rest in the movement itself. Like fascist movements

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elsewhere, the movement is so organized as to make neo-Islamic totalitarianism the whole life of its members.

The Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood has both a visible part (but often outlawed and hence underground) and an intentionally secret part in its movement. Its cells are organized in a hierarchy of groups which the Brotherhood calls "families" and "clans." At each weekly meeting of the "family," the group discusses not only organizational and ideological matters but also the personal problems of its members. The members of the "family" also assume financial responsibility for each other.¹³ All members in all branches at each meeting renew their sworn allegiance to the head of the organization: "I hear and I obey."¹⁴ Only when a member had passed an examination and thus became an "active member," however, could he attend special meetings called by Hasan al-Banna himself. A portion of these members—about 40,000—were organized as "Rover-Scouts" and engaged in parades, athletics and streetfighting.¹⁵ This was merely the "General Circle."

There was also a secret circle. In 1949, the Egyptian prosecutor testified that the secret apparatus admitted only men whose entire life histories were known; each had to keep a daily record (submitted to headquarters each month) of his activities in the recitation and memorization of the Koran, sayings of the Prophet, and prayers, in morning and evening athletic exercises, and in courses in law, weaponry, and first aid.¹⁶

After swearing secrecy on a Koran and a pistol, the members of the secret apparatus were organized in groups of five. These elite corps phalanxes had as their motto: "Absolute obedience without question, without hesitation, without doubting, and without shifting blame."¹⁷ It has been estimated that the secret

¹³ Mitchell, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 316-319.

¹⁴ Article 13 of the organization's basic regulation, *Qanun al-Nizam al-Asasi li Hay'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*, published in Cairo, September 8, 1945.

¹⁵ The figure is claimed by the Moslem Brotherhood magazine *Al-Da'wah*, Cairo, April 15, 1952, which speaks for the more activist faction.

¹⁶ The prosecution's charge is reprinted in the newspaper *al-Asas*, Cairo, September 13, 1949.

¹⁷ Ahmad Amin, *al-Sa'lakah wa al-Futuwwah fi al-Islam* (*Roguery and Chivalry in Islam*), Iqra Series No. 111, Cairo, April 1952, p. 26.

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apparatus, organized in late 1942 or early 1943, numbered about 1,000 members by 1948.¹⁸

Thus the movement permits those who feel superfluous to participate, through various levels of initiation, in a powerful mystery within a group which deems itself the elite among Moslems. The powerless it thus keeps powerless by extinguishing their personality, but it also increases their sense of importance by creating an intense feeling of identification with the leader of the movement whose power, emotion, and style of living pantomime the yearning of his followers. Thus it stimulates an intoxicating sense of nihilism in which the willingness to sacrifice one's self becomes more important than the object for which the sacrifice is made. Those who are sent to death as robots have the illusion of dying as martyrs.

At meetings, this litany of slogans is shouted again and again:

<i>Allahu ghayatuna</i>	God is our goal!
<i>Al-Rasulu za'imuna</i>	The Prophet is our leader!
<i>Al Qur'anu dusturuna</i>	The Koran is our constitution!
<i>Al-jihadu sabiluna</i>	Holy War is our path!
<i>Al-mawt fi sabil Illah asma amanina</i>	Death in God's service is our loftiest hope!
<i>Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar</i>	God is greatest, God is greatest!

It is hardly surprising that there is so much talk about "the art of death" among the members of the Egyptian Brotherhood.¹⁹ For all their talk about resurrecting the splendor and power of Islam, the neo-Islamic totalitarian movements hasten the death of all they hold dear by their very approach. They seem to champion the paternalistic, egalitarian values of the tribe against the exploitation and normlessness of modern secular life. They seem to reassert the unity of law, morality, and society at a time when the old value system no longer finds general assent and the community is in fact living in diverging universes of understanding and

¹⁸ Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

¹⁹ Mitchell, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 342-343. Hasan al-Banna recalled as a youth of meeting a merchant who took him and other youths to a cemetery to read to them sad tales of pious men and ordered them to lie for a while in newly dug graves to contemplate their fate and repent. (Hasan al-Banna, *Mudhakkarat*, p. 16.)

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interests. But when Moslems were in fact linked by common bonds, they formed no secret societies to cement their solidarity. When they were in fact agreed on common values, they needed no totalitarian dictatorship to enforce their consensus. They never even bothered to organize a hierarchy of priests.

These are not zealots, as Toynbee uses the term, who merely will "not retreat," who will "maintain an unbroken and unbending front" in the "observance of every jot and tittle of a traditional . . . law."²⁰ They recognize instead that they cannot stand where they are, yet will not allow growth, and consequently must dedicate themselves to death.

Program

A neo-Islamic totalitarian movement has no real interest in a program. Its chiliastic expectation makes the very effort towards producing a program irrelevant; the reformist Islamic component makes its actual program irrelevant since its closed system of deductive procedure insures an inner coherence at the price of isolation from the world; its modern involvement, however, makes an effort to form a program inescapable. The result is a program of repression and death for the insider, aggression and death for the outsider.

There is also talk about Islamic "socialism." The "socialism" of the neo-Islamic totalitarian movements is much akin to that of the German Anabaptists of the sixteenth century and the German National Socialists of the twentieth century. The Anabaptists "tended to be uneasy about private property. . . . If in most of the groups, little attempt was made to introduce common ownership, Anabaptists certainly did take seriously the obligations of charitably dealing and generous mutual aid." But the ethics of "active brotherly love" and "great solidarity" apply only within each group: "the attitude to society at large tended to be one of uncompromising rejection."²¹

The Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood was exceedingly active in social welfare. It opened a number of free schools for the elimination of illiteracy and the fostering of religious culture; it set up

²⁰ *A Study of History*, Vol. VIII, pp. 580-625.

²¹ Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, pp. 273-275.

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special courses for university students who had failed their general examinations; it built cemeteries for the poor, and collected alms and fed the poor during the holy months; it established small hospitals and dispensaries. It organized help in times of flood and fought malaria. It founded seven commercial companies, in printing, spinning, weaving, engineering—all with shares owned by members of the Brotherhood.²² All these measures were designed exclusively to strengthen the organization by swelling its numbers, its treasury, and its morale. Its economic program for society as a whole, however, is at once oddly specific and vague.

In the special issue of its newspaper *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* of September 5, 1948, celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood, the organization's program was spelled out in an extensive list of 46 planks. The economic program put first the organization of "the collection and spending of tithes and alms according to the spirit of Islamic legislation and using such money in indispensable charity schemes such as the creation of orphanages, asylums for the old and disabled, as well as the reinforcement of the army." Its second point forbade the collection of interest and its third promised "to encourage and increase economic enterprises and employ therein the unemployed and to get rid of foreigners occupying any positions there." Its fourth plank sought "to protect the public against the despotism of monopoly companies and to compel such companies not to be abusive and to get from them all possible advantages for the benefit of the public." Its seventh point said simply that the Brotherhood proposed "to encourage and raise the standard of the peasant and the industrial workers."

The Syrian Moslem Brotherhood is somewhat more precise. It speaks of guaranteeing each worker his livelihood with minimum wages, and payments in case of sickness, and each peasant a minimum amount of property—and of assuring for both workers and peasants a spiritual atmosphere.²³

The "socialism" of these organizations concentrates on foreign

²² Husaini, *The Moslem Brethren*, pp. 52-57.

²³ *Ahdafuna wa Mabadi 'una* (Our Aims and Principles), a pamphlet issued by the Central Committee of the Syrian Moslem Brotherhood, Damascus, 1945, pp. 8-10.

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rather than domestic capitalists. They are opposed, for example, to the granting of concessions to foreigners to exploit natural resources and would prohibit foreigners from acquiring real estate. By contrast, they believe that "the state, when in urgent need, should tap private wealth and the big utilities to the extent required by the highest needs of the nation, provided it does not kill the principle of private property and economic competition."²⁴ That so little socialism should have so much appeal was a reflection of the dire social discontent which existed. In Egypt, no other party (at least prior to Nasser) had promised so much, and "socialism" had not been crystallized as an ideology anywhere in the Middle East. In an estimation of the long-range success of these movements, however, it must be noted that they lack any significant or coordinated program for the improvement of economic conditions.

The primary operational objective is expansion of the power of the movement both within the group and without. Within the ranks of the Brotherhood, the dogmatic reinterpretation of Islamic purity sets no limit on the expansion of control over all aspects of the individual's life. Unlike orthodox Islam, which acknowledged that all men were born equally frail, neo-Islamic totalitarianism makes absolute demands upon the spirit. Individual privacy is abolished through methods hallowed by the precedent of earlier Islamic tyrannies and improved by techniques learned from the modern world—secret police, censorship, terror, propaganda.

In contrast to the ten economic planks in the 1948 program, 30 deal with "Social and Cultural Aspects." In its second plank under that heading, the Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood is concerned "to find a solution to the position of women in order to raise their standards and to protect them in accordance with the Islamic spirit and to avoid such an important matter being dealt with by the perverse opinions of prejudiced writers." Four planks later, it is still in the midst of keeping "women from the use of cosmetics and the display of beauty." In Plank 9, it is positively eager to "encourage marriage and procreation by all possible means and to make special laws for the protection of the family."

It would close down all cabarets and dancing halls (Plank

²⁴ Husaini, *The Moslem Brethren*, p. 57.

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10); censor all plays and films (Plank 11); improve the wording of songs (Plank 12); use cafes for teaching illiterates how to read and write (Plank 17). It would punish severely all those who deliberately disobey the Moslem commandments by not fasting in Ramadan, by not praying, or by swearing (Plank 19); eliminate the use of foreign languages, foreign habits, and fashions in the family (Plank 27). Finally, it would increase the number of hospitals, doctors, and mobile clinics (Plank 29); and improve the condition of the villages by enforcing better order, cleaning, providing good water supplies, and improving cultural and educational standards (Plank 30).

Politically, the 1948 program demands "the dissolution of all political parties and the direction of all the population's political efforts toward a single aim: the review and modification of legislation in order to co-ordinate it with Islamic laws from all points of view; . . . to develop relations among all the Islamic countries . . . and prepare them for the real conception of the question of the Caliphate." The movement itself would act as the intermediary—controlling, coordinating, mustering enthusiasm—between the people and the administration of the state.

This is not traditional Islam. The neo-Islamic totalitarian movements find in the past—which was once a living, integrated whole—only those aspects which they want to look for. In this fashion, the neo-Islamic movements actually contribute to the disintegration of the traditional society which they seem eager to revive. Hasan al-Banna's own interest in Islamic theology was only one phase of his own spiritual transformation. The head of the sufi order that al-Banna joined "never allowed his educated followers to argue a great deal about the consistencies or inconsistencies of things or to repeat the arguments of the apostates and the free-thinkers or the missionaries before the people. He would say to them: 'Do these things in your private meeting places and discuss them among yourselves. As for the common people, in front of them, use practical and effective words which will direct them to the obedience of God.' Al-Banna was deeply affected by this trend."²⁵

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28. Compare this with the Anabaptists who, "in general, attached little importance either to theological speculations or to formal religious ob-

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This same deliberate neglect of analysis also infuses the movement's attitude toward contemporary ideologies. The characteristic response to democracy, socialism, and communism is that Islam includes all that is good in each of them and even surpasses them, being free of what is bad in them.²⁶ In fact, there is no interest in modern ideas except for the techniques they might supply in enlarging the arsenal of power for fighting the modern age.

Indeed, in un-Islamic fashion, neo-Islamic totalitarianism relegates the consensus of the community to a secondary role, so that achieving agreement on principles cannot become an issue to agitate the general population. Complete authority is arrogated to the movement, or rather to an absolute leader who incarnates the movement. The leader embodies the principle, and identification with him is the substitute for thought.

Neo-Islamic totalitarianism compensates for this diminution of the importance of the individual at home by exaggerating the importance of the Islamic community in the world abroad. It opposes the abstraction of the nation bound by geographic limits which separate the believers from each other. It is not an extremist nationalist movement; it is anti-nationalist at home and abroad. Far beyond the recapture of Palestine, it advocates conquest and aggrandizement for the sake of the community of believers—an entity without territorial limits: "If the German Reich imposes itself as a protector of everyone who has German blood running in his veins, Moslem faith makes it the clear duty of every strong Moslem whose soul has drenched in the doctrines of the Koran to consider himself the protector of every other Moslem whose soul has also been drenched . . . in Islam. The doctrine is everything. And is faith anything other than love and

servances. In place of such practices . . . they set a meticulous, literal observance of the precepts which they thought they found in the New Testament. In place of theology they cultivated the 'inner Revelation,' the direct inspirations which they believed they received from God—or, more often, which the leader of the group believed he received." (Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, pp. 273-274.) Hasan al-Banna, in fact, frequently distinguished his own faith by calling it the "Islam of the Moslem Brotherhood." (Husaini, *The Moslem Brethren*, p. 62.)

²⁶ Husaini, *ibid.*, p. 33 and p. 160, note 112, cites three such typical responses in the writings of Hasan al-Banna.

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hate? Hereafter, we want the banner of Allah to fly high once more in those regions which were once happy in Islam and the voice of the *Mu'azzin* was heard praising God. But ill luck deprived them of the light. . . . Andalusia, Sicily, the Balkans, the Greek Islands—all these are Moslem colonies which must come back into the Moslem fold. The Mediterranean and the Red Sea must be two Moslem lakes, as they were before. . . . Following that, we would want to issue our call to the world, and subdue every powerful man to it completely, that there may be no confusion, and that all religions may be Allah's."²⁷ Given the resources of the Middle Eastern states, such a drive is unlikely to be spectacularly successful. It could be sufficiently destructive, however, to undermine the stability of this area.

The Fate of a Totalitarian Party

The life cycle of a neo-Islamic totalitarian movement however, can be molded or cut short by forces that may not have the same impact on an ordinary political party. The very dynamics of a neo-Islamic movement prevent it from attaining stability or permanence. Its organized furor is a symptom of the loss of the vitality of a revelation and community formerly accepted as natural. The movement is led, in the view of the masses, by a mahdi figure who has come to set history once again in tune with the fundamental order of the universe. Not only the personality of the leader but also the movement's success necessarily become the touchstone of its genuineness. That is why its success, or its aura of success, implying sanctity, can quickly win adherents to its bandwagon. That is also why failure, or the aura of failure, can bring about a disaffection just as sudden.

The Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood demonstrates these generalizations quite well. So far in this analysis, the data concerning the Brotherhood are drawn predominantly from the 1940's. What happened afterwards? Its principal organizational strength, the disciplined hierarchic structure, became its principal weakness. By early 1949, the Moslem Brotherhood had grown so powerful that the Egyptian Government determined to have Hasan al-

²⁷ *The Call of the Moslem Brotherhood*, Cairo, October 1938.

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Banna assassinated. He was killed on February 12, 1949. The severe police repression that followed handicapped the movement; but it was the indecisive struggle for control of the position of "Supreme Guide" that proved most debilitating. As a result of this struggle, the organization became prey to the kind of infiltration which was calculated to hurt it most—*infiltration at the top*. To spare itself further internecine struggle and to escape continued repression, the Brotherhood finally accepted King Farouk's candidate as Supreme Guide. Judge Hasan al-Hudaybi was married to the sister of the private chamberlain of the royal family, and had various other connections with the King's entourage. Even after his new appointment in the fall of 1951, he remained a frequent visitor of the King.²⁸

As a result of having to obey Hudaybi as faithfully as it had al-Banna, the Moslem Brotherhood was led to commit a number of grave tactical errors. Although the Brotherhood's brave slogans continued to attract support, the tame leadership provided by Hudaybi curbed the movement's penchant for political conspiracy during the final years of King Farouk's rule. "There is no secrecy in the Message," said Hudaybi, "and no terrorism in religion."²⁹ This loss of drive during a crucial period in Egyptian history left the field free for latecomers without elaborate political organization—a handful of "Free Officers" under Gamal Abd al-Nasser's leadership.

After the military coup in 1952, the Brotherhood was exempted from the decree dissolving all political organizations. It had a number of adherents and sympathizers among the army officers who overthrew the royal house; the Free Officers, lacking any organized civilian support, apparently toyed for a time with the idea of making the Brotherhood their popular arm.³⁰ Soon, however, the Brotherhood made another error. Hudaybi thought himself free to issue commanding advice to Nasser's Revolutionary Command Council, speaking out against two of its major achievements—the land reform law and the Anglo-Egyptian agreement leading to the British evacuation of the Suez base. As

²⁸ Husaini, *The Moslem Brethren*, pp. 113-124.

²⁹ Cited by Mitchell, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 137.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-160.

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a result, the all-too-freewheeling Brotherhood was curbed again.

At this point, the movement fell prey to a disease that can readily beset a group that is desperately dependent on strong leadership because it knows no way of resolving conflicts peacefully. It split into three groups, Hudaybi's conservative and anti-Nasser faction, a secret apparatus which trusted neither Hudaybi nor Nasser, and a faction prepared to oust Hudaybi and collaborate with Nasser. Quite possibly without Hudaybi's knowledge, the secret apparatus attempted on October 26, 1954 to assassinate Nasser. All six pistol shots missed, but over a thousand Brotherhood members were arrested, a few to be hanged and the rest sentenced to jail and hard labor.³¹ Even today, the Moslem Brotherhood remains potentially among Nasser's most important opposition. But encumbered by false leadership, it has missed its historic opportunity for the time being.

The Varieties of Islamic Totalitarianism

The Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood has been the largest native totalitarian movement in the Middle East and it arose in the largest of Arab states. Estimates of its Egyptian membership in the first five years after World War II vary from 300,000 to 1,500,000 in a country that then had an adult male population of about 7,000,000.³² How representative is the Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood of other neo-Islamic totalitarian movements in the area? No catalogue of such movements can be attempted here, but few Moslem states are without them. They are not homogeneous movements; some common tendencies are more predominant in one movement than in another. In Maulana Syad Abul Ala Maudoodi's Jama'at-i-Islami movement in Pakistan, for example, there was, until recently, much more emphasis on recruiting and placing into power a small elite. Only ulema, for example,

³¹ The Brotherhood was outlawed on January 13, 1954, and the regime also found it necessary to dismiss thirty members of the police and seven army officers for their association with the Brotherhood. See Mitchell, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 182-192 for Hudaybi's inability to discover the membership of the secret apparatus.

³² Seton-Williams, *Britain and the Arab States*, London, 1948, p. 88, estimates it at 300,000 to 600,000 members. *The New York Times* suggested 1,500,000 in a report on August 5, 1946, and 1,000,000 on December 9, 1948.

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are to be allowed to sit in parliament and on courts.³³ Sons of gentry whose family lost property and status after the partition of the Indian sub-continent play a leading role within the movement, which has a membership of only a few thousand. The Khaksar movement of Pakistan, established in 1935 by Allama Mashriqi (who had secured the highest marks ever received by a student at Punjab University in mathematics, and later distinguished himself at Cambridge), is a para-military Islamic organization which, in contrast to the Jama'at-i-Islami, declares that it speaks both for the poor and for the infallibility of Islam.³⁴ The Khaksars were responsible for the assassination of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan in 1951.

The dynamics of neo-Islamic totalitarianism need not appear (any more than does modernity) only in their full, pure form. In Saudi Arabia, for example, an earlier historical form (akin in name and purpose to one Hasan al-Banna formed in Egypt in his youth) is still in evidence—the “Society for Commanding Virtue and Forbidding Vice,”³⁵ popularly known as the *Mutawwi'un* (“those who compel obedience”). As a governmental organization created about 1926 (no voluntary organizations are permitted in Saudi Arabia), this group reports directly to the King. It can raid and search on its own and request the police to make arrests; apparently it can inflict corporal punishment on its own authority. Its activities are in line with the puritanical doctrine of the Wahhabi sect, intent on curbing smoking, music, and dancing, though seldom, it is said, disturbing the pleasures of the rich or powerful. That Saudi Arabia is now increasingly being affected by the transformations that have created tensions in Islamic society elsewhere is suggested by the report of some observers that the younger graduates in religious studies at the Wahhabi

³³ See Maudoodi's *Islamic Law and Constitution*, a collection of Maudoodi's speeches and essays, published in Karachi, November 1955. Also Freeland Abbott, “The Jama'at-i-Islam of Pakistan,” *Middle East Journal*, Winter, 1957, pp. 37-51. By contrast, the Syrian Moslem Brotherhood has ascribed the “petrification” of Islam to the failure of the ulema to maintain contact with the people. (*New York Times*, February 19, 1955.)

³⁴ Khaksar means “humble” and the organization's symbol is the long-handled spade. (See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, pp. 235-245.) Leonard Binder has published a detailed and penetrating analysis of *Religion and Politics in Pakistan*, Berkeley, 1961.

³⁵ *Hayat al-amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar.*

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Institute in Riyadh are becoming more fanatical in their views. They fear that their prestige and authority are on the decline.

Even in Turkey, officially the most secular of Islamic countries, religion has not ceased to be a political issue, and the likelihood is that it will yet provoke much more conflict before it subsides. Honest, democratic balloting makes the Turkish peasant the kingpin of the electorate, yet he has been intellectually and socially more isolated from the Ataturk revolution, and has changed less than any other part of the population. Appeals to religion may yet become a major substitute for eliciting or retaining rural support, especially if the almost steady increase of economic benefits to the peasants that began during the past decade should cease, either because Turkish planners find good cause to reallocate the distribution of resources, or else because the economy falters. The growth of religious brotherhoods (dervish orders) with hallowed traditional names but highly modern purposes during the past few years has been increasingly reported in Turkish newspapers and exposed in court trials. A marriage of convenience between them and certain political parties which attack the reforms of Ataturk can by no means be excluded.

In Iran, the Mullah Ayatollah Kashani has exploited religion with obvious political cynicism. When in 1950 a member of the *Fadayin Islam* (Devotees of Islam) assassinated Premier Ali Razmara, Kashani publicly and proudly claimed responsibility. The new Prime Minister, Mosadeq, released the assassin of Razmara from prison without trial, while Kashani, as Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, pledged himself to support Mosadeq. When Western opposition to Mosadeq was patently growing, Kashani turned against Mosadeq a month before the Premier's overthrow in 1953. Since then, one of Kashani's sons has worked actively with the Shah, another against him. Kashani himself at times worked with and against local communists, with and against the U.S.S.R. Clearly, neo-Islamic totalitarianism is not only a faith but a commodity. Political brokers will work with it, and perhaps, as in Kashani's case, because it seems of all political counters at once the most familiar, fascinating, and profitable.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Egypt, a number of neo-Islamic groups have accepted financial support

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and entered into tactical alliance with the communists against common domestic and foreign foes. Their common interest in undermining existing authority, the cynicism of both in employing any means deemed useful, and the fanatic conviction of each that it alone will ultimately triumph over both enemies and collaborators has rendered such temporary, opportunistic alliances possible. With communists as with its conservative allies, however, the neo-Islamic movement is only temporarily responsive to bargaining, and only tactically responsive to arguments. Arguments against its position are disqualified by the mere fact that they belong to or defend a world which its followers cannot accept and are committed to change.

The Potentialities of Islamic and Post-Islamic Totalitarianism

In the 1930's and 1940's, the choice for most Moslems who had retained their traditional values, but were discontented with their society, lay between nationalist regimes committed to the status quo and neo-Islamic resurrectionists. The political success of reformist nationalists in the 1950's assuaged discontent and captured popular imagination, in part by mobilizing the same emotions and satisfying the same demands for dignity and power that the neo-Islamic movements had in their own fashion raised earlier. The influence of the neo-Islamic movements has, as a result, declined. The potential following for such movements, however, continues to grow as nationalist reformers speed the process of modernization and thus inescapably incite the political consciousness of ever larger number of tradition-bound men by involving them in untraditional and unresolved problems.

Some contemporary reformist nationalists, confronted with this growing pressure to cope with the demand of the uprooted for new and more secure roots, may well be tempted to accept the presence of an uprooted mass as an unalterable fact, and be tempted to maintain that mass in a continual state of emotional and political mobilization rather than engage it in the tasks of social reconstruction. Such a policy of expediency only could result in mounting unsolved social and economic problems,

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domestic demagoguery and repression, and foreign adventurism. The end effect upon the country could be as damaging as that from rule by neo-Islamic totalitarianism.

Ultra-nationalism is not the only secular approximation to neo-Islamic totalitarianism. Middle Easterners who no longer accept the beliefs of Islam, but who are no more ready than the neo-Islamic totalitarians to live without dogma and political magic, have been creating secular fascist organizations. Thus in 1952 Davoud Mochi Zadeh, whose father had been hanged after World War I as the leader of a terrorist neo-Islamic group, organized the Socialist National Workers Party of Iran (Sumka), inviting Iranians "to the suppression of self and to struggle against communism and the rotten world of democracy." Like the Pan-Iranian Party, his group also called for the unification of the Caucasus, Afghanistan, much of Turkestan, and other neighboring areas into a Greater Iran.³⁶

Similarly the Syrian National Social Party of Syria and Lebanon believes Syrians (rather than Arabs) to be the supreme "folk" of the Middle East. This party, organized along strictly hierarchic lines, has repeatedly engaged in violence in order to try carving out a Syrian homeland that would reach from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. In Egypt, Ahmad Husain's *Misr al-Fatat* represented until 1952 the secular fascist equivalent of neo-Islamic totalitarianism.³⁷

Such native totalitarian movements—whether Islamic or post-Islamic—will probably continue to sprout in the Middle East until their roots can no longer find inviting soil. For Moslems to be propelled into the midst of a historical and social revolution when resources for experimentation, or even for minimal secularity, are still lacking cannot help but create a profound feeling of anxiety. It is precisely the strength and importance of neo-Islamic totalitarianism and its fascist and ultra-nationalist counterparts

³⁶ *New York Times*, July 7, 1952.

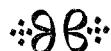
³⁷ See J. Heyworth-Dunne, *Religions and Political Trends in Modern Egypt*, Washington, 1950, pp. 103-105; Walter Z. Laqueur, *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*, New York, 1956, pp. 247-252. For references to similar groups in Turkey, see Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System*, Princeton, 1959, pp. 262-270, 282-292, and 371-376.

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that they directly respond to these anxieties. It is precisely the danger of these movements that they respond with anxiety, deepening the existing abyss between leader and mass, believer and non-believer; unable to still anxiety except by resorting to dogma and the sacrifice of the individual; unable to still frustration except through solidarity in violence.

CHAPTER 9

TOWARD A NEW AGE OF CERTAINTY: COMMUNIST TOTALITARIANISM



Islam and Communism

TWO OPPOSING VIEWS of Islam's relationship to communism were until recently predominant—neither of them valid. One view held that Islam was a firm barrier to communism, and the other that Islam resembled communism so much that Moslems could easily accept it.

Until the early 1950's, it was the pervasive view, especially among Western governments, that communism could not take root where Islam was strong. Thus, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs concluded in 1948 that its analysis "confirms what has long been known, namely that nothing in the history of the peoples, their psychology, or current stage in governmental and institutional development is particularly conducive toward receptivity to Communist propaganda or growth of Communist strength as such. This holds true for each of the main linguistic areas—Arabic, Turkish, Iranian—and main religions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity."¹

The other view carries to an extreme the analogies drawn by A. J. Toynbee, Reinhold Niebuhr, and H. R. Trevor-Roper, among others, between the expansionist ideologies of Islam and

¹ Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Strategy and Tactics of World Communism, Supplement III, B. Communism in the Near East*, Government Printing Office, 1948. For Moslem agreement with this point of view, see Mahmud Ahmad, *Economics of Islam*, Lahore, 1947; Mirza Muhammed Hussain, *Islam and Socialism*, Lahore, 1949; M. Siddiqi, *Marxism and Islam*, Hyderabad, 1951; "The Challenge of Communism and Islam," *The Muslim Sunrise*, Fourth Quarter, 1952; and Muhammed Rafi-ud-Din, *The Fallacy of Marxism*, Lahore, Institute of Islamic Culture, 1953.

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Bolshevism.² Proponents of this view observe that both the communist party and orthodox Islam claim absolute and universal validity for a philosophy which explains the process of reality in all its aspects. Further, both are puritan in character, filled with missionary zeal and spiritual fervor, and demand the submission of the individual to the community and complete devotion to the articles of faith. Both movements have their prophets, saints, scriptures, and demonology, and are less tolerant of the schismatic, the heretic, and the apostate than of foreign sects. Both differentiate between unjust wars and holy wars. If compelled to do so, both acknowledge the possibility of co-existence and neutralism, but only as a qualification of the commandment to pursue and extirpate evil, and to convert the pagan in all those regions of the world that are not yet part of their domain, a crusade felt to be in tune with destiny.

Such an interpretation has some merit, as we shall see, but not in this simple form. Indeed, if stated this baldly, these seeming similarities between Islam and communism are all the more likely to give rise to bitter opposition between them since, at least to this degree, the two movements can understand each other's threat. The orthodox Islamic reply to communism, however, labors under certain difficulties. The ulema who attack communists as hostile to Islam cannot point to contemporary attacks on Islam by Middle Eastern Communists. To postpone direct attacks on religion until they actually achieve control of the state—lest they deprive themselves of mass support while they still need it—is a tactic well established in communist theory and practice.³ The ulema, moreover, face an audience that is increasingly deaf to appeals in defense of traditional re-

² An actual study of the way in which these two closed societies resemble each other, and hence might produce the same kind of political élan and foreign policies, has not yet been attempted, yet would prove most fruitful in revealing both contrasts and similarities between traditional and modern ideological empires.

³ For attacks against Islam after the communists acquired power, see Alexander G. Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan, 1917-1927*, New York, 1957; R. Pipes, "Muslims of Soviet Central Asia," *Middle East Journal*, Spring and Summer, 1955; A. Bennigsen, "Traditional Islam in the Customs of the Turkic Peoples of Central Asia," *ibid.*, Spring 1958, pp. 227-333; Chantal Quelquejay, "Anti-Islamic Propaganda in Kazakhstan Since 1953," *ibid.*, Summer 1959, pp. 319-327.

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ligion, and unlikely to be moved, except perhaps favorably, by the knowledge that *Shari'a* law and other traditional institutions have been stamped out in Soviet Central Asia, even though this audience may give thought to the human price that was paid for rapid development. Often, an audience that is more receptive to the arguments of the ulema is also eager to oppose all modern ideas, whether democratic or communist, on the valid ground that both undermine Islamic orthodoxy.

The communists seldom attempt to capitalize on the seeming similarities between Islam and communism. To do so would endanger the communist claim to be a materialistic, scientific, historical movement. There is one exception. Like early Christianity, early Islam was also in part a protest against the abuse, corruption, and inequality of wealth; like Christianity, it insisted on love, compassion, and equality among all believers.⁴ As religious dogma adjusted itself to the worldliness of empire and the tremendous riches accumulated by the Companions of the Prophet, excessive devotion to the egalitarian spirit of the original revelation came to be considered a kind of left-wing deviationism.⁵ Communist critics have therefore been able to declare that the history of Islam and its institutions, soon dominated by the very powers which had at first opposed the Prophet, contradicts its original assertion of equality and fraternity. They assert that communists alone have the courage now to fulfill Islam's original promise of social and economic reform.⁶

⁴ For examples, Koran, Suras XVIII, 29; LXX, 24-25; LVII, 7; II, 273-80; XV, 20; IX, 34.

⁵ Abu Dharr, the only Companion to oppose the trend of his time and to advocate the limitation of wealth to the immediate needs of the family, and the sharing of the rest, was sent by the third Caliph into forced residence in the desert. A book published in 1948 and based on his ideas was carefully studied by the ulema of al-Azhar University, who acknowledged Abu Dharr's piety but banned the book. Their *fatwa* (legal interpretation) noted that Islam respects property, and sets no limits to the legal accumulation of wealth except in demanding certain specified contributions for charity and the defense of the state, and in encouraging spontaneous offerings. This *fatwa* also justified the prevailing practice of land tenure and sharecropping. Orthodox Islam had justified the historical development of the Islamic community too long to be able now to take an independent lead in analyzing the social and economic consequences of that development.

⁶ Such propaganda appears to have found some response: "Islam's lofty principles, social and economic," said Shaikh Abd al-Karim al-Mashta, one of Iraq's ulema, "are the same as those adopted by Russian and the Socialist

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There are indeed profound differences between Islam and communism, but such differences cannot automatically or without distortion be counted upon to constitute barriers. Materialism and revolution are part of the spirit, though not the letter, of the Islamic inheritance. Those orthodox Moslems who by virtue of their wholehearted attachment to a traditional revelation patently cannot assimilate communism (or any other modern ideology) are now irrevocably diminishing in number and influence. They can doubtless still be mobilized into political action by playing on their fear or hatred of those who will not acknowledge the eternal holiness of the Koran, but only at the price of mobilizing the same sentiment against all change and modernization. Islam in this sense can by now afford only a temporary and opportunistic barrier against communism.

There is one conceivable religious barrier which does not rest on the remnants of traditionalism or the propagandistic exploitation of them. That barrier lies in the possibility of a renaissance of Islamic culture "in which the ultimate meaning of existence shines through all finite forms of thought and action; the culture is transparent, and its creations are vessels of a spiritual content."⁷ Such a renaissance does not seem close in the Middle East.

The Attractions of Marxism

The barriers to communism that are specifically Islamic derive from the social rather than the religious aspects of Islam. To the degree that tradition survives, the Middle East is unready to receive modern ideas, including communism. There is not only erosion at work, however, to break the barriers of tradition. Islam actively prepares the field for communism when its continuing claim as a total way of life is mocked by its failure to solve the major contemporary problems of individual belief and social

countries. They are the same principles that the Iraqi Communists want to apply here. . . ." Arab News Agency despatch, January 30, 1959, cited by Walter Z. Laqueur, "Arab Unity versus Soviet Expansion," *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1959, p. 46.

⁷ The definition is from Paul Tillich (*The Protestant Era*, Chicago, 1957), who acknowledges that such a culture still remains to be recovered in the West.

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action. Communism is peculiarly attractive for Moslems who are prepared above all to look for a modern revelation as total in its concepts, emotional appeal, and the social control it exercises as was Islam in the past. For Moslems thus transfigured by the crisis of their society, the similarities which have been previously noted do indeed become important, and communism becomes attractive both because of the fundamental similarity of its form and the fundamental difference of its content.

These points began to be made for the first time in the early 1950's.⁸ Since then, only one writer has produced major analyses that relate the appeal of communism, Marxism, the communist parties, and the actual models of the Soviet state to Middle Eastern politics since the U.S.S.R. entered as an active participant in 1955.⁹

The matter thus deserves further exploration. Of the various components of communism, Marxism has a particular attraction for Moslems at a time when their society, in process of change, is becoming more unstable and unpredictable. At such a stage in history, Moslems who have preserved certain moral values of their religion despite their rebellion against the social irrelevance and intellectual inadequacy of their father's faith, and who are anxious to regain and enlarge the sense of community which was an intrinsic part of Islam, may well turn to Marxism.¹⁰ Marxism may appear to such Moslems to be a complete guide to a way of life. It seems to provide more modern answers than Islam to the fundamental questions concerning reality, and a sense of co-operating (through shared rituals, beliefs, and actions) with

⁸ See Manfred Halpern, "Implications of Communism for Islam," *The Muslim World*, January 1953; Bernard Lewis, "Communism and Islam," *International Affairs*, London, January 1954; Kenneth Cragg, "The Intellectual Impact of Communism Upon Contemporary Islam," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1954.

⁹ Walter Z. Laqueur, *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*, New York, 1956, and *The Soviet Union and the Middle East*, New York, 1959.

¹⁰ "Fascism and Nazism, with their naked appeal to greed, hate, pride, and envy could in the long run address themselves only to the evil instincts of man, and were correspondingly limited. Communism, while exploiting these to the full, has also perverted to its service some of the noblest aspirations of the human race—as peace, social justice, the brotherhood of man—and has used them with deadly effect. We shall fail to understand and meet the threat of communism if we do not recognize its attraction for the best, though not the brightest, as well as for the worst spirits." Lewis, "Communism and Islam."

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the inevitable development of history toward a universal, classless, and prosperous community.¹¹

Marxism's appeal arises not only from its dogma but equally from its dialectical, historical, and tactical ambiguities. Moslems do not find it difficult to assent to a Marx who, discouraged by the "fetishism of commodities," the alienation of labor, and the reification of society under capitalism, sought to bring about a new society of free individuals in which alienated, distorted relationships of material production no longer determined the pattern of human life. In a society in which toil has never been thought to have either intrinsic dignity or instrumental value for individual purification or salvation, Marxism offers the utopia of satisfaction on the basis of need rather than performance, stressing economic security primarily as a means toward the achievement of human freedom.

To Moslems previously accustomed to a monistic view of life, Marxism therefore appears not as a materialistic approach rejecting spiritual values but rather as a new monistic philosophy projecting spiritual values upon a materialist base. Rejecting an Islam which, in their view, united the people only by binding the oppressed classes to the oppressor by submission, they would now save the community by subverting its present world view. Once Mohammed, they say, had to overcome the ties of kinship and an ancient polytheism in order to establish the community of believers. Now only Marxism seems radical enough to organize the community to deal with widespread want, toil, and injustice in the face of the first genuine historical opportunity to overcome them.¹²

For the majority of Middle Eastern converts to Marxism, the doctrine itself as a system of thought and a pattern for action

¹¹ A statement such as this is clearly Islamic in spirit though obviously not in content: Marxist-Leninist theory "enables the Party to find the right orientation in any situation, to understand the inner connection of current events, to foresee their course, and to perceive not only how and in what direction they are developing in the present but how and in what direction they are bound to develop in the future." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [Bolsheviks]*), New York, 1945.

¹² See also Donald G. Macrae, "The Bolshevik Ideology: The Intellectual and Emotional Factors in Communist Affiliation," *The Cambridge Journal*, December 1951.

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almost certainly has never been an object of detailed examination, study, and acceptance. By osmosis rather than by direct contact with its literature, Marxism's analysis of the causes and character of poverty, exploitation, and imperialism has become widely accepted in the Middle East. Though the Marxist analysis of imperialism is only partly true, it has won great popularity because it is in part true and because its truth (whatever the additional explanations) was dramatically experienced in the Middle East during a century of Western imperialism. Moreover, the modern West itself has failed so far to produce explanations of imperialism more convincing or at least equally simple.¹³

The Attraction of the U.S.S.R. as a Model of Rapid Progress

But Marxism can also show another face, and hence attract yet another group, or reinforce its appeal among those to whom ends justify means or who find it plausible to see a dialectical relationship between these contrasting images of the future. Communism in Soviet practice has become a system in which the state is the sole reservoir of power and capital. The state rationalizes its production and bureaucratic apparatus under authoritarian leadership, places special emphasis on the requirements of urgent industrialization and military preparedness, and justifies its political, economic, and intellectual exactions by an ideology that is totalitarian. Such a system, seen from the outside, is attractive to people who are in a hurry to achieve progress and see no hope of accomplishment except through the use of force by a minority. The Soviet model thus seems to offer a prototype for the kind of revolution that will bring order in the present chaos. Middle Easterners attracted to this model are prepared to justify the police state on the grounds that contemporary Middle Eastern governments are also prepared to use repressive force, but without accompanying it by social reform. There also exists the widespread assumption among Middle East-

¹³ Most Middle Eastern countries have experienced only Western imperialism, and every country that experienced Russian or later Soviet intervention—Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan—has also known Western intervention.

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ern Communists that the evils and errors of Soviet leadership will not, of course, be repeated when Soviet techniques are introduced in this area. Besides, those who are under the whip now will escape further whipping; they will be cracking the whip.

The political and economic models provided by the U.S.S.R. are likely to have far more appeal in the Middle East than are those of Western Europe and the U.S., at least in the next decade. Like the U.S.S.R. a few decades ago, the Middle East is economically backward. Like the U.S.S.R., it seeks to achieve progress, status, and power in a hurry. Most Middle Eastern countries similarly begin with a lack of capital—hence would find it useful to force savings, use the state to direct investments, meanwhile keeping the standard of living of most consumers low. Also striking a responsive chord is the idea of a single political party dedicated to the subversion of the traditional order and, subsequently, the constant mobilization of the population in support of government objectives.

The appeal of such solutions does not necessarily mean that Middle Eastern reformist nationalists will adopt a pro-Soviet orientation. Actually, it is Titoist Yugoslavia that has become one of the most attractive models for these reformist nationalists in recent years. It impresses many Middle Easterners as a country at once European in style and status, yet still in process of overcoming its economic underdevelopment. It is radical in its political, social, and economic approach, but willing to experiment, and it is eager to discuss political means and ends with less experienced Asians and Africans who could not expect equally open exchanges with other kinds of communists. For Egypt, certainly, Yugoslavia has become the chief model of successful neutralism and rapid progress in internal reform.

Increasingly, modernizing countries are also learning from each other, whether from Nehru's India or the Turkey of Ataturk and his successors, from Bourguiba's Tunisia, Touré's Guinea, or Nkrumah's Ghana. Indeed, any comprehensive theory of social, political, and economic development of underdeveloped areas—a theory as yet attempted by no one, though desperately required—would surely have to proceed by viewing the development of the U.S.S.R. and the Middle East in a common analyt-

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ical framework, rather than imposing, whether propagandistically or analytically, the accepted descriptions of earlier ideologies in one country on later practice in another.

Just as the acceptance of Marxism does not always redound to the benefit of the U.S.S.R.—Marxism historically, like Islam, has shown itself capable of many forms and deviations—even the acceptance of specific Soviet models need not favor Soviet aims. In the case of such imitation or creative adaptation as those undertaken by Ataturk and Bourguiba, at least, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the Western cause was served instead.

Indeed, accepting all the Soviet models mentioned so far would not call for a totalitarian, but only an authoritarian regime. The attractiveness of a totalitarian regime—one which, in contrast to an authoritarian regime, abolishes privacy—stems from three rather different considerations: (1) In justified or unjustified fears of foreign or domestic menace, an authoritarian regime can easily persuade itself that its police must henceforth probe private thoughts rather than merely enforce public behavior; (2) for reasons of ideological loyalty or on the pragmatic assumption that the regime could not survive without Soviet help or against Soviet pressure, an authoritarian regime may feel compelled to follow Soviet footsteps; or (3) an authoritarian regime may decide to speed up its campaign to instill production-mindedness within a single generation.

Only the last motivation demands further explanation. The Middle East, like the U.S.S.R. at the time of the Bolshevik revolution, is a peasant society, and peasants work in tune with the seasons—working hard three to six months in most of the Middle East; then they rest and sit and wait. The discipline of the industrial work week is alien to them, and demands an entirely new spirit and sense of values. Such a new discipline can be established gradually. To change men's rhythm of life and their souls in a single generation in an environment that can, for the most part, afford to grant few immediate rewards for such a change of spirit requires a profound governmental concern with men's discipline, enthusiasm, loyalty, values, fears, and intentions—in short, totalitarian methods. There are other ways to progress, but they require either more resources or more time.

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The Soviet practice of communism, which is obviously irrelevant for the needs of industrial countries, is an alternative for underdeveloped countries—the one that exacts great and grave sacrifices.

Should totalitarian and Soviet-oriented regimes actually emerge in the Middle East, a major difference even within this group is bound to become apparent. Not all so-called underdeveloped countries have significant untapped resources. Some are poor in every resource except labor. In Egypt, which would probably double its present per capita income of about \$150 per year yet not hope to escape poverty, communism would face tasks quite different from those it would confront in oil-rich and land-rich Iraq. Whether Soviet communism is a useable model for poor countries is doubtful.

The Attraction of Chinese Communist Models

When Walter Lippmann asked Chairman Khrushchev in 1959 about the relevance of communism to poor countries, Lippmann recalled that "I did not feel that he was willing to face the somewhat speculative question. . . ."¹⁴ When Mehdi Ben Barka, a leader of a radical party in a relatively poor country, Morocco, was recently asked a similar question, he replied that there appeared to be a great distinction arising in the communist world, with the U.S.S.R. representing the "communism of the rich" and China the "communism of the poor."

It is doubtful that the Soviet Union is a relevant model for a country such as Iraq which has excellent resources for economic progress if it will only utilize them wisely and efficiently. One could even argue that, once the world's technology has achieved major breakthroughs in food production and processing, cheap energy, automation, and birth control, the Soviet or Chinese model will not be relevant for any country. Certainly, most of the countries of the Middle East lack the prerequisites for rapid industrial growth which Russia possessed when the Soviets came to power. "When the Soviets started, they already had the boots,

¹⁴ Walter Lippmann, *The Communist World and Ours*, New York, 1959, p. 25.

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and the straps to pull on, whereas contemporary Asia is, relatively speaking, still barefooted." The U.S.S.R. may well be a model for rapidly converting a good start into high accomplishment through exclusive state control over economic activity, and a ruthless use of controls to move the entire population and all resources in the "right" direction. But unlike most of the Middle East, it could make such a start and achieve its present development without having to confront with full force the problems of initial acceleration of savings, of expanding agricultural output to overtake rapid population growth, and of finding productive employment for urban and rural labor expanding at a frighteningly rapid rate. Much of Soviet development is a product of improvisation—as the scarcity of both pre-revolutionary Marxist and post-revolutionary Soviet writing on the modernization of underdeveloped areas implies, and a close examination of its history demonstrates. But for those tasks which will make or break Middle Eastern economic development, the U.S.S.R. has had neither to improvise policies nor develop doctrines.¹⁵ By now, having become a highly industrialized, powerful nation, the U.S.S.R. has by its very achievement ceased to be an innovating model of special relevance to underdeveloped areas.

That is why Middle Easterners have in recent years been increasingly fascinated by the "communism of the poor." China appears to have several political and social attractions that the U.S.S.R. either no longer or else never possessed for some Middle Easterners. It is clearly Asian and not primarily European. It has overcome its inferiority and its inferiority complex, but it is not yet an advanced industrial and military power demonstrating its strength as such in the Middle East. Indeed, it is located at a much more reassuring distance than either the U.S.S.R. or the West. There was a time—perhaps it was still true a year or two ago—when the U.S.S.R. could speak to the Middle East, as the United States could not, in words that suggested that it knew what it felt to have been an underdog, to have been put on the

¹⁵ Most of the points made in this paragraph and all quotations, are drawn from Oleg Hoeffding's "The Soviet Union: Model for Asia? State Planning and Forced Industrialization," *Problems of Communism*, November-December 1959, pp. 38-46, an excellent analysis of the principal economic issues and facts involved.

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defensive, to have been exploited, yet now to be the elder brother of the poor. It may still seek to retain that image, but the advent of the Sputniks and its own assertions and demonstrations of power have altered the Soviet posture decisively.

China for a time assumed the former Soviet mantle in Middle Eastern eyes. Its demonstration of what a country rich in poor people can accomplish by marshaling its labor seemed to be especially impressive. Commented the Moroccan Ben Barka, voicing perspectives almost certainly shared by many other Middle Easterners: "China presents itself as the country which has the greatest similarities with our own by virtue of its past, by the tremendous backwardness which it has had to overcome, and also by the errors committed at the morrow of its liberation. . . . Certainly the conditions under which the progress of China has been realized deserves to be fully analyzed [since] the economic and social, technical and cultural development of such a country poses the same problems as ours: problems of direction, planning, democratic participation of the masses involved in production, and problems also of foreign aid. . . ."¹⁶

Yet the image of China has changed almost as rapidly as that of the U.S.S.R. Both first came dramatically to the attention of Middle Eastern leaders in 1955—the U.S.S.R. as an alternate supplier of arms, economic aid, and diplomatic support at that time to Egypt; China as a prominent member of the Bandung Conference of 29 Afro-Asian nations. By 1958, when the U.S.S.R. seemed as deeply involved as a partisan in Arab rivalries as Western powers before it, its special luster began to wane.¹⁷ So did China's when it allowed the leader of the outlawed Syrian Communist Party to condemn the United Arab Republic at a public ceremony in China attended by the U.A.R. Ambassador. And China later alarmed all Arabs, regardless of their partisanship, by attacking along a disputed border with India in 1959. This was an obvious breach of the Bandung spirit of peaceful

¹⁶ *Problèmes d'Edification du Maroc et du Maghreb, Quatre Entretiens avec El Mehdi Ben Barka*, collected by Raymond Jean, *Tribune Libre*, No. 52, Paris, 1959, p. 50.

¹⁷ See the exchanges of sharp criticism between Cairo and Moscow over Iraq at the end of 1958 and early 1959.

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collaboration among all Afro-Asian nations, non-intervention in each other's affairs, and negotiation of all differences.¹⁸

Although the glitter of China, no less than that of the U.S.S.R., was soon dimmed, the study of the Chinese effort to conquer poverty continues. If Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt come to resort, as well they may, to the formation of short-term conscripted labor battalions, the models are likely to be Yugoslav—but modified in the light of an examination of the errors of China. What counts are not so much the specific models that are borrowed as the system of action and thought of which they become a part.

In the Middle East today, even the most reformist governments point with proud awareness to the fact that Islam in all its history has been largely free of religious inquisitions or political brain-washing. Traditional Islam never developed a cohesive social, political, and moral structure hierarchically interlocking peasant and Emperor, as in China or Japan. Islam always respected the privacy and inner freedom of the believer. For these reasons, it is argued, Islam is less prepared for total social controls than Japan in the nineteen thirties or China today.

Such historical traditions, however, are not likely to deter forever leaders who have eclectically tried and joined various concrete models, yet failed to outpace the growth of their population. The majority of the people of the Middle East live in countries that are even poorer, per capita, than China was a decade ago or is now. If non-totalitarian roads fail, acceptance of the path of Chinese communism may well become in the Middle East the politics of despair of the left just as neo-Islamic totalitarianism has become the politics of despair of the right.

Factors Hampering the Role of Communist Parties in the Middle East: Small Membership

So far, our analysis suggests that communism, in its various aspects, must be counted as one of the serious political competi-

¹⁸ There was also considerable inclination among Middle Easterners in 1959 who had earlier thought of China as a useful countervailing force against both Soviet and American influence in the area to suspect that the more violently aggressive communist faction in Iraq was inspired by Chinese, rather than Russian, example and support.

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tors in the Middle East—an alternative stimulated far more than hindered by an Islam in crisis. It also suggests that, as an ideology or a cluster of practices, its appeal has special attractions and special limitations. These attractions and limitations also affect the fortunes of the local communist parties.

The communist parties in the area from Morocco to Pakistan are all still quite small. Iran's Communist Tudeh Party became the largest in Middle Eastern history when it grew to about 40,000-80,000 members in 1953, but by 1963 it had been reduced to less than 2,000.¹⁹ The leading communist parties of the Arab world today are in Syria, with 1,500 members, and in Iraq, Egypt, and Morocco, with about 1,000 members each. In Egypt, the largest Arab country, seven small and outlawed communist factions have sometimes managed to coalesce into, at most, three major splinters; hence particular communist individuals have been more influential than any organized communist group. In Syria, which has long had the largest communist party in the Arab world, the party has remained outlawed before, during, and after Syria's membership in the United Arab Republic. A nationalist communist faction, including the former editor of the party newspaper, split off from the Syrian party in August 1959. In Lebanon, where outlawed communists have been consistently freer to operate during the past decade than anywhere else in the Arab world, they have been no more successful than any other local political party in breaking through the religious-ethnic allocation of all government positions to gain important influence. The fortunes of both communist parties in Iraq—one pro-Soviet, but apparently divided between a revolutionary and a constitutional faction, the other loyal to Iraqi nationalism—have waned since the excesses of the pro-Soviet group alienated government and people during 1959. The illegal parties of Jordan, Sudan, and Pakistan have, respectively, about 200, 1,500, and 3,500 members.

In Arab Africa, no communist party now has important influence, and all of them are now outlawed. In Morocco and

¹⁹ All figures on communist party strength in this chapter are based on Intelligence Report 4489, *World Strength of the Communist Party Organizations* (Unclassified), Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, January 1963, and earlier editions.

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Tunisia, the parties shrivelled from about 10,000 each to about one-tenth that size from 1946 to 1961. Freedom from French control was the principal interest of politically active Moroccans and Tunisians, and a party whose membership was predominantly French, whose principal target was "U.S. imperialism," and whose policy toward local independence was changeable and ambiguous could not fail to lose numbers and influence. A similar fate has now befallen the Algerian Communist Party. In Libya, the party is yet to be reformed after its small remnant of Italian members was exiled in 1951. In Turkey, consistent repression since 1925 and a broad popular sense of menace from the north has kept communist activities limited to a few cells. In Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, political repression has not yet permitted any political party to arise.

Why are most of the communist parties of the Middle East still so small? The particular fortunes of most of these parties are detailed in the work of Laqueur.²⁰ Problems that have bedevilled the development of all political parties in the Middle East are discussed in Chapter 14. Here we must discover the peculiar handicaps that face the communist parties in competing with others in the Middle East.

Shifting and Unrewarding Communist Strategies

The communist party has been handicapped by its own strategy. This fact becomes perhaps most apparent in a brief review of the many major changes in communist party strategy in this region from 1917 to the present in response to the changing world power balance, the forced pace of change within the U.S.S.R., and the social transformation in process everywhere in the world. Between 1917 and 1921, Soviet leaders not only favored world revolution but saw their foreign comrades make progress in that direction in, among other countries, Turkey and Iran. In Turkey, local communist forces, though of dubious orthodoxy, were supporting Ataturk's armies. In Iran, commu-

²⁰ *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East*. In Israel, where the party has about 2,000 members, of whom 500 may be Arabs, its total appeal has never exceeded 5 percent of the popular vote. It has been crippled by its anti-Zionist orientation in the Zionist state.

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nists were attempting to establish separate states in Azerbaijan and Gilan.²¹ By 1921, however, it had become clear to Soviet leaders that they lacked the strength to sustain the efforts of these foreign communist movements. Within the U.S.S.R., this re-trenchment was reflected in the New Economic Policy; outside, it showed itself in an eagerness to improve relations with neighboring Middle Eastern governments at the expense, if necessary, of the local communist parties. In Iran and Turkey, communists by the thousands were thus left to the hangman.

When, in September 1928, at the Sixth Comintern Congress, international communism shifted again to an emphasis on revolutionary activity, little response was possible in the area from Morocco to Pakistan. The two strongest communist movements had been decimated; the rest were as yet unimportant. The reversal of communist strategy in 1934—so helpful in the West, where fascism was recognized as a threat and where some liberal forces were ready to enter into a united front with communists to fight fascism—turned into a handicap in the Middle East. To unite with their British or French overlords against Germany and Italy was not attractive to Moslems who, when not neutral toward such a seemingly distant struggle, were drawn to the proposition that the enemy of their enemy might be their friend. Between 1934 and 1939, communists in the Middle East did succeed in drawing local or foreign resident Christians and Jews into their ranks—only to make it more difficult to attract Moslems during those two short years, 1939-1941, when their first real opportunity arrived.

The year 1939, which in the West marks the desertion of communists from the battle against fascism, gave the party its first opportunity in the Middle East to woo followers with the area's most popular themes. In the light of the Nazi-Soviet pact, it became possible to recruit members to fight against British and French imperialism without regard to the war in Europe. Still, this chance netted the communists little. Religious and ethnic

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 205-211; George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948*, Ithaca, 1949, pp. 48-62; Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Communist Impact on Turkey and Iran, 1918-1954," an unpublished paper delivered to the Panel on International Communism, American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 11, 1954.

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minorities loomed too large among the communist core; where British and French influence counted, governmental repression grew in reaction to the new communist line. Moreover, the opportunity lasted for only two years. With the German invasion of the U.S.S.R. in 1941, World War II became to the communist a "patriotic war." By opposing any political activities against British and French imperialism that might hurt the war effort, the communists destroyed all chance of linking themselves with local nationalist movements until 1946.

Since 1946, there has been evolving, gradually and not without contradictions, the present strategy of the communist parties —giving priority to the formation of a new broad popular front against the one menace facing the world—"American imperialism." There remained uncertainty in communist ranks, at least between 1946 and 1954, as to whether to limit collaboration to left-wing groups or collaborate with all nationalists. This problem was rendered more difficult by the ideological ambiguities of both clique and mass parties of the Middle East, and by the secret, non-party structure of the most successful local revolutionary groups.²² There remained uncertainty at least until 1952 also as to whether domestic revolution was still part of the new strategy or whether such revolutionary activity must be eschewed lest nationalists be frightened away from collaboration with communists against "American imperialism."²³

How confusing a period this was, and how little the communist parties were able to profit from their new freedom to concentrate on themes closest to Middle Eastern hearts—"national

²² Thus "the Egyptian revolution of 1952 was described in a contemporary Soviet work, the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, as the action of a 'reactionary officers group linked with the USA' which had embarked on 'savage repression of the workers' movement.' Writing in 1953, L. N. Vatolina, an expert on Egyptian affairs, observed that since the revolution there had been increased persecutions of communists, democrats, and trade unionists, and that the peasants had been cheated of their rights by a purely 'demagogic' measure of land reform. In 1954, however, A. F. Sultanov said that the land reform law, while not solving the agrarian question, was undoubtedly a progressive measure. In 1956 I. A. Dement'yev said that Egypt, since becoming a republic, had been able to institute social reforms and to adopt an independent foreign policy; and a short work entitled *Independent Egypt*, published in the same year, represented the revolution of 1952 as the turning point in Egyptian history, as a result of which Egypt had become a 'bourgeois democratic state.' " (*The Mizan Newsletter, A Review of Soviet Writing on the Middle East*, February

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liberation" and "anti-imperialism"—is dramatized, indeed almost caricatured, by the fortunes of the Tunisian Communist Party. In 1946, it was one of the largest in the Arab world. By 1951, it had lost about four-fifths of its original membership of 10,000. Yet here was a country with a strong, and at that time unsatisfied, drive for national independence. Here also was a country with few resources and growing poverty, where more than half of all Tunisians who have any cash income were having to spend 90 percent of it on food, and with Algeria's high birth rate but without Algeria's safety valve of free immigration to France.

Communist strength in Tunisia in 1946 was the harvest of an earlier and now discarded strategy. As a result of its support (albeit belated) of the French resistance effort, it had achieved a predominantly French membership. With such a cadre, it now proposed to campaign for Tunisian liberation from France. In February 1946, the Tunisian Communist newspaper *L'Avenir* had still attacked Tunisian leaders like Habib Bourguiba for allegedly collaborating with fascism, and had endorsed a French evolutionary program that would not lead to Tunisian self-government in any foreseeable future. By August, communists were no longer in the French government, and *L'Avenir* apologized for its previous attacks and called for "an end to the colonial regime."²⁴

Though the major turn in communist strategy in Tunisia came in the fall of 1946, zig-zags persisted in Tunisia (and, of exactly the same kind, elsewhere in North Africa) for another year and

1959, p. 4, published by the Central Asian Research Centre in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford, Soviet Affairs Study Group.)

²³ Between 1946 and 1951 the communists engaged in guerrilla activities in Greece, Iran, India, Burma, Malaya, and the Philippines but not in Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, or Lebanon, where the communists had more members proportional to the population, than in India.

²⁴ Though more limited and less publicized, the conflict between its European and colonial policies can involve the U.S.S.R. and its world communist movement no less than the U.S. in ambiguities and contradictions. The U.S.S.R. has so far even seen fit to borrow trouble (or been forced by its own restricted freedom of movement into such difficult maneuver) by making the party in metropolitan Europe the intermediary for instructions to parties in colonial and even former colonial areas. Thus the Algerian Communist Party apparently was unable to escape the onus of control from Paris until early 1958, when it cemented connections with the Italian Communist Party. See *L'Unità*, February 8, 1959.

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a half. The Central Committee of the Tunisian Communist Party, meeting on August 3-4, 1946, had called for a revision of the Franco-Tunisian Protectorate Treaty of 1881. Two months later, however, the communists noticeably played down the theme of national independence. The third balloting on the new Constitution was being conducted in France, and the communists wanted to present the best possible face to France. A year later, in October 1947, the communists proposed a new draft to replace the Protectorate Treaty but, contrary to Bourguiba's nationalists, called for Tunisia's inclusion in the French Union rather than complete independence.²⁵

The Third Congress of the Tunisian Communist Party in May 1948 formalized and elaborated the new line of national liberation and anti-imperialism, but placed it into a context alien to nationalist concerns and tactics. The communists made the United States the primary target of attack, giving only second rating to "its valet, French colonialism," while continuing to stress the unity of interest between the French and Tunisian "working class."²⁶ Prior to 1951, the party's tactics succeeded, moreover, in exposing its ideological preconceptions to the detriment of its larger strategy of marshaling support against U.S. power and influence. It took pains publicly to defend the Soviet recognition of Israel. It attacked the Arab League, which was supporting and subsidizing the efforts of Tunisia's nationalists, as a "bankrupt" association of "feudal lords" and "imperialist tools." It attacked Arab neutralists as individuals who lacked courage to associate themselves with the Soviet "camp of peace." It opposed the final U.N. decision leading to neighboring Libya's independence, which was endorsed by Tunisia's nationalists, because it would not put an end to "Western imperialist control" over that country. On September 4, 1948, in the pages of *L'Avenir*, the new Secretary General of the party, Maurice Nissard, noted that many comrades were discouraged, but declared that opportunities for them would increase.

²⁵ Not till April 1949 did the Tunisian Communists reject the concept of the French Union.

²⁶ A similar priority of targets was, of course, enunciated by communist parties throughout the Middle East, and where specific reference to "working class unity" with a metropolitan European area was irrelevant, references to "proletarian internationalism" played the same role.

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Even though it was still voicing sectarian slogans which it would be compelled to yield after 1951, the party was already paying a price for its new pursuit. It was losing old members. In April 1948, Ali Djerad, one of the party's founders and then still its Secretary General, was expelled from the party as a "left-wing sectarian."²⁷ Djerad, who is said to have spent a year in Moscow and two years in Moslem communities in the U.S.S.R., was opposed to the postponement of preparations for communist revolution inherent in the policy of collaboration with nationalist parties. He favored instead reliance on the urban proletariat and emphasis on the organization of a revolutionary cadre. By 1951, to be sure, Arabs had come to equal and perhaps to exceed Europeans in membership, but only because Europeans saw no future for themselves in the new line and were leaving the party. In January 1952, governmental repression for the first time hit the Tunisian Communist Party. By December of that year, lack of funds forced the party to give up its drab second-floor apartment headquarters in Tunis.

The decay of the Tunisian Communist Party in 1952 left for several years only three communist parties in all the region from Morocco to Pakistan important enough to deserve the attention of politically concerned Moslems—in Iran, Syria, and the Sudan.

The Burden of Soviet Discipline

The communist parties of the Middle East suffer from being under Soviet discipline. This burden is of two kinds. First, it limits their appeals to others in this highly nationalist region. The significance of the frequent, abrupt, and major changes of communist line entirely in response to the needs of the U.S.S.R. has not escaped most political leaders in the Middle East. No other party leader in this area finds it necessary, as do communists, to attend congresses in the capital of a major foreign power to reaffirm his devotion to a common international strategy. No other

²⁷ The task of cleansing the party internally to carry the new line effectively became even greater after 1951, when the exclusive concentration of communist parties on foreign policy matters served to harden factional differences in a number of parties. The Iraqi party, as a matter of fact, found it impossible, because of internal disputes, to make the 1951 shift until 1953, and then only at the cost of leaving two factions behind.

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Middle Eastern political party has ever been specifically and publicly defended by the Premier of a major foreign power against purely local criticism as were Arab Communist parties recently by Premier Khrushchev.²⁸

Middle Eastern leaders may make unduly optimistic assumptions about their own strength when they opportunistically collaborate with local communists. They may also entertain unduly optimistic hopes about the personal independence of particular communists whom they have long known as cousins, classmates, or fellow opportunists. In exploiting these two assumptions lie two of the principal opportunities for communist successes in the Middle East. But few, if any, Middle Eastern leaders have doubts about the discipline that ties communist parties as such to Moscow. A few politicians, misled by earlier Middle Eastern perspectives, have tried to use the communist party as a broker for securing the support of the U.S.S.R. for their own political career. (This may well have been the gambit attempted by Deputy Premier Khalid al-Azm of Syria in his drive for the Syrian Presidency just before others cut the ground under him by joining Syria to Egypt.) For the great majority of leaders, however, the risks in terms of prestige and political freedom of cooperating with a party that is directly tied to a foreign power continue to preclude such an adventure.

Secondly, the burden of Soviet discipline has, again and again, spelled the near suicide of local communist parties. In part, that is already evident in the preceding brief account of the effects on parties of the many changes in strategy since 1917. Shaping policy in line with Soviet rather than local requirements has particularly hurt parties that have hitherto been among the most influential in the Middle East—the Iranian and the Syrian.

Twice, in 1921 and 1946, the Iranian party was deserted by the U.S.S.R. at the cost of many communist lives after the U.S.S.R. no longer found it prudent to protect the separatist regional regimes which communists, obviously with Soviet encouragement, had established as springboards for further local triumphs. In 1953 the Communist Tudeh Party failed to seize power, despite its considerable strength, and allowed Premier

²⁸ *New York Times*, January 28, 1959.

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Mosadeq to be overthrown instead by conservative forces. The Soviet Union may well have deterred the Tudeh Party from acting in a situation so fraught with opportunity but also with grave dangers, considering that the U.S. and the U.K. were clearly prepared to enter the struggle by supporting countervailing forces in Iranian society.²⁹ Moreover, it did not seem likely that the Soviet Union would have been able to capitalize on this victory by expanding into the rest of the Middle East. On the contrary, the expansion of Soviet influence on that scale and only after inescapably violent conflict would much more likely have served to frighten neighboring states into closer ties with the West. The consequence of abstention, however, was a drop of communist membership to less than five percent of its former size.

In Syria, the communists had been growing in influence during the 1950's. Among other reasons, this occurred because the U.S.S.R. had given them the most popular slogans anyone could voice: national liberation, anti-imperialism, Arab unity. But what the U.S.S.R. had given in principle it took away in practice at the most critical moment. When the majority of Syrian political leaders agreed to union with Egypt in 1958, the communists stood opposed. They obviously could not continue to support national liberation, anti-imperialism, and Arab unity at a point when these slogans proved most popular in explaining a move designed specifically to curb Soviet and communist influence.

Lack of Internal Cohesion in Communist Parties

Communist ideological convictions have not always been strong enough to transcend religious or ethnic differences. Such differences have repeatedly created internal conflicts and even schisms, or at least limited the appeal of the communist party in almost every Middle Eastern country.³⁰ French and Arab Com-

²⁹ Tudeh's acquiescence would only echo the arguments of the Greek Communists, the most experienced in guerrilla warfare and its consequences in the Near East. In 1951, they declared that it would be "cynical adventurism" even to prepare for revolution now. They argued that, while the task of isolating the U.S. internationally remains undone, communist revolutionary attempts can only serve to induce U.S. intervention. (KKE Draft Program, June 1951.)

³⁰ Thus, the principal Arab Communist, Khalid Bakdash, told his Syrian

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munists have been unable to collaborate effectively in North Africa; Arab and Kurdish Communists have pursued separate ways in Iraq; the communist parties in the two regions of Pakistan have remained autonomous.

Unlike European communist parties, the communist party in the Middle East has no permanent clientele or predominant sway among the proletariat. The proletariat is only beginning to come into being and to become conscious of itself as a group.³¹ Party membership—both its hard core and its sympathizers—is drawn largely from the new middle class. Hence Middle Eastern communist parties are in constant competition with other parties for the same clientele. Repression or failures, encouragement or successes therefore affect their size and internal cohesion more quickly and more deeply than they could any class-bound communist party in Western Europe.

A Mistaken Communist Image of Middle Eastern Society

The communists are handicapped by the image of the Middle Eastern social structure imposed on them by their ideology. Until 1954, Soviet scholarship on contemporary politics and social change in the region from Morocco to Pakistan had suffered from a prolonged neglect.³² Since then, the volume of production has increased, but few notably concrete and discerning analyses have come from the pen of any Soviet or Middle Eastern communist writer.³³ The most significant change in perspective

followers: "We must clearly understand that most of our difficulties, the shortcomings of our work, and our lack of progress, in relation to the possibilities and readiness of the people, stem from the weak education, intellectual, and theoretical level in our ranks." ("Report to the Central Committee," January 1951, translated by Harold W. Glidden, *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1953, p. 220.)

³¹ See Chapter 6 on the character of the Middle Eastern working class and Chapter 15 on the role of trade unions.

³² See W. Z. Laqueur, "The Shifting Line in Soviet Orientalology," *Problems of Communism*, March-April, 1956, pp. 20-26.

³³ Rudolf Loewenthal has produced three useful bibliographies: "Russian Materials on Africa," "Russian Materials on Islam and Islamic Institutions," and "Russian Materials on Arabs and Arab Countries," all published by the Institute of Language and Linguistics, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, 1958. See also Roger Swearingen, "Asian Studies in the Soviet

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evident in substance since about 1946 and in quantity since 1954 is a new appreciation of the role of the middle class. "Serious mistakes have occasionally been committed in appraising the role of the national bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist movement of the countries of the East," said the Soviet theoretical journal *Kommunist* in May 1955.³⁴ Scholarly analysis was now to catch up with the political verdict rendered in 1951: "Even certain representatives of the big bourgeoisie, whose interests have also been infringed by the policy of the American imperialists, are far from being happy at the loss of national independence. They have been forced to assent that the working class stands in the van of the struggle for the restoration of this independence under the banner of the unification of all the forces of the nation. To unite these forces, an alliance between the working class—fighting for its own unity—and the middle strata is necessary, as always emphasized by the classics of Marxism-Leninism."³⁵

It is one thing, however, to turn on a world-wide scale to the strategy of political alliance with the "middle strata," including even the "national bourgeoisie," in order to concentrate the broadest possible attack on the U.S. position in the cold war. Such are the transcendent requirements of the U.S.S.R. as a national state. But useful as it may be as a strategy of Soviet foreign policy, it is quite another matter to accept this formulation as a true image of Middle Eastern social classes and social forces. Such a distortion also serves to foil the elementary requirements of political strategy. It cannot clearly identify friend and foe, indeed, not even identify the class from which most communists are drawn.

Union," *Journal of Asian Studies*, May 1958, pp. 515-537, and O. Edmund Clubb, "Soviet Oriental Studies and the Asian Revolution," *Pacific Affairs*, December 1958, pp. 380-389.

³⁴ "For a Further Upsurge in Soviet Eastern Studies," *Kommunist*, May 1955, pp. 74-83. See also Ann K. S. Lambton, editor, *Islam and Russia. A Detailed Analysis of An Outline of the History of Islamic Studies in the U.S.S.R.*, by N. A. Smirnov, London, 1956.

³⁵ Jacques Duclos, Secretary of the French Communist Party, in *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy*, Bucharest, November 2, 1951. See also Bernard S. Morris and Morris Watnick, "Current Communist Strategy in Nonindustrialized Countries," *Problems of Communism*, September-October, 1955, pp. 1-6.

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Of the four pillars on which communist strategy was now to rest—workers, peasants, petit bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie—the workers constitute at most, seven percent of the total population of the more industrialized countries and many are unskilled and unemployed—hence not yet conscious of themselves as “workers” in a Marxist sense. Workers have recently been gaining rapidly in importance as a political force in the Middle East, but nowhere (except in part in Iraq and the Sudan) as a result of communist activities. In any event, the emphasis placed by local communists on the working class as the principal force of revolution long antedates the emergence of a Middle Eastern proletariat as an important social or political force. Peasants—the proletariat’s “principal allies in our country”—constitute the great majority—70 to 80 percent—of the local population, but with them the communists have so far achieved almost no contact.³⁶

There are members of the “national bourgeoisie” who would ally themselves with the communist party.³⁷ In contrast to its role in the West, the “national bourgeoisie” in the Middle East has been quite insecure in its position, socially, economically, and politically, even when it stood closer to the ruling institution than it usually does now.³⁸ Political opportunism is rife among this class, and communists will not find it more reliable in a political crisis than others have.³⁹

³⁶ Bakdash's complaint remains justified: “Nearly 75 percent of its activity, whether in propaganda, organizing, or daily work, has been confined to petty bourgeois elements in cities and villages on the one hand and selected workers on the other. But the broad masses of workers and fellahin have received hardly any attention and have been the object of little of our political and organizing activity. . . . We have little experience in working in the rural areas and have little knowledge of the subject.” (*Report to the Central Committee*, January 1951, pp. 208 and 213-214.)

³⁷ “National,” as defined by the communists, is any member of the bourgeoisie, however rich, who has “not sold out to U.S. imperialism.”

³⁸ See Chapter 3.

³⁹ Nor will the national bourgeoisie find the communists any less opportunistic. “In No. 1 of 1956 *Sovetskaya Vostokovedeniye* deplored the fact that ‘the dialectical conception of the dual nature of the national bourgeoisie has been replaced by a one-sided conception of it as the faithful ally of imperialism in the struggle against the working masses.’ But in No. 4 of 1959, *Voprosy Istorii*, the Deputy Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, R. A. Ul'yanov-kii, complains that in Soviet orientalists’ work during 1958, ‘a sufficiently penetrating light has not yet been thrown on such questions as the essential

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The petit bourgeoisie—composed of the smaller scale entrepreneurs, traders, artisans, shopkeepers, salaried employees, and somewhat more prosperous peasants—exists, but not in the form and context recognized by Marxist-Leninist theory. Those of its members who own their means of production are far from being as independent politically as they often are in the West. They are deeply dependent on, and sensitive to, the contracts and policies of government, family connections, and established and relatively static commercial clienteles. For the same reasons, the property owning petit bourgeoisie has neither the numbers, strength, nor cohesion of purpose to act as a class.

There is a partial awareness among Middle Eastern communist leaders that the four social classes who make up the pillars of contemporary communist strategy do not possess the character or play the role that strategy assigns to them. In his *Report to the Central Committee*, Bakdash wrote: “The main attention of our organizations is directed toward *the creation of a lot of sound and fury* around the Party and its slogans rather than toward *the building up of bases and foundations* among the workers and the masses of the fellahin, especially the poor among them. . . . *How did this situation come about in our Party?* . . . Like most Communist Parties in extremely industrially backward countries like ours, our Party grew up in a milieu far removed from Marxism—a milieu without any previous traditions of a labor movement or of socialist thought. . . . Owing to the circumstances of imperialist domination, feudal tyranny, and the weakness of the class struggle, it was natural that this noise should first attract those circles referred to as ‘enlightened’ from among the intellectuals, students, and certain enlightened workers. . . . Therefore . . . the general milieu and atmosphere in which our Party works are not yet proletarian, but are still petty bourgeois in character.”⁴⁰

opposition between the working class and the national bourgeoisie, class distinctions among peasants, the part played by the national bourgeoisie in the exploitation of the peasantry, the connection of the national bourgeoisie with foreign capital, the political parties of the bourgeoisie their ideology, strategy, and tactics at the present stage, and their attitude toward the socialist camp and towards the international communist and workers movement.” (*Mizan Newsletter*, May 1959, p. 11.)

⁴⁰ Bakdash, “Report to the Central Committee,” January 1951, pp. 208-209. Italics his.

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The communists recognize that their leadership and core in the Middle East⁴¹ are drawn primarily from what they call "the petty bourgeoisie, and in particular, from the revolutionary inclined intelligentsia."⁴² From this recognition, that their very core is not yet constituted as it ought to be, the communists draw only one practical lesson: they must concentrate on recruiting workers, even to the extent that the constitutions of a number of parties in the area demand a longer probationary period for recruits who do not come from the working class. "As Lenin and Stalin teach us, *the principal force of the patriotic democratic revolution is the working class. . . .*"⁴³ It is obviously advantageous to broaden one's following among the masses, and especially among a group that is likely to give increasingly vigorous and organized voice to its discontent. But the injunction to recruit workers is not merely pragmatically motivated. Marxist dogma concerning the role of the working class in shaping history compels this drive for labor support.

Yet this emphasis on the working class entails several unreconciled conflicts. For, as Bakdash points out, it is a "wrong idea" for communist workers "to think that they represent the working class in the Communist Party and in other Party bodies. The truth . . . is that they represent the Communist Party among the workers. . . . The representative of the workers is the Communist Party as a whole, for it is the party and vanguard of the working class. . . . Every member of it . . . represents the working class and its higher interest. . . ."⁴⁴ From that perspective there is no need for workers within the communist party at all.

There is another unresolved issue. The so-called "revolutionary inclined intelligentsia" that now constitutes the core of Middle Eastern communist parties is more than a mere stratum or portion of the petit bourgeoisie. It is part of a social class that

⁴¹ And elsewhere in underdeveloped areas, as Morris Watnick made clear in "The Appeal of Communism to the Peoples of Underdeveloped Areas," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 1952, pp. 22-36.

⁴² "The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies; Resolution of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International," adopted September 1, 1928, *International Press Correspondence*, December 12, 1928, p. 1670.

⁴³ Bakdash, "Report to the Central Committee," January 1951, p. 207. Italics his.

⁴⁴ Bakdash, "Report to the Central Committee," January 1951, p. 213.

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has all the historical attributes of a class and its own distinct class interests—a new middle class that is coming to dominate, and in several countries is already dominating, social, economic, and political life.⁴⁵ A party which is kept by its ideology from freely acting as the champion of this new middle class, and must instead speak for the Kremlin's shifting interpretations of the interests of the working class, operates under a distinct handicap.

The party's interest in the working class is not even an unadulterated advantage in wooing the latter group. For them, the communist appeal is blunted in the realm of foreign affairs by the fact that Moscow is conceded supremacy by all communist parties as interpreter of working class interests. In the realm of domestic affairs, communist party programs do not differ materially from those of any party of the new middle class committed to rapid economic progress. Both will need to harness and discipline the worker, discourage his immediate consumption, and increase his productivity.⁴⁶ If such a forced march into the modern age ultimately also benefits the workers, both communist and non-communist parties will be equally able to claim that, dialectically, they represented the "higher interests" of the workers all along.

So far, communist analysts have not acknowledged that social change in the Middle East is coming about by revolution from the top, made by small groups representative of the new middle class and, if with working class support, then harnessed to the leadership and interests of the new middle class. Even writers within the Soviet bloc who would amend if not revise Marx have retained this ideological preconception that both distorts communist perception and mars communist capabilities in the Middle East: ". . . Traditional Marxist theory," writes one of Poland's chief planners, "probably attaches too little importance to the intelligentsia, especially its role in production. . . . A Marxist

⁴⁵ This point is argued in detail in Chapter 4.

⁴⁶ Neither communist nor non-communist leaders in the Middle East, however, have so far frankly acknowledged this point. By contrast, see an alternative to such a forced march proposed by the Indian socialist parliamentarian and trade union leader, Asoka Mehta, in "Asia: Industrialized Democratically," *Dissent*, Spring 1955, pp. 152-162, and "Asia: The Peasant's Way," *Dissent*, Summer 1955, pp. 213-220.

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analysis of this phenomenon is undoubtedly necessary. . . . [But the] very essence [of the intelligentsia] prevents it from being an independent force; it can only express the opinions and wishes of the working class. . . . It can help, but it is not the social force which can bring about social changes. The best proof of this are the numerous backward countries . . . which have a progressive intelligentsia on a high level but it is helpless because there is no working class which could support, realize, and transform the progressive ideas of the intelligentsia into an organized social movement.”⁴⁷

Communist parties could drop their blinders only at the cost of revising their fundamental ideological assumptions—namely that philosophy and history need the working class as their instrument, and that they must maintain their ties to the U.S.S.R. The same ideology that limits their present vision and strategy binds them to the U.S.S.R. as the center and guide for the international revolution of the “working class.”

There is one irony in this, and it may gradually have consequences. It has been well-argued that the Soviet revolution, led by a would-be middle class, has now succeeded in firmly ensconcing that middle class into power. If the U.S.S.R., as a result of a resolution of the cold war and an expansion of its economy were to draw freely the intellectual and political conclusions that are apparent in its own development, then the terms of the ideological and political contest in the Middle East and other underdeveloped areas would, of course, be transformed too. At this point, however, the Soviets still insist on seeing and saying less, including in the Middle East, than already meets the eye.

The Competition of Nationalist Movements

Nationalism has not only sensitized Middle Eastern politicians to foreign influence in domestic affairs but also pre-empted the field of mass organizations. How solid and pervasive this nationalism may be and how much it sets a limit to alignment with a foreign nation are controversial questions each deserving a

⁴⁷ Oscar Lange, *Some Problems Relating to the Polish Road to Socialism*, Warsaw, 1957, pp. 27-29.

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separate examination.⁴⁸ One thing is clear. The largest movements of the Middle East are those concentrating on nationalist aspirations. Hence men eager for political action or personal careers are likely to join, instead of communist parties however nationalistic in pretense, the great parties which have already attracted their friends and relations. Whenever such a movement has been strong and united, it has seen no reason to bargain for the additional support of a small band of communists. In such circumstances, the present strategy of the communist party contributes to the perpetuation of its weakness. By emphasizing its own endorsement of nationalist objectives and underplaying its evaluation of bourgeois nationalism as a mere phase in the transition toward communist-controlled regimes, the communists swell the membership of the dominant nationalist movement without enhancing their own separate influence.

The Price of Rivalry

The communists challenge the power of regimes that nowhere in this entire region are gentle with rivals for power. This is the simplest and one of the strongest and most enduring barriers to communist advances in the Middle East. Since it involves the very survival of existing political elites, the weight of this proposition is greater than any interest in improving relations with the U.S.S.R., its impact more direct than any ideological arguments. To be an effective barrier, however, certain conditions must first be satisfied. The ruling elite must be internally united, lest communists be sought as allies in intra-elite competition. The ruling elite must be politically sophisticated, lest it either accept communists as merely more radical nationalists or confuse all opposition elements with communists. The ruling elite must also, through constructive work, be able to avoid the kind of instability that breeds opposition and renders its own rule ineffective. These necessary preconditions greatly restrict the reliability of repression as a barrier against communist expansion.

As a result of the handicaps under which they operate, com-

⁴⁸ The influence of nationalism is discussed in Chapter 10, the problems of foreign orientation, in Chapter 19.

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unist parties have so far played only a relatively small role in the turbulent changes affecting the Middle East and North Africa. The other side of the ledger, however, also needs examination. The advantages that can accrue to the communist parties from the appeal of Marxism as a philosophy of knowledge and revolution, and from Soviet communism in practice as a model of organization and rapid material progress have already been explored. There are also advantages that specifically affect the fortunes of communist parties.

Factors Favorable for Communist Activities

Smallness in membership is no grave handicap to the achievement of power. Minorities have always dominated politics in the Middle East: both traditional expectations and the scarcity of modern skills grant extraordinary influence to small numbers of individuals. Groups of fewer than 50 overthrew Egypt's King Farouk under Nasser's leadership in 1952, engineered the union of Syria with Egypt in 1957, and, in 1958, curbed the powers of the absolute Saudi monarch. Fewer than 50 organized the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy, and established military rule in the Sudan and Pakistan during 1958, and brought an end to Syrian-Egyptian union in 1961. In each case, this small revolutionary core could count on the disciplined support of at least the larger portion of the army.

Ironically, this most revolutionary of eras is marked, not by popular revolutions, but by *coups d'état*. In each of these instances, the coup came first, the attempt to organize mass support, if at all, afterwards. At present, communist capabilities for penetrating such small conspiratorial groups are inhibited by the very size, military exclusiveness, and secrecy of this nucleus, and also by communist strategy which calls for unity with nationalists rather than immediate violent efforts to take their place.

These inhibitions have not eliminated communist opportunities. Iraq in the winter of 1958-1959 became a dramatic demonstration of how a hitherto quite small, suppressed, and splintered communist party could come suddenly to play a vital role. Many outside observers, however, tended to exaggerate communist

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potentials in Iraq during that period. They tended to ascribe to successful communist propaganda an anti-Western outburst that had in fact been largely stimulated by long-pent-up resentment against the alliance of the reactionary Nuri regime with the West, and immediate and not entirely fanciful fears of possible Western intervention against the new junta. They suspected only communist influence at work in a political situation in which the new ruler, General Kassim, carefully sought to bring all major political forces in balance against each other because he trusted none of them. They overestimated communist capabilities, and were surprised when communist violence—in great part the fruit of undisciplined party factionalism and experimentation—quickly served to diminish the party's influence.

In the highly unstable politics of the Middle East, communist opportunities are increased by the fact that numbers do not yet necessarily count.⁴⁹ But the extraordinary alertness to communist infiltration which this volatile situation requires also demands, especially in the West, a particular sensitivity to the causes and potentials of collaboration between communists and nationalists in the Middle East. A peculiar Western pessimism, namely that in contacts between communists and others, one must always suspect that it is the non-communist who will become infected, can lead to premature Western reactions which may only serve to harden such contacts in the face of what is only too easily interpreted by nationalists no less than communists as foreign intervention.⁵⁰

To call a party subversive is, however, not to brand it evil in

⁴⁹ This is also true in the realm of intellectual influence. In Pakistan, for example, "Urdu literature . . . has witnessed remarkable development during the last two decades. The emergence of leftist writers like Faiz Ahmad Faiz, the late Sa'adat Hassan Manto (died 1956), Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, and many others is indicative of the direction in which Pakistan's intellectuals are moving. These men have a wide audience. Each of the two recent collections of Faiz's poems have had a greater sale than any other book in Pakistan. Manto and Qasmi figure on every shelf and their *Quarterly Journal* is eagerly awaited in universities and offices. In recent years, some of them have started writing in local dialects, which may prove to be a movement of great significance. They are sensitive and brilliant men who believe in Communist theory and are convinced of its justice in practice. In a situation of extreme confusion and frustration . . . an ideology that is modern, that has an economic program to offer, and earnest, creative men to take up its cause, stands a fair chance of

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the Middle East where nearly every party is subversive. In the U.S., it is relatively easy to identify a party that may be committed to the overthrow of constitutional government by force and violence, and easier still to marshal public opinion against such a group. In the Middle East and North Africa, almost every party, ruler, and dynasty now in power seized control by overthrowing the previous regime. In this region of the world, constitutions are numerous, legitimacy validated by a broad consensus is rare, and respect for freedom under law, rarer still.

This common resort to subversion strikes down more than governments. Political activity by itself also subverts faith and society in the Middle East. To become politically active means that a Moslem—who had once been certain about the single web that connected the meaning of life with its rituals, patterns, and loyalties—must separate the ideological from the metaphysical, the political from the divine. To take this step affects the very roots of Islam: to be active now is to uproot. In the Islamic past, the actions of most rulers were inspired by secular motives, but all of them took care to veil them, for the sake of popular support, in appropriate metaphysical terms. Today a nationalist ruler eager to make his country progress cannot escape inducting his entire people into secular activities.

There is not even escape from subversion by resorting to either conservative or fundamentalist reactionary policies. The late Premier Nuri al-Said of Iraq, attempting to maintain existing institutions by repression, became, in effect, a more potent propa-

success." (Eqbal Ahmad, *Pakistan an Islamic State?*, an unpublished seminar paper, Princeton University, January 14, 1959, p. 24.)

⁵⁰ It is at least possible that Western treatment as pro-communist of leaders of the Syrian Arab Socialist Resurrectionist (*Ba'th*) Party who opportunistically collaborated with communists from time to time between 1954 and 1957 may have helped to prolong this alliance. This same party was later to be a prime mover in uniting Syria with Egypt in order to prevent communist predominance, and its Iraqi branch one of the principal opponents of communist influence in Kassim's Iraq. By the time of the XXI Party Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in Moscow, Khalid Bakdash, the Syrian Communist chief, called the *Ba'th* "adventurers who resemble the right-wing socialists in Europe and rely upon the Yugoslav renegades have begun to play a very dirty game in the Arab East, the role of a gang isolated from the people, a gang of adventurers, spies, and saboteurs of the Arab Liberation Movement." (Moscow Radio, Soviet Near Eastern Service, February 2, 1959.)

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gandist for change than an effective reformist regime might have been. The Moslem Brotherhood, by radicalizing traditional values, selecting out of a once integrated whole those principles which will now best serve aggression and defense, thus destroys both past and present. The communist party is merely another subversive party.

The communist party is therefore capable of winning sympathy not only within the realm of the ambiguity created by its own advocacy of nationalism and anti-imperialism, but also within the large realm of tolerance resulting from the fact that most political parties play similar roles and use similar methods, and that ideologies are not yet clearly differentiated. Almost all parties are marked by conspiratorial activity and violence when out of power, repressive measures when in power.

Communist infiltration of other parties and the building of fellow traveling organizations are also facilitated by the fact that ideological distinctions on the left have only recently been put to the test in the Middle East and hence remain somewhat blurred. In the West, prolonged scholarly study, as well as bitter debates, served to clarify and differentiate liberal democratic, democratic socialist, and communist positions. Furthermore, decades of practical experience in actual political competition tested and sharpened these distinctions. This sorting out is still incomplete in the Middle East, though in the Arab East, communist violence in Iraq during 1958 and 1959, contrasting with Nasser's rapid crystallization of socialism during that period, helped to bring home the vital distinctions.

The survival of traditional loyalties sometimes helps to obfuscate party differences. Just as Druze mountaineers will loyally follow the heir of one of their leading feudal families, Kamal Jumblatt, in support of the socialist party he created, so the leader of the Syrian Communist Party, Khalid Bakdash, can rely on the vote of his fellow Kurds whose knowledge of communist doctrine is quite uncertain. Middle Eastern communists, like Middle Eastern tax evaders with cousins in important positions, can still sometimes avoid jail in the midst of repressive measures or gain "furloughs" from their jail sentence.

Even the most damaging truths about the communist party—

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that it is the willing arm of a world-wide conspiracy led by a foreign state—can be beclouded, though not removed, by the fact that other parties in the Middle East have been known to be subsidized and influenced by certain Western nations, or by neighboring Middle Eastern states. Indeed, this accusation does not always stimulate a response unfavorable to the communist party. Certain Arab leaders of 1917-1921 were clearly prepared to draw on British support in order to free themselves of Ottoman rule, and others, like Nuri al-Said, remained in permanent alliance with the U.K. to strengthen themselves against domestic and regional rivals. In the same manner reliance on the U.S.S.R. may be sought by Arabs today on opportunistic as well as ideological grounds.⁵¹

Repression, being common as well as commonly ineffective in the Middle East, has served further to obscure the difference between communists and others. Because communists and other parties share common persecution and common immediate objectives—to overthrow the government in power—contacts become frequent in a context conducive to sympathetic personal and political exchanges. The resulting confusion about differences among the parties has not solely benefited the communists, of course. Confusion has also been created in communist ranks, and a wide gap persists between its small hard core and a rather unreliable membership of fellow travelers, sympathizers, and opportunists. But on balance, such a confusion in political values, methods, and policies cannot benefit parties seeking to create or conserve stable institutions as much as it can the communist party.

The communist party is a relatively more disciplined movement than most other parties, more capable of self-denial in postponing final rewards, less corrupt, more hard working, and more intent upon demanding hard work from people at large. Although the communist party is one of the most puritan of Middle

⁵¹ In Malaya, many joined the communist party precisely because it was known to be an instrument of the U.S.S.R. Without foreign support, they reasoned that their guerrilla war could not succeed. They deserted the party when they discovered that Soviet support was not forthcoming. (See Lucian Pye, *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya, Its Social and Political Meaning*, Princeton, 1956.)

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Eastern political movements, this point should not be overstated. It applies much less to its membership, which suffers from considerable turnover, than to its hard core. Some non-communist parties—for example, Tunisia's Neo-Destour—have achieved more élan and discipline on more democratic foundations. The word *relatively* needs to be underscored. Still, in many countries of the Middle East its greater discipline is apparent. What accounts for it?

However mistaken it may be, communist doctrine is one of the few modern doctrines so far popularized in the Middle East that provides historical justification for sacrificing the present for the sake of a materially better future—the not too distant future if Soviet example be a guide. Democratic socialism has so far had difficulties, both in theory and practice, in showing a way to progress relevant to any but the most highly developed areas of the world. Democratic capitalism has shown itself to be similarly confined. An authoritarian state socialism is communism's principal competitor in the Middle East.⁵²

Part of the inspiration for the latter doctrine is nationalism. It is the most popular of all in the Middle East and it, too, is capable of inspiring great and prolonged sacrifices. But state socialism cannot succeed without invidiously destroying, rewarding, or disciplining segments of a society that expected to be rewarded equally under the standards of nationalism. This conflict of interests often confuses, or renders powerless, or fragments the leadership of state socialist regimes which usually have neither sufficient experience nor ideology to guide them.

The communist party, however, possesses an ideology which, despite all its distortions, ambiguities, and sudden reversals, at least addresses itself to the problems of social change and the requirements of political power and organization. In its dogmatic assertion of truth, its demands for disciplined solidarity among its members, and its opportunities for manipulating men and events, communism grants its members, much like the neo-Islamic movements, great and immediate rewards rare in the present Middle Eastern environment. It frankly exposes exploitation, even if it will not insist on forcing its remedies on a local

⁵² For a more detailed analysis of this alternative, see Chapter 12.

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government when such activities would embarrass the foreign policy objectives of the U.S.S.R. It is aware that the population as a whole must be mobilized, but once in power, the communists would exceed any other party in ruthlessly compelling sacrifices from workers and peasants. It is boldly anti-imperialistic, and says it supports the right of any nation to pursue independent foreign and domestic policies, yet nothing in Soviet ideology or action so far would justify such an assertion except as an example of cynical opportunism. Parties which would offer effective competition to the communists, however, cannot content themselves with exposing the hollowness or the price of communist virtues. They must be able to offer greater and more solid virtues of their own.

The Potentials of Communism

What are the chances that communist parties will be able to seize power in the Middle East?

The preceding discussion has suggested that the barriers the communist party faces are not all high or solid, but neither are its advantages all unqualified. For the most part, the discussion thus far has been concerned with factors rather than forces. We must now look at both the Middle East and the communist parties in motion.

The role and character of Middle Eastern communist parties are changing. Present communist strategy places a premium on non-violent action as most likely to marshall broad support for eliminating or neutralizing American influence in the area.⁵³ However, to postpone revolutions intended to alter the structure of society, and meanwhile allow participation only in violent actions that are dedicated to "national liberation," is a course bound to change the character of communist parties. A hard core with faith and discipline will probably remain orthodox. But as time passes, will the communist party continue to attract men eager for a quick and radical overturn of society when it has in

⁵³ I have explored the relationship between the Communist parties and political violence in this region in greater detail in Chapter 12 of *Communism and Revolution*, edited by C. E. Black and T. P. Thornton, Princeton, 1964.

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fact become a movement that will not revolt in order to achieve sole control until that day when the United States has been isolated internationally and can no longer intervene effectively? For a time, aided by the propaganda of its enemies, the communist party will undoubtedly be able to attract such men on the strength of an earlier reputation. But how long will it be before the composition of its membership is likely to change as the revolutionary-minded are drawn off to other parties?

Already changes of marching orders have during the past decade caused important factional splits within nearly every communist party in the area. Three factions usually emerge: (1) Those who joined the party because they wanted a revolution and are therefore intent on having one. (2) Those with the same idea who, prevented by Soviet policy from fulfilling it in the present, insist at least on making preparations now for revolution in the future. (3) Those who concentrate on gaining the broadest possible local support for the foreign policy objectives of the U.S.S.R., eschewing all talk or action that might frighten away bourgeois elements with the specter of revolution. Only the last is orthodox.

The persistence of this last strategy over a long period of time is likely to have several consequences, none useful to the communist party. The frequency and bitterness of factional splits in the party may well increase. The violent encounters, even in jail, among three such factions that rendered the Iraqi Communist party impotent between 1951 and 1953 and led to the emergence of two separate parties in 1960 is an illustration of what is possible. Such breaks may be avoidable. The most revolutionary of the three factions will often be able to blame its inaction on local realities and so find it possible to remain united with the rest. The second faction, provided it is prudent enough to stay underground, may often be given a limited freedom by the third, and orthodox faction, in part as a sentimental or precautionary warrant of its own sustained revolutionary fervor. And as long as the party as a whole is gaining in strength and influence, the leaders of the unorthodox factions may easily find it possible opportunistically to repress their differences in order to share in their

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party's victory.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, these are fundamental differences. If the United States is not successfully isolated and revolution must therefore be further postponed, splits in the communist movement are likely to become more common and more profound.

Such a development could bring in its wake a novel situation. The communist faction least likely to act under Soviet instructions is most likely to engage in revolution and involve Western interest. In the midst of cold war tensions, such an eventuality could produce either dangerous confusion or startling detachment. It will also create increasing opportunities for Communist China to support the revolutionary communist faction in areas where it never had influence before. It will pay to be well-informed about factionalism in communist parties.

The evolution of the communist movement in turn suggests that the two principal threats of communist control in the Middle East will increasingly arise from two sources. One is opportunism on the part of particular nationalist leaders. They may gamble in the midst of a revolutionary situation on their ability to enlarge the control of their own faction over a pluralistic revolutionary movement by drawing on communist support while intending to prevent the capture of the movement by communists from within. The other threat lies in the opportunity on the part of the communists to appear to be the most dynamic, yet constitutional, opposition party. To offer themselves, not as a revolutionary movement, but as the party that will be more effectively nationalist, anti-imperialist, and reformist than any party now in power gives the communists greater respectability than ever before, and considerable drawing power. How readily a communist party can succeed when it has no important competitors in the realm of social reform was demonstrated in Guatemala prior to 1954 and Malaya prior to 1956.

The changing power constellation in each country, and especially the range of actual communist competitors, thus deserves constant attention. Who competes with whom is more important

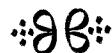
⁵⁴ The recent history of the Indian Communist Party illustrates this possibility particularly well. (See John Kautsky, *Moscow and the Communist Party of India*, New York, 1955.)

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than who represses whom. The main repressive force, the army, is no longer an obedient servant of constituted authority. In many countries, it now attracts the most ambitious and able of the new middle class, and thus already reflects the political divisions of Middle Eastern society. In short, there is no firm barrier to the Communist party—neither its own shortcomings nor the repression from existing authority are enough—except a competitor with a better program and more effective organization.

CHAPTER 10

FROM UNORGANIZED INSECURITY TO ORGANIZED INSECURITY: NATIONALISM



The Meaning of Nationalism

WHAT IS NATIONALISM and why is it the most popular political ideology of the Middle East?¹ The external factors that molded it are clear enough. The Middle East's encounter with a freer, more productive, and more powerful Western civilization compelled its peoples to try to discover anew their own identity and purpose and to seek more effective means for saving or regaining their integrity and cohesion. Both Ottoman rule and Western imperialism hastened the growth of nationalism in most of the Middle East, sharpened its intensity, and shaped many of its political tasks. Although part of the Middle East's environment, even some of its major roads to national self-discovery and self-assertion, has been fashioned in interaction with influences from abroad, the people of this area have, nonetheless, had to find their way themselves. A highly selective memory of Islam and each local cultural heritage is also part of contemporary nationalism. These traditions, however, cannot define the core of nationalism, for they belong to a pre-nationalist age. Nationalism was invented

¹ The pioneers in the analysis of nationalism are themselves keenly aware that such questions remain open. "What has given great vogue to nationalism in modern times?" asked Carlton Hayes toward the end of *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism*, only to reply, "We really do not know." (New York, 1931, p. 302.) After writing more than a dozen studies of nationalism, Hans Kohn welcomed Louis L. Snyder's *The Meaning of Nationalism* (New Brunswick, 1954) as "the first introduction" and "starting point" to an "interdisciplinary inquiry" of nationalism which has become "urgent and important." (Foreword, p. ix.) Analytical studies of Arab, Turkish, Iranian, or Pakistani nationalism remain scarce.

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in modern times.² The particular historical events that lie at the origins of Middle Eastern nationalism cannot explain its present fervor. We must search more deeply to understand the role and significance of the nationalism of this region.

The argument of this chapter is that nationalism is the principal political manifestation of social change in the Middle East. Nationalists exist because there is social change, and hence the basic problem confronting nationalists is not nationalism but social change. This framework of analysis and action is relevant not only to the Middle East but to other areas, both Western and non-Western, for all of us now live in a world in which traditional ideas and relationships are being questioned, and nationalism has become the first universal faith.

There has, of course, always been a sense, even a pride, of community. Common kinship, culture, and religion served in the past to cement people. Common language, culture, environment, religion, or race remain the most popular criteria for defining the attributes of nationhood. Yet look closely merely at the countries of Northern Africa from Egypt to Morocco and these criteria turn out to be nearly irrelevant. Although the great majority of the people in each of the five territories are Arabs by culture and language and Moslem by religion, they continue to live as five distinct nations within boundaries that, except perhaps for Egypt,

² "The word 'patriotism' first cropped up in the eighteenth century, and 'nationalism' only in the nineteenth. In French, *nationalisme* is to be found once in 1812; the oldest example of 'nationalism' in English dates from 1836, and then, remarkably, with a theological significance, namely for the doctrine that certain nations have been chosen by God." ("Patriotism and Nationalism in European History" in Johann Huizinga's *Men and Ideas*, New York 1959, p. 99.)

In Egypt, the discussion of the difference between patriotism and religion and the meaning of nationalism seems to have begun in 1880 when Shaikh Husain al-Marsafi, in *al-Kalim al-Thaman* (*The Eight Words*), tried to explain such words as *watan* (fatherland), *ummah* (nation), and *siyāsah* (politics) "which are on the tongues of the present-day younger generation." Two decades later, Mohammed 'Umar, in his *Hadir al-Misriyin* (*The Present State of the Egyptians*), (Cairo, 1902) still endeavored to explain to his readers the distinction between "nationalism" and "religion." (J. Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt*, London, 1938, p. 287, note 2.) For traditional terms employed to define the Islamic community see Louis Massignon, "L'Umma et ses synonymes: notion de 'communauté sociale' en Islam" in *Revue des Études Islamiques*, Années, 1941-1946 (published 1947), pp. 151-157. Also see Haim cited here in note 12.

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have little geographical or historical significance. National interest, not culture, language, or religion, will determine whether they will unite in the future or remain apart. If by language and culture the people of Northern Africa are intimately connected with the Arabs east of Suez, and by religion with 430,000,000 Moslems from Nigeria to the Philippines, by race they are connected with half the world. The Tunisian, for example, has been created, in generous parts, out of Berber, Phoenician, Roman, Vandal, Jew, Arab, Italian, Spaniard, Turk, Negro, and Frenchman, and Tunisia's neighbors are, by race, almost as cosmopolitan or even more so. Yet their racial mixture will not let them fashion links that their nationalism cannot countenance. Racial distinctness, however, proves no barrier. Those blue-eyed, blond, or red-haired North Africans who speak Berber—a language which seems to have no kinship with any other living tongue in the world—are no less nationalist than other Moroccans and Algerians who have discovered—and this discovery is essential—that the social tissues of the past are irreparably torn.

What are the essentials of nationalism? Are the state and the nation inseparably connected? The state alone, as a legal, administrative entity, has never been stable, efficient, or heroic enough in the Middle East to inspire any devotion. Egypt has been a state ever since the state was first invented; it discovered itself as a nation only about three-quarters of a century ago. Like the other states of Arab Africa, it became most conscious of being a nation during the period when it lacked an independent government.

Does nationalism begin with the rediscovery of the glories of a people's past? In Algeria's case, there is no Algeria to be rediscovered. This object of bloody nationalist struggle did not exist until a foreign nation created and unified it and gave Algerians, after 1848, their first century of history as a separate people. Nowhere are the principal nationalist leaders characteristic representatives of the traditional culture.

Is nationalism merely a sudden awakening to a fact that was always true—to a prose one had always spoken? Most Middle Eastern countries rediscovered their own past from the work of Western scholars and learned the language of nationalism in

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French and English rather than through their own tongue. That does not warrant the common assumption, however, that the Middle East, in adopting nationalism, is taking over a "Western" ideology. The West, entering the modern age earlier than the Middle East, developed nationalism sooner too. Nationalism, like inductive scientific thought, was at first as alien to the traditions of medieval Islam as it had been to medieval Europe. But nationalism, like science, is ultimately bound to no particular civilization and its various forms can be assimilated by any people that sheds its previous closed system of thought or social structure.

Is strong nationalist pressure required to achieve independence? If so, Libya—which had independence thrust upon it by the United Nations—would not be independent today. Is a strong pervasive sense of nationality required to operate a state in the modern world? If so, the Sudan—divided into an Arabized, Moslem north and a largely pagan, negroid south—could not have survived until now. Is the growth of effective nationalist strength directly related to the length of a people's exposure to modern social change? If so, Tunisia and Morocco could not both have achieved independence in the same month of 1956. Tunisia, open to European and Ottoman influences for three centuries, possessed a sturdier middle class and a better organized working class upon becoming independent than most of the countries of the Arab East. Morocco preserved its independence and most of its medievalism from the encroachment of both Europe and the Ottoman East until the twentieth century. Less than five decades later, its nationalist and its labor movement had shown as much strength, determination, and skill in ending French control as had the nationalist and labor movements in Tunisia.

Faced with these apparent inconsistencies, Europeans have sometimes concluded that Middle Eastern nationalism is not real, while Middle Easterners have often concluded that nationalism, albeit in a different guise, had been there all the time. H. L. Featherstone examined *A Century of Nationalism* and concluded that "nationalism is not capable of scientific definition."³

³ H. L. Featherstone, *A Century of Nationalism*, New York 1939, p. 6. Particularly good, critical reviews of attempts at definition are to be found in

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When Gamal abd al-Nasser came to power in one of the world's oldest states as the leader of one of the world's most articulated nationalist movements, he cried, "If anyone had asked me in those days what I wanted most, I would have answered promptly: to hear an Egyptian speak fairly about another Egyptian. To sense that an Egyptian has opened his heart to pardon, forgiveness, and love for his Egyptian brethren. To find an Egyptian who does not devote his time to tearing down the views of another Egyptian. . . . The word 'T' was on every tongue. It was the solution to every difficulty, the cure for every ill. I had many times met eminent men—or so they were called by the press—of every political tendency and color, but when I would ask any of them about a problem in the hope that he could supply a solution, I would never hear anything but 'T.'"⁴

Had even Nasser concluded that Egyptian nationalism is not real? On the contrary, his very complaint is an authentic voice of nationalism. Nationalism has become the most appealing rallying cry of this age of social change because it allows man to crystallize and express the tension between the self he could once take for granted and the self he now asserts all the more painfully and vociferously because he is not sure what he is, what he is worth, and how he may be secure. The transformation of all previous bonds of kinship, culture, and religion has converted the matter of being into a problem. Nationalism allows modern man to join with all who share his uncertainties in the quest for a new solidarity, for a definition of himself and his group. Obviously a man will love his own folk more dearly than any other ("nationalism" has always existed in this sense), but who are a man's "own folk" to be in this new age? Is a man born in Fez to give his first loyalty to his wife and children (to one wife or to several, to his daughters no less than his sons), or to his father, his tribe, to Fez, to Morocco, to the king, to the Istiqlal Party, or to its offshoot, the National Union of Popular Forces, to North Africa, to France,

Louis L. Snyder, *The Meaning of Nationalism*, op. cit., Frederick Hertz, *Nationality in History and Politics, a Psychology and Sociology of National Sentiment*, London 1944, and Chapter I of Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, New York 1953.

⁴ Gamal abd al-Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Washington, 1955, pp. 35-36.

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to the Arabs, to Islam, to God, to humanity, to himself alone?⁵ This problem never arose with such scope and complexity before the modern age. The hierarchy of loyalties was clear. Ideally, and usually also in practice, it began with one's loyalty to the head of the family, who determined the next link. Now loyalties are in competition and the nation itself, even in the Middle East's sovereign states, remains a promise rather than fulfillment.

Nationalism as a Necessity

Yet the price of nationalism has so often run high, especially since all neighboring states are using the same, but non-convertible, currency of nationalism, that one is entitled to ask—is nationalism necessary?⁶ Certainly it is not an ideology sufficient to be an end in itself; but its popularity is justified and justifiable on the ground that no other vital steps toward controlling social change can precede it. Before the modern age began, small and ascetic communities in static balance, making and meeting no new demands, had no cause for nationalism. Today, however, such balance is threatened everywhere, even in such strongholds of tradition as the Arabian Peninsula, by the impact of competing domestic aspirations and foreign pressures. Communities cannot help but mobilize themselves. As the modern age continues, it may become possible to create grounds for greater courage—for autonomous individuals, freely associating themselves with others, with groups varying as the purpose varies, and for the emergence of units larger than nations. To strive beyond nationalism may be too much to ask of most men so soon after the soul-shaking transformation of traditional society began.

⁵ The nationality law of the United Arab Republic, for example, having to grapple directly with the definition of "Arab" no less than "Egyptian" or "Syrian," derived its definitions from past, present, and future. It defined an *Arab* as a person who enjoys the nationality of the *UAR*, *Arab territory* as the Egyptian and Syrian regions. The Minister of Interior in Cairo may grant *Arab nationality* to a person born in *Arab territory* to a foreign father provided the father was born in the *Arab homeland*, defined by law as the area between the Atlantic Ocean and the Persian Gulf where the *majority* of the people speak *Arabic* or embrace *Islam*. The president of the *UAR* can grant *Arab nationality* to any *foreigner* who has rendered outstanding services for the *state* or for *Arab nationalism*, and to heads of *Arab religious sects*. (*al-Ahram*, Cairo, June 25, 1958.)

⁶ For a recent assessment ending in doubt on this score, see Elie Kedourie's *Nationalism*, London, 1960.

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Nationalism also has the virtue, in the Middle East as elsewhere, of constituting recognition of the minimum necessities of political participation in the modern world. Organization must precede reform: the "Political Kingdom" must be established first before, in Albert Camus' phrase, men who have been rescued from destiny can deliver themselves from chance.⁷ In a world in which family and tribe are no longer stable or large enough, where the traditional Islamic state based on dominance and submission may be large but not stable enough, and where the community of true believers is undermined by the decay of a traditional faith, nationalism can establish a new and effective unit for collective bargaining with other groups.

To these needs Middle Easterners are particularly sensitive, since most of them obtained their national independence within the memory of living men. They know that, however beneficial colonial rule might have been in introducing a modern structure of administration and economy, the foreigner never intended fully to integrate the local population with the people of his own imperial country nor allow the local peoples freely to find their own roots. The persistence of colonial rule in most countries of the Middle East until the end of World War II therefore delayed the resolution of the imbalances between aspiration and resources, education and jobs, population growth and opportunities, revolution and consensus, that make the present problem so total in scope.

When the opportunity at last arrives for the mobilization of

⁷ The reference to the "Political Kingdom" is drawn from the opening address by Ghana's Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah to the All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra, December 8, 1958: "My first advice to you who are struggling to be free is to aim for the attainment of the Political Kingdom—that is to say, the complete independence and self-determination of your territories. When you have achieved the Political Kingdom, all else will follow. Only with the acquisition of political power—real power through the attainment of sovereign independence—will you be in a position to reshape your life and destiny."

The passage in Albert Camus reads: "[Lucretius] has to admit, however, that atoms do not aggregate of their own accord, and rather than believe in a superior law and, finally, in the destiny he wishes to deny, he accepts the concept of a purely fortuitous mutation, the clinamen, in which the atoms meet and group themselves together. Already, as we can see, the great problem of modern times arises: the discovery that to rescue man from destiny is to deliver him to chance. That is why the contemporary mind is trying so desperately hard to restore destiny to man—a historical destiny this time." (*The Rebel*, New York, 1956, p. 30.)

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the entire community to deal with the imbalances produced by social change, nationalist rule may turn out to be no better, or even worse, than colonial rule. In a world desperately in need of supra-national authority to enforce international law, it may even seem a dubious premise to suggest that the mere persistence of the nation-state in the Middle East is a major advance. It is true that the national state is increasingly being transcended by the creation of larger units, voluntarily (as in Western Europe) or under duress (as within the Soviet bloc). What has not been so obvious is that if the Sudan (the size of all European NATO nations combined, containing peoples speaking more than a hundred different languages) remains united, it will be succeeding as Europe has not yet succeeded in building a nation equivalent in size and variety to that of a continent. Similarly, the success of Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria in holding together so many large heretical Moslem and non-Moslem, Arab and non-Arab communities within their respective boundaries, and for almost all Middle Eastern states to have achieved cooperation among tribes and clans which for centuries had been fighting each other are no mean accomplishments. In the Middle East, nationalism already represents unification, albeit incomplete, of different languages, tribes, races, and religions. It is a nationalism already equivalent structurally to that force striving for European unification, ahead of it in some areas, behind in others.⁸

There are, of course, a number of states in the Middle East that are independent but not yet nationalist. The state of Lebanon, for example, is based on the co-existence of ethnic and religious groups, Saudi Arabia on the co-existence of tribes. Such co-existence has always been precarious, and is especially so in modern times when kinships and religious groups lack the cohesion to speak for all their members. Such a balance is forever shattered when too many individuals begin to want to attain status on the basis of universalistic standards of skill and talent, regardless of birth, and when political and economic institutions cannot achieve efficiency and stability on any but such standards. These standards, which tear the web of traditional bonds, can be satisfied only within a larger unit which can shelter the individual

⁸ The forces for regional, rather than national, unity or disunity are dealt with as the main concern of Chapter 18.

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while he establishes new relationships and reward him for transcending parochial values. Even these nations will need to enter the age of nationalism.

The Nation as an Accident

However necessary nationalism may be as a principle of organization, the membership of each particular Middle Eastern nation is largely accidental. Common territory, race, culture, religion, and language are useful elements in the making of any nation, but none are essential. The word *nation* derives from nascere, to be born. The crux of the matter, however, is not birth into a kinship group—that is no longer enough—but into a new community of experience. The crux of the matter is the experience of men who start from the common background of a closed traditional society, and discover that the social transformation that is the modern age leaves them defenseless within and without, as individuals, believers, and members of groups, unless they fashion a new solidarity. For the common experience of the past was the repetitive experience of a closed universe. The common experience of the modern age is the experience of constant change and diversity in a world in which all questions may be opened and no answer is final.

Those who are born into this condition of life will be encumbered or aided by many accidents. The territorial frontiers in the Middle East that, in most instances, have for less than half a century marked off a particular people's experience with the modern age from that of its neighbors have almost all been arbitrarily drawn by foreigners. What may begin as an artifice, however, soon develops its own institutional network, and hence its own political and even sacred magnetism. Such a framework of political and economic institutions exercises a strong, independent force in developing loyalties and reconciling rival allegiances within a territory—much more so than is often conceded by nationalist ideology with its emphasis on will, spirit, and myth. Its greater institutional inheritance may well help to explain why Turkey takes its nationalism more for granted than the Arab world, where institutions and cadres had to be created anew.

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Even within a few decades, however, most Middle Eastern states, regardless of their artificial or recent origin, have sprouted a nationalism different in tone or intent from that of neighbors of the same race, language, original culture, and religion. A nation may be formed from a group anywhere between a single tribe and humanity. There is nothing predestined about the size or composition of the group that may form a nation; only the process itself and its consequences are predictable.

If, upon actual analysis, such factors as language or religion turn out to be useful but not essential in the formation of nations, one can still learn a good deal about nationalism by asking why nationalists have talked so much about them. In men's search for new roots, nationalism is now a better answer than tribalism, but not as complete an answer as tribalism once was. People in a nation are, at best, only in utilitarian or symbolic contact with each other. Closer relations are possible, but these one can enter only as an autonomous individual. Despite the multiplication of oaths and mass meetings, the sense of belonging to a nation never quite matches the secure sense of kinship and the patterned relationships within a tribe—hence all the hunting in this modern age for additional links among men who in fact are bound by little beyond their common fate. Only those who do not yet feel linked as individuals would look so hard for bonds; only those not yet secure would be so anxious; only those not yet sure about how they compare to their neighbors would worry so much about prestige.

What they find in the past may well link them—but only in the context of their common fate. If all of them have always spoken Arabic, it only means that they now face the common task of escaping its ancient, implicit images and concepts, modernizing its vocabulary, and narrowing the gap between written and colloquial Arabic that now impedes the growth of literacy.⁹ If all of them shared in the historical experience of living under Arab or Islamic institutions, they now share the burden of transforming or discarding them. If they have always lived within the same frontiers, they now share the problem of

⁹ See Eli Shoubi, "The Influence of the Arabic Language on the Psychology of the Arabs," *Middle East Journal*, Summer 1951, pp. 284-302, and the

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prospering together by finding modern methods for utilizing the resources their territory offers. If they were once expert in propitiating uncontrolled natural forces which they did not comprehend, they must now become skilled in understanding uncontrolled social forces that cannot be propitiated. Pride in the past can be a strong cement for unity but it is no substitute for any of these tasks.

Indeed, nationalism, despite the seeming reassurance of its interest in the past, actually generates new anxieties. It must derogate older loyalties—especially those to family, village, tribe, and the community of believers—before it can fulfill itself. It must capture not the sole but certainly the supreme loyalty of all people within the state. In this battle for loyalties, the nation-state, joined by all the forces of social transformation, often succeeds in destroying the old more readily than in creating new institutions that will assure solidarity, safety, and welfare as satisfactorily as did traditional structures in a traditional world. Partial successes entail their own kind of conflict and confusion: a civil servant who gives special consideration to his young nephew is no longer sure whether he did right, or whether his young nephew can be counted on to return the favor. Government itself, the integrating mechanism of the nation-state, has only in a few Middle Eastern states begun to give some assurance of legitimacy and stability.

Modern political leaders may try to cement the nation-state by evoking the emotions of unity that once existed in the Islamic or the Arab tribal community, only to pay the price of undermining the national status of the Christian Arab or the non-Arab Moslem.¹⁰ For the sake of easing social communication, such leaders thus obscure the very novelty of nationalism, for nationalism arose in this area in large part because the Islamic and tribal community failed.

replies thereto: Charles Issawi, "The Arabic Language and Arab Psychology," *ibid.*, Autumn 1951, pp. 525-526, and Abou Hadeed, "Psychology and the Arabic Language," *ibid.*, Winter 1952, pp. 112-114.

¹⁰ Efforts to bridge differences between Christian and Moslem Arabs, for example, are likely to be successful only if the "true religion" referred to is in fact neither traditionally Christian or Moslem: "True nationalism can in no case be incompatible with true religion, because it is in essence nothing except

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The Popularity of Nationalism

If nationalism is merely a novel crystallization of new tensions in human relationships, why is it more popular than any other Middle Eastern ideology? The fervor of Middle Eastern nationalism draws not only upon the compulsions of necessity but also on fundamental psychological mechanisms. In the midst of all the uncertainties as to status, ideas, and goals that accompany the transformation of Middle Eastern society, no other ideology demands fewer commitments. Nationalism can assert itself without at the same time demanding loyalty to any particular form of government or society, economic organization or values, or any particular religious beliefs. No other ideology presents as cheap a bargain. It offers and demands the most intense form of "togetherness" even before there has been a genuine encounter of individuals and issues. Thus one of the basic attractions of nationalism is precisely that it is nothing more than an organization of insecurity.¹¹

Identification with the movement of nationalism is stimulated by the feeling, often enough a reflection of reality, that neither the individual nor his nation has yet attained status in the world. To define one's self in terms of the group—even though this group is composed of men no more secure than one's self—is nonetheless to benefit from the organization of insecurity. Each can then agree what he is even before any has discovered, or in the midst of transformation rediscovered, who he is. As this fictitious, corporate personality emerges, not only is there the greater strength of number, but also number renders faceless and hence acceptable deeds that no individual would dare commit for himself. It allows people to expand their power by concerning themselves, not so much with the morality of what is

a spiritual movement which aims at the regeneration of the inner force of a nation and the realization of its mental and spiritual potentialities. . . . It neither opposes nor contradicts any religion, but accepts them all. . . . As for true religion, it emanates with nationalism from the same spring." (Costi Zurayq, *Al-wa'i al-Qawmi [National Consciousness]* Beirut, 1938, pp. 126-127.)

¹¹ The phrase, as indeed the title of this chapter, is borrowed from Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, New York, 1949, p. 129.

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being done, but who does them. And identification with the nation makes it possible to express all the anxiety, frustration, and hatred that accompanies the transformation of Middle Eastern society, yet to direct these emotions, not against one's self or one's own group which might well be destroyed by them, but against the foreigner.

There is not only a psychological attraction to nationalism, but also its appeal as an idea. If an idea is to be successful, especially in a period of transition, it must not seem so novel, so alien, that it prevents communication. Here nationalism has a peculiar advantage. It can more readily exploit the symbols and emotions of the tribal and heroic past than any other movement save that of neo-Islamic totalitarianism, yet, unlike the latter, give them modern secular content.¹²

The range, tone, and style of most Middle Eastern discussion of the unique character of each regional nationalism mirror—this is one of the ironies of nationalism—the discourse of nationalists everywhere in the world.¹³ We have therefore neglected to repeat its manifest content here and concentrated instead on its latent meaning. Its content, however, is changing. Although, as late as the 1950's, one could still easily find examples of writings that put Islam above the nation, that still asked what "Arabism" was, or inquired whether Arab nationalism transcended the boundaries of any particular Arab nation,¹⁴ a new trend has been clearly observable in more recent years. The newest nationalist writings—especially those inspired by Nasser in Egypt, Bourguiba in Tunisia, and Ben Barka in Morocco—are activist and reformist in character, and self-critical rather than apologetic,

¹² Sylvia G. Haim, in "Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism" (*Die Welt des Islams*, N.S., Vol. IV, 1955), examines the transformation of a number of Islamic concepts and concludes that although nationalism "introduces into Islam features which may not accord with strict orthodoxy, it is the least incompatible, perhaps, of modern European doctrines with the political thought and political experience of Islam."

¹³ See such summaries as Nicola A. Ziadeh's "Recent Arabic Literature on Arabism," *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 1952, and Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh, *The Ideas of Arab Nationalism*, Ithaca, 1956. For readers who know no Arabic, *Inside the Arab Mind: A Bibliographic Survey of Literature in Arabic on Arab Nationalism and Unity*, compiled and annotated by Fahim I. Qubain, Arlington, Middle East Research Associates, 1960, can provide an excellent and concise view of nationalist discussions.

¹⁴ For such a sampling, examine Abi Nu'man al-Muhajir, "*al-Asabiyyah al-*

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aggressive, or romantic.¹⁵ A similar change can also be observed in Pakistan.

In large part, this change of spirit reflects the arrival of a new class. For nationalism appeals not only as an idea but as the ideology of a class. Nationalism first emerges in the Middle East when the traditional bourgeoisie finds sufficient frustrations and incentives in a changing environment to try to oust the foreign overlord and run the country in its own interests. A different spirit of nationalism emerges somewhat later when a new salaried or would-be salaried middle class arises and no longer finds it possible to achieve its interests on any but a national scale, and deliberately sets out to mobilize society for common tasks.

Nationalism is popular in several varieties. There are countries where the nation-state is being treated as a community organized to strengthen the individual—and the modern age began, after all, with the rediscovery of the individual—to explore himself and relate himself to his world to the fullness of his capacities. It is difficult to speak confidently of countries in the Middle East where the foundations for such a life may soon be secure, though a majority of them seem to be striving in this direction at least some of the time. Sometimes nationalism becomes a resting place, a useful formula for linking the masses to the reassuring sentiments of the past and the new elite to the reassuring vested interests acquired in the present without allowing a vague sense of dread to become a conscious recognition that nationalism is a symptom of change. (Iraq before the revolution of 1958 exemplified this tenuous phase.) Frequently nationalism remains among the

islamiyah fawq al-asabiyat" ("Islamic Group Loyalty Is Above All Group Loyalties"); *Al-Muslimun*, Cairo, April 1953, pp. 23-25; Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, *Azmat al-fikr al-arabi (The Crisis in Arab Thought)*, Beirut, 1954; Mohammed Zaki Baydun, "al-Ummah wa al-qawmiyah," ("The Nation and Nationalism"), *Al-Adib*, Beirut, September 1959, pp. 33-35; 'Ali Budur, "al-Tatawwur al-iijima'i" ("Social Evolution [of the Arab Community"]"), *Al-Adab*, Beirut, March 1959, pp. 9-10, 61-63; Emir Mustafa al-Shihabi, "al-Qawmiyah wa awamilha" ("Nationalism and Its Factors"), *Majallat al-Majma' al-ilmi al-arabi*, Damascus, July 1, 1958, pp. 372-379.

¹⁵ Michel Aflaq's *Fi sabil al-ba'th al-arabi*, Baghdad, 1953, with its assertion of Arab nationalism on existential rather than rational grounds would seem to constitute a midway point in this new trend. See Leonard Binder's detailed exposition of this view in "Radical-Reform Nationalism in Syria and Egypt," *Muslim World*, April and July 1959, pp. 96-110 and 213-231.

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masses a novel word for an ancient spell—the charisma that always adheres to the region, albeit larger now, where only the true believers are to be found. In still other countries, but not only in the Middle East, the championship of nationalism has often become a defensive strategy of rulers both against threatening neighbors who are no less bent on a frightening quest for reassurance, and also as a diversion of domestic pressures for social change.¹⁶

The Limitations of Nationalism

Nationalism is a limited ideology. It can create new states, but each state, once created, has its own problems. Like the nationalization of industry, the nationalization of human souls solves only the problem of who is to be in charge, not the problems of stability or purpose.¹⁷ Before power is achieved, it may be possible to argue, for example, that "it is not true that the essential goal of North African unity is that daily bread be assured every North African. . . . The goal that the Maghreb pursues in its historic battle against colonialism is that of liberty before bread. The peoples of North Africa do not want bread in slavery."¹⁸ The establishment of the nation-state, however, only frees men for the task of making themselves free. The individual's freedom and bread remain to be won.

Moreover, those who rely on nationalism in the modern age can suffer the same fate as those who in the past relied on tribal *asabiya* (a sense of solidarity and virtue)—their state may disintegrate. Ibn Khaldun, the most profound analyst of the decay of traditional Islamic states, could not imagine how a state, once alienated from the tribe that founded it, could retain its *asabiya*. A society that had never succeeded in fashioning

¹⁶ These formulations, though incomplete, suggest that a typology of nationalism developed on the basis of the political function it plays in the course of social change—a useful task which cannot be attempted here—would easily be applicable to both non-Western and Western history.

¹⁷ When the Moroccans, in support of their exiled Sultan, were boycotting European goods in 1955, sellers of hashish were said to be increasing their sales by whispering that it was nationalist to buy hashish because hashish is a native product and tobacco is not. (*Maroc-Presse*, January 10, 1956.)

¹⁸ *Moujtahid* (the newspaper of the Algerian FLN), July 22, 1958.

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enduring political loyalties above warring families and tribes must now learn to build a state resting upon the cooperation of individuals. Such a state requires a new society for its foundation.

Because of opportunism, shortsightedness, lack of political and economic skill, or a shortage of needed resources, many leaders persevere in national mobilization without ever passing on to social reconstruction. But the failures of nationalists have also more profound causes deriving directly from the inner and peculiar connection between nationalism and the transformation of society in this modern age. It is the special character of this social transformation that it changes a once closely integrated and static system unevenly; it creates imbalances. One social imbalance in particular produces a profound obstacle to both national mobilization and social reconstruction. A modern, educated, but small and mostly urban, minority faces a large tradition-oriented mass. No rulers of the Middle East ever attempted to mobilize so large a mass whose view of the world was so different from their own.

Imbalances produced by social change are among the major causes of the uneasy existence of Syria as a separate nation-state. The nationalists of Syria face the task of overcoming age-old religious and ethnic divisions among a population of about four million, of whom only about 60 percent are Sunni Arabs. (Kurds, Alawis, Druzes, Greek Orthodox, and Armenians are each more than 100,000 in number, and nine other minority groups have more than 10,000 members.)¹⁹ The Sunni Arabs have themselves long been traditionally divided among those whose culture is either urban, peasant, or nomad. The two largest cities have always been sharp rivals for political and economic supremacy, with Aleppo (398,000) often oriented toward the Iraqi capital of Baghdad rather than Damascus (395,000), while the third largest city, Homs (130,000), has been striving at least for parochial autonomy.

The changes in structure and values that are necessary to transform this mosaic of separate loyalties into a new devotion to the common tasks of the nation-state are made harder by the deadlock that the partial transformation of Syria has created

¹⁹ *The Middle East, A Political and Economic Survey*, London, 1958, p. 453.

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among the social groups that make up the politically active minority. The landowners, the older bourgeoisie (largely Christian), the new middle class, the workers have each either grown, declined, or split internally just enough to be able to act only as veto groups: none are strong enough to take lasting domestic initiatives.

As the only ideology that can, for prolonged periods, cement people without committing them to particular social or economic programs, nationalism alone in Syria has held most of the various veto groups together in the face of serious pressures from outside—from Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, and the West, Israel, the U.S.S.R., and Egypt. These pressures have exposed, however, the inadequacy of nationalism as a political alternative in itself. As Nasser once wrote, “to be successful, the political revolution must unite all elements of the nation, build them solidly together, and instill in them the spirit of self-sacrifice for the sake of the whole country. But one of the primary features of social revolution is that it shakes values and loosens principles, and sets the citizenry, as individuals and classes, to fighting each other. . . . For us, the terrible experience through which our people are going is that we are having both revolutions at the same time.”²⁰ When the political hold of a ruling nationalist group is unstable domestically, and the state insecure abroad among regional rivals and great powers, the local leaders are not likely to risk shattering a unity built only on nationalist convictions by deliberately taking sides in the social revolution already upon them. The Syrian example indeed suggests a more compelling obstacle: none of the groups may have the strength to come to terms with the social change around them.

The result of concentrating exclusively on one manifestation—nationalism—rather than its essence—social change—can result in temporary failure as a nation-state, as the Syrians demonstrated between 1958 and 1961. Others may not be as lucky as were the Syrians in finding none-too-alien receivers and in being able to justify their course on grounds of a larger (Arab) nationalism. The recovery of independence seems merely to have permitted the Syrians to return to their earlier travails.

²⁰ Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, pp. 40-41.

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The imbalances that mark Middle Eastern society in the midst of its transformation cannot be prevented from toppling governments and nations simply by attempts to curb opposition at home in the name of national unity, or to externalize the dire domestic problems of power, welfare, and justice by pretending that such problems arise only in dealings with foreign nations. Less demagoguery, better administration, or the discovery of more resources will not, by themselves, remedy the situation in any lasting way. The real issue is whether Middle Eastern leaders will be inspired by nationalism to organize new institutions large enough and flexible enough to deal with social change.

There are many ways to fail. Resources and skills may in fact turn out to be inadequate, and an unsatisfied population aroused to new expectations may not remain content with organized insecurity, but rather seek refuge in organized violence. Courage may be lacking in making internal enemies—the price of controlled social change. Such nationalists, in resting content with nationalism alone, will merely symptomize the travail of their society and will finally be destroyed by social change. Others may deliberately concentrate on mobilization as an end in itself. This kind of ultra-nationalism then tends to become a secular version of neo-Islamic totalitarianism; that is, fascism. Or short-sighted nationalists may also be overthrown by those who have moved beyond nationalism in their own fashion; both communists and neo-Islamic totalitarian groups like the Moslem Brotherhood, for example, are not content merely to organize insecurity. They believe they know what history has appointed and how to hurry men to their preordained fate.

Nationalism, being a new phenomenon in history, thus offers a novel choice. Nationalists can produce a new unity based upon power alone, but they run the risk of being consumed by the forces of change they have not mastered. They can also capitalize upon unity and power in order to create new roots for their society. If they succeed, they will inevitably transform nationalism too, making its fundamental concerns no longer the inner search for identity, solidarity, and self-esteem, but rather the self-confident and perhaps also self-possessed and responsible pursuit of the national interest in relation with others.

CHAPTER 11

TRANSFORMING THE PRESENT: THE QUEST FOR FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY



The Radical Requirements of Democracy

CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY is probably the most radical political alternative facing the Middle East today. Democracy, as we shall consider it here, presupposes no particular institutional models, but rather certain ground rules and values: (1) belief in the validity of man-made laws; (2) respect for legal institutions and processes even if one disagrees with particular decisions or laws; (3) the enactment of all laws with the participation of representatives of all major social and interest groups; (4) the enforcement of the same rules for ruler and ruled; (5) the right of opposition groups who accept these ground rules to act as if they were, potentially, the future government; (6) legal guarantees for individual rights—both for the free play of reason and conscience and for participation in public life.

How much transformation these concepts demand of men and authority in the Middle East! They imply the emergence, indeed the rewarding, of a new kind of individual willing to act on grounds of moral duty and technical competence even if his judgments break beyond the bounds of consensus of the one solid social and political unit he has ever known—the kinship group.¹

¹ A political system may operate successfully on the basis of resolving conflicts among kinship groups rather than individuals. A constitutional system may formalize the rules of the game among kinship groups, castes, corporate bodies, and classes no less than individuals. Democracy, however, rests historically on concepts of individual freedom, and however large the number content to enjoy or acquiesce in democracy passively, such a system requires that its active participants act in the light of individual freedom and the rules required to preserve the same freedom for other citizens.

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To permit democrats to act, society must grant room to a loyal opposition. For the secular-minded minority that provides most of the political leadership in the Middle East today, such a grant of freedom would first require the achievement of a center of authority embodied in institutions acknowledged by all as legitimate, and strong enough to survive diversities of opinion and conflicts of interest. For the great majority of the more traditional-minded constituency, such a grant demands a break, not with God, but certainly with the God of their fathers.

The God of their fathers permitted no distinctions to be made between the sacred and the secular, the ethical and the legal, between ultimate concerns and what may be prudent or expedient. In actuality, Islamic orthodoxy acquiesced in the secular wilfullness of individual tyrants even while it dogmatically maintained that no individual could interpret for himself the revealed laws of the Koran. Folk Islam propounded the duty of revolution by the community against impious rulers, but did not grant the individual greater political freedom than orthodoxy did. As long as the central authority of the state asserted itself as absolute, and the law on which it was based as sacred, individual initiative was bound to be either presumptuous, subversive, or blasphemous. As a result, differences over political, social, and economic issues in the past could be resolved only through brute power, neglect, schismatic heresy, casuistry, or through the changing balance of tensions among the permanent cast of the political drama. To suppose that any opposition could be loyal would require Moslems to acknowledge that God's revelation was, despite their impression over the centuries, neither final nor perfect, and that believers may honestly differ on what men should make of themselves or alter in their universe.²

Democracy demands an acceptance of politics as the art of the possible and as an art that anyone may practice. But what is possible in an area of scarce resources and skills when everyone tries to practice this art? For the sake of becoming only relatively poor instead of remaining very poor—for the sake of doubling

² For a most fruitful discussion of social change in terms of the tension between the sacred and the secular, see Howard Becker's "A Sacred-Secular Evaluation Continuum of Social Change," in *Proceedings of the Third International Sociological Conference*, Amsterdam, Vol. IV, 1954, pp. 19-41.

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per capita annual income from \$75.00 to \$150.00 in twenty years—most Middle Easterners will need to work much harder, and sacrifice hallowed habits, values, and relationships. Any honest, democratic ruler who presented such a future plainly to a largely tradition-minded majority would almost certainly find himself losing the next democratically held election.

In the Middle East neither the acquisition of power nor the absence of power is to be faced with equanimity. Traditional elite and modern counter-elite have not enough common values or even common language to permit them to agree to disagree. Yet men who are denied power in a society in which population is increasingly pressing on resources and the gap between expectations and accomplishments is growing are not inclined to wait patiently for another opportunity. Not only individually but historically, the opportunity may not come again. There are many ways of making progress while resources remain adequate to feed the population. Twenty years hence, when the population of the Middle East will have doubled, the alternatives in many countries will have become fewer and harsher.

Thus, instead of political brokers stimulating, clarifying, delimiting, accommodating, and compromising on issues among various classes and interest groups, political relationships in the Middle East tend even now either toward violence against a particular leader or a sense of identification with him. Violence destroys democratic processes. Identification—at least the kind that shrinks the ego of the follower by substituting that of the leader's—prevents democratic processes by destroying the autonomous perception and assertion of the individual, and rests instead upon the sacred strength of the leader's charisma.³

One experienced Middle Eastern economist, Charles Issawi, sees as obstacles to democracy the handicaps among these countries in "size of territory and population, level of economic development, distribution of wealth, industrialization, homogeneity of language and religion, degree of education, and habit of co-

³ There is, of course, also a rational sense of identification, resting on a perception of common interests, values, ideas, and sympathies. This distinction leaves entirely open the question whether non-rational identification serves, in any particular instance, a good or evil cause, or whether rational identification rests on accurate perception.

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operative association.”⁴ Even this abbreviated list of handicaps leads Issawi to the conclusion that “a long and arduous road lies ahead.”⁵

Freedom and Authority in Traditional Islam

There are writers, however, who argue that the traditional tribal structure experienced democracy in practice, that Islam contains the essential roots of democracy, and that no one could be more individualistic, and hence more determined to act in freedom, than the Arab—or Berber or Turk or Iranian or Pakistani.

Some Middle Easterners have argued that the traditional tribal council could become an indigenous base for contemporary democracy. It is true that in these councils the older men of a village or tribe consider themselves equal to one another and that accession to leadership is dependent on the acknowledgment of the community. But is it democracy in the twentieth century to fasten the individual to his kinship group and to make his status dependent on agreement with its consensus? Can Middle Eastern countries achieve either stability or progress by strengthening the power of traditional families and tribes, giving formal dignity to their rivalries and bargains?

It is now a fact of life that most of these small units have already lost their self-sufficiency, if not their pride, and have yielded predominant power to national governments. The institutional habits of the past continue to have important ideological and practical consequences, however. The survival of the traditional expectation that, after consultation has taken place, it is the obligation of the minority to incline before the majority, predisposes Middle Easterners to accept reformist regimes of a kind sometimes known as “popular authoritarianism” or “plebiscitary democracy.”

As a community above the reality of tribes, traditional Islam was built ideally upon the equality of believers under a law revealed by God and to be executed, without right of further legisla-

⁴ “Economic and Social Foundations of Democracy in the Middle East,” in Walter Z. Laqueur, *The Middle East in Transition*, p. 35.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

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tion, by the temporal ruler. It is doubtful whether any reference to *demos* is relevant when law is only to be obeyed but never to be revised or amended. The very possibility of any but a monopoly of political power is ignored in the theory of orthodox Islam.⁶ In practice, however, Moslems have not merely passively submitted to God's law. The consensus (*ijma*) of the Community of Believers is an acknowledged source of *Shari'a* law, though one must not do violence to historical memory by forgetting that this consensus was almost from the first officially restricted to the ulema, who closed the door to individual reinterpretation of *Shari'a* law to all, including themselves, after the tenth century. Nonetheless, consensus in different forms remained an active force throughout Islamic history. The consensus of kinship, regions, classes, guilds, brotherhoods, even town quarters, has been alive enough to maintain patterns of Islam distinct from orthodoxy, to moderate or even challenge official policies, and, within limits, to assimilate new ideas and activities. On the other hand, neither revealed law nor the common agreement of the community was ever translated into institutions strong enough to curb the tyranny of sultans permanently or to insure civil or political equality among all subjects of the state: there was no independent court, no organized church, no feudal aristocracy, no strong propertied class, no general assembly. The tensions among autonomous groups persisted at the cost of preventing the emergence of a common sense of citizenship in the state.

Orthodox Islam defined freedom in terms akin to those of Marxism: the right to do what is necessary to serve a community conforming to history's highest law. Islamic practice, molded by political tyranny and economic oppression and scarcity no less than God's revelation, fashioned freedoms complementary to such a state. There was the freedom to escape dogma, tyranny, or exploitation by being indifferent, by smoking kif or hashish or chewing gat, or by conforming without thought, and hence feeling no burden. A tribe might escape history, and conformity with the

⁶ Neither was there any concept of a collectivity of individuals with powers to act as a juridical personality. (See J. H. Kramers, "L'Islam et la Démocratie," in *Orientalia Neerlandica*, Leiden, Netherlands' Oriental Society, 1948, pp. 223-239.)

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larger culture, by seeking isolation in the mountains, or following only its own customs during periods of anarchy. There was the freedom to seek a "higher freedom" by dying in holy war; by seeking mystic unity with God, whether by contemplation or ecstasy. There was a certain freedom to be had, too, by softening tyranny through nepotism, bribery, casuistry, and hypocrisy, or through the protection of guilds and religious brotherhoods, or through speculation in ideas or money. For a few, there was temporary freedom to be had at the pinnacle of power—freedom from the obligations of family and tribe, from work, from obeying others, even from revealed law itself. But all these freedoms were fragile and inherent in the functioning of the system and did not threaten its foundations. None of the freedoms that characterize the modern age are provided for in this traditional system and all of them subvert that system.

Moslems may now reasonably argue that the time has come to interpret "consensus" and "freedom" in the spirit of the twentieth century. But to borrow Islamic terms such as *ijma* for consensus does not alter the problem of organizing a new common agreement and institutionalizing consultation among separate individuals, and still co-existing modern and traditional interests. To return to Islam for vocabulary may ease the task of gaining verbal assent, but perhaps at the price of obscuring the difficulties of moving from Islam to democracy.

The obstacles to be faced touch the very authority on which modern government is to be founded, its form of organization, and the kind of individual needed to make it function. Can a state derive its authority and the sanction of its laws from the consent of the governed, and at the same time draw upon divine revelation in a sense that makes consent and representation at best complementary to an immutable constitution, and at worst redundant?⁷ Yet, can a state be democratic, and ignore the religious traditions which still define and inspire the morality and social cohesion of the great majority of its people? The answer is

⁷ These questions are elaborated by Kenneth Cragg, "Religious Developments in Islam in the 20th Century," *Journal of World History*, Vol. III, No. 2, 1956, who also cites a useful Moslem contribution to this discussion, Kemal Amin Faruki, *Ijma' [Consensus] and the Gate of Ijtihad [Individual Judgment]*, Karachi, 1954.

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clear, no less in logic than in contemporary Middle Eastern practice. A secular state (which sunders the traditional links between religion, politics, and society) and makes modernization rather than Islam its ultimate criterion of the necessary and the good (in action if not always in words) cannot as yet be democratic. The majority is not yet ready.⁸

Many Middle Easterners have argued, with considerable support from hopeful Western observers, that the traditional individualism of their compatriots provides a firm foundation for democracy. But there are two kinds of individualism, and one of these sustains democracy while the other prevents growth or makes its survival problematical. An "individualist by ideal" prefers to use his own judgment; an "individualist by default" uses his own judgment only when society does not or cannot enforce its established ways.⁹ The Moslem has been an "individualist by default".

The Moslem's assertion of individual freedom has not been akin to the modern Western view that man, being the most creative part of an evolving creative process, has the duty to actualize his potentialities. In popular Islam, an unseen world demands continual propitiation; in orthodox Islam, the believer has been given rules to guide his entire conduct by a God so powerful that only submission is possible. In his immediate social world, loyalty to family ideally reigned supreme over truth or self in any judgment. In response to tyranny and anarchy in the political realm, bending with the wind became the habit of survival.

Not that the Moslem's submission therefore became mechanical. Frequently, fervently, and shrewdly he has sought to assert his personality wherever, by some default in the system, he could break through. Fatalism in Islam exists only in polarity with rebellion. The constant tension between these two poles indeed explains why fatalism can exhibit itself with dignity¹⁰ and why

⁸ This point is argued with great cogency by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in *Pakistan as an Islamic State*, Lahore, 1951, a book written at a moment when Pakistan was still attempting to become both democratic and Islamic and had not yet turned, as it did in 1958, into a secular authoritarian road.

⁹ I owe these definitions to an unpublished draft, "Some Aspects of 'Individualism' and the Problem of Modernization in China and Japan," presented to the American Council of Learned Societies Annual Meeting on *Individualism in Asia and the West*, January 24-25, 1957, by Professor Marion J. Levy of Princeton University.

¹⁰ Ignorance, poverty, and disease, which have always marred that sense of

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rebellion has so often been merely momentary, impulsive, or unsure. It is a canny kind of individualism that has been shaped in reaction to a universe overwhelming in power, and therefore does not easily lead to voluntary integration in large communities or sustained interest in politics.

Individualists by default are likely to grow rapidly in number in the Middle East as the process of modernization destroys older structures and standards and opens up new areas of activity still lacking accepted standards to guide individual judgment. In this setting, policy making on a decentralized basis becomes exceedingly difficult. For individualism by default can be extremely subversive of effective capital formation, social planning, and political cohesion.¹¹ Such "individualists" may make the exercise of authoritarian or totalitarian rule more difficult; they make democracy, which has no substitute for the individual, impossible. Indeed as they fail by such individualism to attain the prosperity of modern life, they are even more likely than others to turn to that action in which fatalism and rebellion are synonymous—sacrificing their individuality to a totalitarian movement.

The Search for Democracy in the Middle East

Still, everyone talks about democracy in the Middle East; no form of governmental organization is more popular. Even authoritarian rulers champion it by defining their regimes as being, in a special sense, democratic,¹² or by promising to guide the state toward democracy. That democracy should be valued so highly is an extraordinary phenomenon, especially after the failure or defeat of parliamentary government in almost every

dignity, are now combined with a new uncertainty whether any of these must now be endured, and hence have readily moved the Moslem closer to the pole of rebellion.

¹¹ This paragraph merely translates into a Middle Eastern environment Levy's insights on China and Japan (see *Individualism in Asia and the West*).

¹² For example, after General Iskander Mirza declared a state of emergency throughout Pakistan and dissolved the Constituent Assembly, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting explained that Pakistan, like the United States and Great Britain, would henceforth have a "controlled democracy," where "in the ultimate analysis, the leader of the party that wins the vote controls the Parliament, controls the government, and controls every activity of the people of the country." (*New York Times*, December 5, 1954.)

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Middle Eastern country which has tried it; after a century of resentment of imperialist rule by nations which were, at home, democratic; and after the spectacular success of communism in the Soviet Union.

Some of this talk about democracy, of course, is mere talk. Actually, the concept of democracy is just beginning to be clarified by discussion or practice. Its popularity as a word is due in part to the fact that the modern political vocabulary of the Middle East was learned largely from England and France, that using it seems to validate the speaker's status as a modern leader, and makes it easier for him to make political claims on the democratic conscience of the West. It also eases recruitment and mobilization of other social classes by the small elite that leads the nationalist and social revolutions. Democratic slogans seem to validate minority leadership by asserting that its rule is of and for the people and (by their sense of identification is, or by further reforms soon will be) by the people.¹³ The agitation in behalf of democracy is carried on as lustily by people whom we have here called individualists by default as it is genuinely felt by individualists by ideal.

But all this talk about democracy is not entirely instrumental or propagandistic. It is also a manifestation of new social conditions. Every citizen is in fact now in motion and insists, though still in varying degrees, on being accounted for.¹⁴ Leaders can no longer hope to maintain themselves in power by relying merely on the support of an army or certain tribal sheikhs or certain landowners. It is not only that the assertion of one's self as

¹³ Constitutions in the Middle East are often declarations of intentions rather than agreed upon fundamental laws. It was thus quite natural that Adib Shishakli, upon his election as President of Syria in 1953, should declare that "the Constitution is a program of government [and a] guide for the people." (Damascus Radio, July 11, 1953.)

¹⁴ When the press is free, but elections are not, the clash of reality and expectations about democracy can take grotesque forms, as witness this item from a Damascus newspaper after the May 1957 by-elections: "As a result of government terror, pressure on the public, mobilization of all resources of the state, exploitation of ministerial influence, threats and slander directed against all citizens, more than 100 cases of kidnapping, attacks and threats of armed force, and straight bribery, Maiki won by 2,645 votes." (Reported by the *Economist*, May 18, 1957, pp. 604-605.)

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spokesman for a nation conjures up expectations by all citizens within it; nations in fact are being formed and are looking for spokesmen. Democracy is the only concept of government that allows all men to participate in making rules and distributing benefits. Therefore democracy has become the word.

Despite such pressures for democracy, the barriers remain greater still. What is at stake in Middle Eastern politics now is the substance of beliefs and the fate of society. In the midst of such a transfiguration, it is not yet possible to treat politics as an autonomous sphere of life. Political democracy has social, economic, and psychological preconditions.¹⁵ The road to democracy in the Middle East cannot start from democratic political institutions. In order to reach these institutions, democrats must begin by accepting their inescapably subversive and radical role in the present environment, and deliberately bring about the social and economic changes which are necessary before democracy can reign.

The Authoritarian Road to Democracy

Despite all the ambiguities in the language of politics in the Middle East, one thing at least is clear. No arguments by any of the rulers for the special virtues of authoritarianism are based on dogmatic assumptions concerning the inescapable laws of history, but rather are entirely contingent in character. Their arguments are thus not novel in political theory and can be examined quite apart from the heat and bias of contemporary Middle Eastern

¹⁵ Professor William J. Newman neglects this fact when, arguing for "Liberal Government for 'Backward States'" (*Commentary*, March 1959, pp. 212-221), he declares that liberalism tries to do "one" thing: "provide a framework of government which combines order and freedom so that change can take place without violence." Professor Carl Friedrich's statement, cited by Newman, that "constitutionalism is about the only system of government which seems able to get along without . . . agreement on fundamentals" is only partly true. To agree to disagree implies either that there are in fact no fundamental differences or that no one is prepared to do battle. Neither applies to the partisans of the Middle East. Part of Newman's greater hope for liberalism in underdeveloped areas arises from his concentration on constitutionalism as divorced from democracy ("the liberal form of government is very much at home with elite and elite leadership") and his more cheerful analytical perspective ("man is a free agent and no one can say what decisions will be made in these states and by what people or what groups. . .").

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affairs. They were already well articulated a century ago by John Stuart Mill. In a chapter devoted to the proposition "That the Ideally Best Form of Government is Representative Government," Mill asserts that the acceptance of despotism can be excused, but only if "the dictator employs the whole power he assumes in removing obstacles which debar the nation from the enjoyment of freedom."¹⁶ Hence any despot who eternalizes a political dogma or institutionalizes terror inescapably excludes himself from this company. Speaking of peoples who have yet "some lesson to learn, some habit not yet acquired," Mill notes—and many of today's Middle Eastern leaders echo him—a number of instances in which a non-representative government would be not only unavoidable but "preferable." Speaking of areas where tribes have long been independent, Mill says that "a race who have been trained in energy and courage by struggles with Nature and their neighbors, but who have not yet settled down into permanent obedience to any common superior, would be little likely to acquire this habit under the collective government of their own body. A representative assembly drawn from among themselves would simply reflect their own turbulent insubordination."¹⁷

Not only lack of obedience but "extreme passivity, and ready submission to tyranny," make a people unfit for representative government, Mill suggests. "Many a people has gradually emerged from this condition by the aid of a central authority, where position has made it the rival, and has ended by making it the master, of the local despots, and which, above all, has been single." Such a ruler "was long compelled by necessities of position to exert his authority as the ally, rather than the master, of the classes whom he had aided in effecting their liberation. In this manner a central power, despotic in principle though generally much restricted in practice, was mainly instrumental in

¹⁶ J. S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, Oxford, 1948, p. 141. Steven Muller, in a paper "On the Problem of Opposition Parties in the New Commonwealth," delivered to the 59th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 10-12, 1959, thanks David Spitz for urging him to reread J. S. Mill. Hence I owe thanks to both of them for causing me to reread Mill for the first time in the light of non-Western politics.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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carrying the people through a necessary stage of improvement, which representative government, if real, would most likely have prevented them from entering upon.”¹⁸ Such was in fact the accomplishment of Ataturk, and is the intention of the present leadership in a majority of Middle Eastern states.

Societies that “have had considerable practice in exercising their faculties on village or town interests, and have even realized a tolerably effective popular government on that restricted scale, . . . may yet have but slender sympathies with anything beyond, and no habit or capacity of dealing with interests common to many such communities. I am not aware that history furnishes any example in which a number of these political atoms or corpuscles have coalesced into a body, and learnt to feel themselves one people, except through previous subjection to a central authority common to all.”¹⁹

Mill mentions other considerations where it is “not equally obvious that the government of One or a Few would have any tendency to cure or alleviate the evil.” In the Middle East, these arguments carry particular conviction to members of a new middle class that is educated in modern ideas and skills in a fashion so different from the illiterate mass of the population that they become almost a separate and distinct society. This new middle class is likely to be struck by the force of contrast when “strong prejudices of any kind; obstinate adherence to old habits; positive defects of national character, or mere ignorance, and deficiency of mental cultivation, if prevalent in a people, will be faithfully reflected in their representative assemblies: and should it happen that the executive administration, the direct management of public affairs, is in the hands of persons comparatively free from these defects, more good would frequently be done by them when not hampered by the necessity of carrying with them the voluntary assent of such bodies. . . . Under those conditions, government by the representatives of the mass would stand a chance of depriving them of much of the benefit they might derive from the greater cultivation of the superior ranks. . . . The best prospect of improvement for a people thus com-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-5

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

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posed lies in the existence of a constitutionally unlimited, or at least practically preponderant, authority in the chief ruler of the dominant class. He alone has by his position an interest in raising and improving the mass of whom he is not jealous, as a counterpoise to his associates of whom he is.”²⁰

The New Authoritarians and the Old

Mill’s arguments, with their intrinsic concern for the purposes for which authority is used, help to explain the persistence of authoritarian rule in the Middle East, even though a new age has been ushered in. For the first time one can distinguish two kinds of authoritarian rulers. The rulers of the past—whether traditional oligarchs or representatives of a recent status quo resting on the alliance between landowners, army, bourgeoisie, and frequently foreign overlords—all based their power on a calculus of personal relations. They based it upon the tribal sheikh whose uncle was killed, whose nephew was rewarded, whose pockets were filled; upon the expectation of future favors through a third cousin; upon the fear of losing a favor not earned on grounds of talent or skill. Such a power, like Nuri al-Said’s in Iraq, cannot be peacefully passed on to a successor. The web of loyalties must each time be created anew: the successor must himself have killed, rewarded, intimidated in order to have all strings in his own hands. Such authoritarian rulers have thus always been vulnerable. The calculus of personal relations is sensitive above all to the anticipation of future favors, not past gratitudes.

In the modern age, those who base their power on these personal relations are much more vulnerable than ever before. They are barred, by the very nature of the ties that created their power, from engaging in reforms that might harm existing relationships—not only between those who count and those who do not, but any that would destroy the traditional social pattern in which politics is still synonymous with the calculus of personal relations. Neither new dams nor new policemen are adequate substitutes for reforms of the system itself.

That is why rulers like Nuri, who seek to preserve themselves

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-9.

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by conserving this traditional pattern, are doomed to do little that comes to grips with the transformation of their society. Yet this transformation has brought into existence everywhere in the Middle East men who, by virtue of their opinions, lack of connections, or sheer number cannot hope to find a place in the traditional matrix of politics. Their weight sooner or later cannot help but overthrow a system that refuses to contain them. Though all Middle Eastern rulers are vulnerable to subversion, conspiracy, and assassination, the implications of their overthrow vary sharply from country to country: when King Hussayn or the Shah of Iran or Nuri al-Said yield their power or their life, their end marks the end of an age; but the end of a Nasser or a Kassim would mark only the end of a phase within the new era.

None of the political minorities striving for control of their society, even the moderates, will be able to avoid having to acquire power sufficient to counter-balance the power of vested interests, the harshness of the environment, and their own small number. In the present state of the Middle East, it is not possible to escape a choice between oligarchies. Whether extremists win, however, or else moderates or radicals succeed, remains still an open choice depending in each country on how grave the imbalances are that social change has created, the power constellation among domestic movements, and the balance of benefits and pressures from outside.

The distinction that counts among oligarchies today is between those who consciously and deliberately lead a social revolution in order to catch up with the revolutionary consequences of social change among their peoples, and those who merely seek to survive while they can, in style if possible. The Turkish experience under Ataturk demonstrates that it is possible for authoritarian rulers to lay the foundations for democratic participation. The partial reversion toward repressive measures on the part of later Turkish governments does not derogate from Ataturk's achievement. It proves merely what has always been known, that the struggle for freedom knows no final battles.

The new authoritarians will not necessarily accomplish more than the regimes they displaced. Indeed, in an area of the world which is just beginning to crystallize its modern perspectives and

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in which resources and skills are scarce, it is not always easy to tell whether a particular ruler cannot, will not, or does not know how to deal with social change. The new rulers have, however, several major advantages over their predecessors. They are the first authoritarian regimes to share certain basic bonds with the politically active masses. They are not deterred by interests of their own from embarking upon fundamental reforms to improve the daily life of the majority. Hence they can at least purchase time by speaking new thoughts even if they turn out in the end to fail in their new deeds. Far less dependent on the calculus of personal relations than the older regimes, they will also be received with far less skepticism when they speak for the entire nation; that is, for all who are no longer bound together by the web of personal loyalties.²¹

Resort to demagoguery characterizes the new authoritarians even more than the old, who felt less compulsion to address the *demos*. The new authoritarians are more sensitive to the persisting gap between popular needs and national achievements, and also to the need for maintenance of enthusiasm and a spirit of sacrifice. For the new authoritarians, demagoguery is a genuine symptom of the uncertainties, confusions, and emotions which leaders and followers share. It is a means of achieving communication that instinctively or deliberately will remain endemic until Middle Easterners have consciously re-established themselves and their society on a stable base.

Another bond between the new rulers and their followers is nationalism. Those who have not yet succeeded in defining their individual identity find it more comforting to define themselves in terms of a group. Since the nation still remains to be built, nationalism can so far only grant the solidarity of a common passion. The uses and power of such a passion—the strongest and most pervasive in all the Middle East—have been examined

²¹ Note, for example, Nasser's rejection of this calculus of personal relations: "I remember visiting once one of our universities where I called the professors together and sat with them in order to benefit from their scholastic experience. . . . It was unfortunate that none of them advanced any ideas; instead, each confined himself to advancing himself to me, pointing out his unique fitness for making miracles. Each of them kept glancing at me with the look of one who preferred me to all the treasures of earth and heaven. I recall that I could not restrain myself. . . ." (Gamal Abd al-Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, pp. 36-37.)

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in the preceding chapter. Here it remains only to be noted that a ruler who uses his power in behalf of this common quest for identity is likely to be forgiven more by his constituents for demanding sacrifices, or even lying or killing, in behalf of the group than if he were a ruler acting merely in behalf of a dynasty or clique.

Most of these bonds are reactions to, not actions toward, the challenges that face leaders and followers in this region. They may buy time for a particular ruler, and so also perpetuate authoritarian rule. Only the effort that removes the barriers to freedom and progress can also put an end to authoritarian rule.

Toward Representative Government

How can a nation pass from unlimited to representative government? Even one of the most enlightened of twentieth century authoritarian rulers in the Middle East, Kemal Ataturk, twice repressed opposition groups that had organized without his consent. Once he changed his mind and turned against an opposition party he himself had encouraged to grow.²²

The Middle East has particular difficulties in finding an answer, having for some decades mistaken parliamentary for representative government. Parliaments there have been in the Middle East—those of pre-Nasser Egypt and Syria and pre-Kassim Iraq readily come to mind—but they have usually been controlled by a small group of leaders traditionally entrenched in society. To accommodate themselves to this structure created for them by foreigners and often welcomed by them as evidence of their own modernity, politicians used its imported language, and termed as “political parties” the various and changing coalitions of deputies with those few outsiders to whom they dispensed or on whom they depended for favors.

Mill describes most perceptively the inability of such legislative bodies to hold the government to account on behalf of a larger constituency: “When nobody, or only some small fraction, feels

²² For the first thoroughly documented analysis of the latter episode, see Walter F. Weiker, *The Free Party of 1930 in Turkey: Loyal Opposition in a Rapidly Modernizing Nation* (a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Departments of Politics and Oriental Studies, Princeton University, May 19, 1962).

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the degree of interest in the general affairs of the state necessary to the formation of a public opinion, the electors will seldom make any use of the right of suffrage, but to serve their private interest, or the interest of their locality, or of some one with whom they are connected as adherents or dependents. The small class who, in this state of public feeling, gain the command of the representative body, for the most part use it solely as a means of seeking their fortune. If the executive is weak, the country is distracted by mere struggles for place; if strong, it makes itself despotic, at the cheap price of appeasing the representatives, or such of them as are capable of giving trouble, by a share of the spoils; and the only fruit produced by national representation is that, in addition to those who really govern, there is an assembly quartered on the public, and no abuse in which a portion of the assembly are interested is at all likely to be removed."²³ Thus there were, for example, 45 different cabinets in Iraq between 1921 and 1950, 31 of them between 1932 (when Iraq became independent) and 1950. Yet all the cabinet posts rotated only among about 120 politicians, and General Nuri al-Sa'id remained the principal power behind most governments for almost two decades until a revolution in 1958 altered the entire political and social structure of Iraq.²⁴

There are many local and foreign observers of past parliaments in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, and contemporary parliaments in Iran and Jordan who have argued, akin to Mill, that when "the evil stops here, the price may be worth paying, for the publicity and discussion which, though not an invariable, are a natural accomplishment of any, even nominal representation."²⁵ In all these Middle Eastern countries, however, it would be hard to say whether such a spectacle, on balance, accomplished some useful

²³ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, p. 153.

²⁴ Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, pp. 29-30 and *passim*. The rules of the game in the Middle East during the parliamentary era we have been discussing included certain representational requirements: it was permissible to rig elections, but it was not permissible to exclude your most prominent opponent, at least if your opponent, whatever his particular vested interest, was a supporter of the status quo. Exclusion often brought rebellion. This was the experience of the Ali Jawdat cabinet which broke the rules of the game in Iraq in the fall and winter of 1934-35. (*Ibid.*, pp. 50-53.) It was also the experience of President Chamoun of Lebanon in 1957-1958.

²⁵ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, p. 153.

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purpose by raising the idea of popular rights, or whether it did more harm by corrupting the popular conception of what democracy might be.²⁶ For if, as Mill realizes, "instead of struggling for the favors of the chief ruler, these selfish and sordid factions struggled for the chief place itself, they would certainly, as in Spanish America, keep the country in a state of chronic revolution and civil war. A despotism, not even legal, but of illegal violence, would be alternately exercised by a succession of political adventurers, and the name and forms of representation would have no effect but to prevent despotism from attaining the stability and security by which alone its evils can be mitigated, or its few advantages realized."²⁷

A dominant single party controlled by a modern Middle Eastern authoritarian ruler whose objectives are "tutelary"—whose function "is not only control and mobilization, but also political acculturation, the preparation of the ground for the emergence of a Western-type associational system and of a Western-type party system with a coherent, responsible, and loyal opposition"²⁸—may well find it useful to establish a parliament. Such a parliament, however, is likely to place beside the executive, "not as controllers but as subordinates, a body representative of the superior caste, which by its objections and questionings, and by its occasional outbreaks of spirit, keeps alive habits of collective resistance, and may admit of being, in time and by degrees, expanded into a really national representation (which is in substance the history of the English Parliament) . . ."²⁹

²⁶ Certainly the task of those who recognized the fundamental advantages of achieving a truly parliamentary regime was rendered more difficult. "We should not attribute the weakness of representative constitutional government and its failure in Arab countries to the parliamentary system itself," writes Cecil Hourani, currently an adviser to Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba, "but to certain special circumstances most of which still exist." Pointing to the fact that Arab constitutions were not fashioned primarily in response to internal political forces and hopes, he adds, "Before we decide that a constitutional system is unsuited to Arab countries, we should be sure that it was really tried out." "Mustaqbil al hukm al-dasturi fi al-bilad al-'arabiyyah" ("The Future of Constitutional Government in Arab Countries"), *al-Abhath*, Beirut, March 1953, p. 59.

²⁷ Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, pp. 153-154.

²⁸ Almond, "A Comparative Study of Interest Groups and the Political Process," p. 276.

²⁹ Mill, *Consideration on Representative Government*, p. 159.

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To achieve even this degree of representation, it is necessary to move beyond the kind of parliamentary regimes which typified the Middle East in the 1940's and most of the 1950's—those in which the influence of members reflected not so much their parliamentary skill or popular support as the traditional weight of their kinship group or their extensive ownership of land. Such "parliamentarians" have every interest to prevent the broadening of representation to include new classes of men with new perspectives on status and power. They have no use for either cadre or mass parties since their own status is unrelated to, if not actually exploitative of, any larger constituency.

The emergence of the new middle class as the dominant element in society enlarges, but still sets limits to the feasible representation of the community at large in parliament. All the political parties of the Middle East that are genuinely based on cadre or mass support are now being led by members of the new middle class. This class, as we have seen, may well divide its political allegiance among a variety of modern ideologies. But what characterizes all its choices is that, in contrast to the perspective still typical of the majority of the population, this class is modern in substance and concerned to satisfy, in the first instance, its own interests or those of one of its segments. The peasants and workers of the Middle East are becoming receptive to political recruitment, but they are not yet ready to organize themselves. Representation of the mass is therefore most likely to be confined for some time to leaders drawn from this newly dominant class or beholden to it.

There are likely to be other limitations to a meaningful parliamentary representation of the general population. Parties in competition for a mass clientele of illiterate and inexperienced voters may be prone to engage in strategies for victory that will confine the range of issues to only a few, and may well distort these for the sake of winning. Or if an election has the not unlikely result of creating a parliament truly representative of the full spectrum of existing interests—(1) traditional landowners, traditional religion, wealthy commercial middlemen, (2) members of the new middle class devoted to authoritarian state socialism or state capitalism, and (3) members of the new middle class devoted to

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communist, neo-Islamic, or ultra-nationalist extremism—no political compromise, not even genuine discussion, becomes possible.

A multi-party parliament may be able to legislate, or at least be “the nation’s Committee of Grievances and its Congress of Opinions,”³⁰ but only as long as a single party in fact remains predominant. Such an institution is a clear improvement over the single party governing alone in that it forces the governing party to justify itself almost continually to a constituency far larger than its own party ranks. The requirements of public debate help to crystallize a shift from the conflict of cliques to the conflict of orientations. It keeps alive the tension between ruler and ruled that remains the mark of authoritarianism no less than democracy, and keeps the ruler from sliding over into totalitarianism, whose crime is that it seeks to make the slave consent to his slavery.

Those who demand a parliament that is to be the free and peaceful market place of bargains among landlords, peasants, industrialists, workers, secularists, traditionalists, communists, neo-Islamic totalitarians, socialists, and ultra-nationalists—are asking for more than the contemporary Middle East is capable of achieving. A viable parliament demands a political system which is “characterized by a homogeneous secular political culture . . . a multi-valued, political culture, a rational-calculating, bargaining and experimental political culture. It is a homogeneous culture in the sense that there is a sharing of political ends and means.”³¹ For want of such a homogeneous secular culture, the parliaments of Pakistan and the Sudan failed to survive in 1958 and the Lebanese parliament barely managed to survive a civil war which put into question the religio-ethnic balance which its membership is intended to reflect.³²

The Middle East may not in the foreseeable future success-

³⁰ Mill, *ibid.*, p. 172.

³¹ Almond, “Comparative Political Systems,” p. 398.

³² See Khalid Bin Sayeed, “Collapse of Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan,” *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 1959, pp. 389-406; Helen A. Kitchen, “The Sudan in Transition,” *Current History*, July 1959, pp. 35-40; Nabih Amin Faris, “Report on Lebanon,” *Middle East Report* 1959, edited by William Sands, Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1959, pp. 39-41.

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fully complete the transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes. The danger seems less that the powerful will be corrupted by power than by the fear that they still do not have enough power to avoid being overwhelmed by their problems. It may, oddly enough, be the successful authoritarian ruler who is most likely to prepare the ground for constitutional democracy. His success, from any perspective, will be tested by whether he has given adequate employment to the growing reservoir of men powered by new skills and knowledge. Such men may yet try to coerce or cajole others, as they themselves may be coerced or cajoled. But from such men, more than any other, is also likely to come the substance, strength, and confidence which inspire individuals to insist that power be shared.³³

³³ These issues are further explored in Chapter 14 dealing with the role of political parties.

CHAPTER 12

TRANSFORMING THE PRESENT: SOCIALISM FOR THE FEW, FOR THE MANY, OR FOR THE AGGRANDIZEMENT OF THE STATE?



NEXT to nationalism, no ideology in the Middle East is more popular than socialism. Indeed, the plenitude of parties today that are socialistic in content if not in name contrasts startlingly with the near absence of such parties, genuine or otherwise, thirty years ago, and with their small size and number even fifteen years ago, at the end of World War II.¹ The open and avowed popularity of socialism is a phenomenon of the 1950's. Arising so recently, and in an era of repression and one-party regimes, socialists of whatever stripe have not yet had opportunity to clarify the great differences among themselves.

In all countries from Morocco to Pakistan since World War II, the names of scarcely half a dozen parties have borne the official label "socialist." Of these, the Egyptian Socialist Party, led by Ahmed Hussein, was in fact fascist; the Socialist Republican Party that staged a brief appearance during the Sudanese elections of 1953 was comprised of pro-British sheikhs hunting for urban support; the Islamic Socialist Party of Syria was just another name for the neo-Islamic totalitarian Moslem Brotherhood. A Turkish Socialist Party was founded in 1946 but outlawed that same year. The Arab Socialist Resurrectionist (*Ba'th*) Party, a recognizably socialist party, has overt or covert branches in Syria,

¹ In the early 1930's, characteristic of the handful of socialist groups with limited membership were a Turkish group, whose opinions were best expressed in the magazine *Kadro* (see Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics*, pp. 70-72), and the Ahali group in Iraq (see Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, Oxford, 1951, pp. 71-75).

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Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, but in each of these countries it faces competition from other movements which, despite a great variety of names, all champion "socialism."

As an instrumentation of government policy, socialism in the Middle East greatly antedates its endorsement as an ideology. Its future, both in government and as a body of systematized thought, is likely to owe as little to European models as its past. To explain Middle Eastern "socialism," therefore, one must fall back on sociological analysis rather than socialist theory.

The Tasks of Socialism in the Middle East

The proclaimed goals of European socialism were the destruction of economic and hence political domination by "monopoly capitalists" and the more equitable distribution of income and goods. Its principal moral aim was to end the exploitation of man by man. Middle Eastern socialists confront a situation in which the most powerful economic organizations are either still owned by foreigners or already owned by their own government. Urban workers constitute little more than, at most, about seven percent of the population, and many of these remain unorganized, unskilled, and recently arrived from the rural countryside where most men remain miserable sharecroppers. Poverty is all that is available at the moment for more equitable distribution. Socialism in the Middle East thus begins a long way from its goal.

The lessons of Western European socialism cannot be readily applied, for the Middle East will not recapitulate the West's development, even in telescoped form. The virtues of capitalism are already being questioned by the majority of the new salaried middle class and governments are curbing its free operation even before a strong, native, modern capitalist class has emerged. The arguments used against capitalism differ from the indictments of that system by European socialists. For historical reasons, the capitalists of the Middle East have been relatively smaller and more insecure as a class than their European counterparts. Most of them have been interested in quick turnovers rather than long-term investments. An unusually large number have the tenuous minority status of being Christians or Jews. Modern capitalism

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appeared originally in many areas of the Middle East as harbinger or in the wake, of Western imperialism. Socialism in the Middle East has therefore always been strongly nationalist. When the largest and most important private enterprises are owned by foreigners, and the next largest by local entrepreneurs often dependent on them, to be pro-capitalist seems to make one appear pro-British, pro-French, or pro-American. Hence acts of nationalization are above all declarations of national independence.

Not only have such giant enterprises as the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the Universal Suez Canal Company thus been nationalized without pitting socialist and private capitalist against each other in domestic political conflict, but also the role of government has generally become decisive in the economy of all Middle Eastern countries in recent decades without much ideological debate. Historically, the state in this region of the world has always been the principal owner of capital (often of the source of capital, land), the principal source of contracts, and the supervisor of the rules of trade and production. State ownership, control, and guidance is an inheritance of the Middle Eastern economy.

But if the state is now the largest employer in the majority of Middle Eastern countries, there are also new reasons for it. Broadly speaking, foreign enterprisers no longer consider it wise to invest, and domestic enterprisers do not yet think it prudent or are not yet sufficiently capable or skilled. Certainly, even when the latter do appear (and there are some remarkably able local capitalists), there are not enough of them to lay the foundations in infrastructure and investment sufficient to assure rapid progress for the nation as a whole. Only the state remains to mobilize capital and skills.

The call upon the state to intervene, and to do so quickly and decisively, also arises from the increasing pain of poverty in the Middle East. In many countries during the past few decades an already low standard of living has been reduced still further: modern sanitation and public order have prolonged life, and there are now more people on poor land. In many countries, the disparity between rich and poor has become both greater and more visible. Many of the rich became richer only recently, in

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the period of scarcity and inflation following World War II. They call to mind a similar group in pre-revolutionary Russia: "As Russia became industrialized, in a sudden rush of activity which took place around the turn of the century, there were clearly apparent the absence of an adequate tradition of responsibility and restraint on the part of the capital-owning class and a general lack of preparedness, on the part of the state and of society generally, to cope with the new strains. This industrial development, proceeding largely on the basis of individual enterprise rather than of widely distributed corporative ownership, was marked by sudden accumulations of fortunes in the hands of individuals and families not always well prepared for such affluence. Often the mode of expenditure of wealth appeared to other people as little creditable as the means by which it had been accumulated. . . . Such conditions often bore greater resemblance to the pattern of early Industrial-Revolution capitalism, as Marx had described it, than to conditions in advanced Western countries. This fact may well have had something to do with the success of Marxism in Russia. The Russian industrial capitalist was generally visible in the flesh, and as often as not he had the rotundity, and sometimes (not always) the vulgarity and callousness, of the capitalist of the early Communist caricature."²

Poverty, in turn, now produces more discontent than ever before. There are now more things that the poor cannot buy. Poverty is also harder to endure since for the first time Middle Easterners have come to believe that it can be cured.

In the beginning the poor were enlisted in the cause of nationalism by being told that imperialist exploitation was the cause of their misery. Sovereignty came, but their misery continued. Sometimes it grew worse. It was true, of course, that the first regimes to inherit power in independent Middle Eastern countries often represented a wealthy oligarchy. But in this part of the world, not even those who call for a change of ruling groups and a reorganization of the economy can bring about an early end of poverty. What is actually needed are patience, hard work, self-discipline, and a profound change of values, even enforced sac-

² George F. Kennan, "America and the Russian Future," *Foreign Affairs*, April 1951, p. 353.

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rifices. These are harsh demands. Yet the rapidly growing numbers of the poor, and of a dissident, educated, would-be salariat without jobs, have convinced the dominant salaried middle class that it must either employ the apparatus of government to deal with poverty or perish.

The Faces of Socialism

If socialism has produced few ideological theoreticians in the Middle East, it is perhaps because socialism has come about through necessity rather than reasoned conviction. The result often is an unsure grasp of political and social problems. Few socialists are yet knowledgeable in dealing with the transformation that was already revolutionizing politics, economies, and societies even before socialists first appeared on the Middle Eastern scene.

The use of governmental power unchecked by a philosophic commitment to the freedom and welfare of the majority has, however, sometimes resulted in a Middle Eastern "socialism" that benefits only the few. Some leaders have nationalized foreign enterprises merely for the sake of political expediency or even as a substitute for new investments, thereby creating new employment only in the displacement of foreigners. Governmental organization and control thus become a profit-sharing system whose benefits are restricted to those who hold political stock in the ruling group. Others, like Ataturk, have employed government initiative primarily for strengthening the power of the nation-state and its technocratic elite rather than augmenting the welfare of the majority.

These forms of "socialism," however, are yielding increasingly to a much more far-reaching variety. It is becoming more difficult in the Middle East to avoid giving socialism a social (and not merely a nationalist) content. Let us look at one of the Middle East's major socialist parties—the Arab Socialist Resurrectionist Party, commonly called the *Ba'th* Party³—and one of the major practitioners of Middle Eastern socialism, Gamal abd al-Nasser, to see what roads are being taken.

³ Its full name in Arabic: *Hizb al-ba'th al-arabi al-ishtiraki*.

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The *Ba'th* Party grew out of a merger in 1953 of two parties: the Arab Resurrectionist Party, founded in 1947 by the Christian Arab Michel Aflaq (who quit the communist party in 1944) and the Moslem Arab Salah al-Din Bitar; and the Socialist Party founded by the lawyer Akram Hourani in 1950. The *Ba'th*'s constitution is the program of "a national, populist, revolutionary movement fighting for Arab unity, freedom, and socialism."⁴ Its nationalism is marked by its devotion, not to any particular Arab state, but to the Arab people as a whole, combatting "all other denominational, factional, parochial, tribal or regional loyalties." Its headquarters are now in Damascus, but they "may be transferred to any other Arab city if required by the national interest." The resurrection of which the party speaks gives Islam a special but subordinate place: "The Arab nation is distinguished by its special merit, revealed by its repeated awakenings. It is marked by the abundance of its vitality and inventiveness, and its tendency toward reform and resurgence." Islam is never mentioned by name; the implication seems to be that it belongs to the era of an earlier awakening.

This socialist party begins its programmatic statement by declaring that "socialism will guarantee the continuous growth of the nation in its spiritual and material development; and it will guarantee close brotherliness among its individual members." The *Ba'th* Party "is a revolutionary party: it believes that its main goals of reawakening Arab nationalism and building socialism cannot be achieved except by revolution and struggle. The party believes that to rely on gradual evolution and partial reform threatens these goals with failure."

Although the party in its revolutionary goals is concerned with "all intellectual, economic, social, and political aspects of life," its constitution says nothing about necessary first steps to these ends, but leaps at once into a world of free democracy and

⁴ For an English translation, see both Leonard Binder, "The Constitution of the Arab Resurrection (*Ba'th*) Socialist Party of Syria," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1959, pp. 195-200, and the corrections of this translation by Nicholas L. Heer and Howard E. Koch, Jr., *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 1959, pp. 487-489. The translation in this chapter is based directly on the original text, *Sharh dustur hizb al-ba'th al-arabi al-ishtiraki* (no publisher or date), and hence differs occasionally from both of these English versions.

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socialist welfare. Government will be “representative and constitutional,” and elected in “free” and “honest” elections; administration will be “decentralized,” the judiciary “will be protected from and independent of every other authority.” “Intellectual labor is one of the most sacred kinds of labor. It will be incumbent upon the state to protect intellectuals and scholars and to encourage them.” At the same time, workers will participate in the management of factories, and, in addition to wages fixed by the state, will share in the profits. Land will be redistributed: large industries and utilities nationalized; ownership and inheritance, “within the limits of national rights,” are otherwise “natural and protected rights”; the state will both require and guarantee employment; “comprehensive” economic planning will be the order of the day.

Except for a great deal of talk about “revolution and struggle” little attention is given to the means for transforming society into something better. The talk instead is about the need for unity. In a collection of speeches and editorials by the *Ba'th*'s chief ideologist, Michel Aflaq, this need is reiterated time and again.⁵ “Freedom, socialism, and unity are fundamental aims and equal in importance. One cannot be separated or postponed from the rest. But there is also no doubt [so runs the next sentence] that unity, which expresses the all-inclusive Arab character, has a priority and a prime significance which Ba'thists should not disregard.⁶ Or, “socialism is the body and unity the spirit.”⁷ But somehow the spirit always overshadows the flesh: “The problem of the distribution of wealth . . . is a critical problem which occupies first place in our thought and struggle, but we never regard it as the original problem. It rather stands in the way of perceiving the real problem . . . reviving the spirit of our nation. . . .”⁸ The political chief of the party, Akram Hourani, resolves the matter on purely pragmatic grounds. Any person, he writes, irrespective

⁵ *Ma'rikat al-masir al-wahid* (*The Battle for a Common Destiny*) Beirut, Dar al-Adab, 1958.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18. Or see the two sentences following each other on p. 37: “In accordance with our single perspective on the Arab cause, we do not believe it possible to separate Arab unity and socialism. Arab unity is higher and superior in the hierarchy of values than socialism.”

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

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of motives, who divides the national front at this stage assists imperialism. The motto shall be "more devotion and unity." The resolution of disagreements about methods and plans for Arab welfare must await victory.⁹

The compelling need to fashion national unity in Middle Eastern countries, as well as the unresolved conflicts over national interests among Middle Eastern socialists, continues to make socialism ancillary to nationalism. Increasingly, however, its connection with nationalism is becoming closer and more secure. When Hourani wrote the editorial just quoted, Syria was being severely shaken by internal conspiracies and foreign pressures. At such a moment, and such moments have been frequent since World War II, Middle Eastern socialists sometimes shrank from dividing the nation by pushing for reallocation of power and benefits, or even merely by clearly outlining the sacrifices required before socialism can benefit the many. That attitude is changing. Since 1958, the severe political conflicts within Syria and Iraq, and between these and several other Arab states and Egypt, have never been over the meaning of nationalism alone, but invariably also over the adoption of socialism.

This change is especially evident in the performance of President Nasser. As late as 1959, he still spoke feelingly of the problem of finding his way: The Egyptian "revolution (*thawrah*)," said Nasser, "must be understood, in reality, not as a simple change of the individuals in power—this would be a coup d'etat (*inqilab*)—but as the attempt to change the foundations of society. If we examine the state of the country in the light of the past seven years, we must frankly admit that the revolution has not been achieved. It is today only at the threshold. . . . The revolution carried out by the Egyptian army was not the reply to an urgent need of society. In truth, it was more than that—a reaction to a mortal danger, gathering all the forces of the country

⁹ *al-Ba'th* (Damascus weekly) March 23, 1957. Even at such a point socialists remain clearly distinguishable from another group which uses the word "social" ('*ijtama'i*—an adjective referring to society) rather than "socialist" ('*cishiraki*—an adjective referring to cooperation) to describe itself. The Syrian National Social Party, like similar parties in France, Italy, and Spain, believes that if anything is needed, it is discipline and purification rather than freedom and reform.

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and mobilizing them for a decisive struggle. In any case, however, the army did not have any exact idea of the needs and aspirations of the people, and years of experiment and error were required before we could learn what these were. . . . Though it felt the need for a radical change in society and state, the army knew neither the way nor the means of achieving this; it was completely lacking in experience and preparation.¹⁰

With all his candor, Nasser is too modest in suggesting that he knew no more in 1959 than in 1953 when he wrote the *Philosophy of the Revolution*. To be sure, he has not yet become a philosopher-king, and there are as yet no Middle Eastern or foreign theoreticians who have dealt with the issues that men like Nasser encounter in transforming their own society.¹¹ Nasser and his colleagues have not yet written more clearly than the *Ba'th* Party about socialism, but since about 1956 it may at least be said that his practice has been more explicit and more far-reaching than his theory. He, like other governing leaders drawn from the new middle class, has discovered that rulers can no longer avoid giving priority to the pressure from below for opportunity and status. Socialism for the sake of a technocratic elite, as in Ataturk's Turkey, is no longer enough. Those who mean to avoid the extremes of communism and neo-Islamic totalitarianism are left with only three choices: temporary survival through repression; temporary adventurism through ultra-nationalism; or hard work over a long time, even if marred by repression and demagoguery, to achieve welfare for the many. All three roads demand national unity. All three are easy to justify in the name of national unity. Even welfare-minded leaders can neglect the claims of nationalism only at their peril. But, as we have already observed in Chapter 10, nationalism can help to mobilize a nation, but it cannot keep nationalists alive.

Some Middle Eastern leaders, for example Tunisia's Bourguiba and Morocco's Ben Barka, early recognized the need for giving

¹⁰ Gamal abd al-Nasser in an interview with *al-Ahram*, Cairo, July 2, 1959.

¹¹ The American socialist leader Norman Thomas says of his conversation with Nasser: "He is clearly an advocate of the welfare state," but "I questioned the President about his understanding of democratic socialism and got no very clear answer." ("Notes on Socialism in the Middle East," *Dissent*, Summer 1958, p. 250.)

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nationalism a social content.¹² Nasser, who has appeared to be much less consistent, may therefore be worth studying in this regard. Within a year after the July 1952 revolution, Nasser had written that “we are going through two revolutions, . . . a political revolution by which [a people] wrests the right to govern itself from the hand of tyranny . . . and a social revolution, involving the conflict of classes, which settles down when justice is secured for the citizens of the united nation.” He anticipated inconsistencies: “It was not within our power to stand on the road of history like a traffic policeman and hold up the passage of one revolution until the other had passed by in order to prevent a collision. The only thing possible to do was to act as best we could and try to avoid being ground between the millstones, . . . however contradictory our actions might at times appear.”¹³

The “Six Objectives of the Revolution”—“elimination of imperialism and its helpers, elimination of feudalism, elimination of monopoly and its domination of the government, the establishment of universal social justice, the formation of a strong, patriotic, national army, and the creation of sound democratic life”—were constantly kept before the public. The need for “work, sweat, and effort” over a period of “many years” remained a steady theme in Nasser’s speeches. Democracy, it was made clear, would come only gradually: “There will be democracy and freedom, but we must first be free from exploitation, despotism, and slavery. I cannot understand how there can be freedom if I am not free to find my bread and make a living, and free to find employment.”¹⁴ Socialism and cooperatives had immediate priority: “We consider that the state has tutelage over both private and public property, and the responsibility for the protection of the individual against all economic and social exploitation.”¹⁵ In 1959 the government undertook to finance 60 percent of the new projects during the following years, and thereby double Egypt’s

¹² The views and activities of these two leaders are discussed in detail in Chapters 14 and 15.

¹³ *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, pp. 39-44.

¹⁴ Nasser, in a speech broadcast over the Egyptian Home Service, April 30, 1954.

¹⁵ Nasser, in a speech broadcast over the Egyptian Home Service, August 9, 1959.

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standard of living within a decade. In the meantime, it continued to subsidize the four staples of the Egyptian poor—tea, sugar, wheat, and kerosene. By 1962, Nasser had nationalized all large Egyptian enterprises, expanded land reform, and placed all important sectors of the economy under the control of socialist planners. He also raised taxes to 90 percent on incomes above \$23,000 (£E 10,000), placed workers on company boards of directors, and introduced profit-sharing for employees.

The West's major encounters with Nasser have drawn attention primarily to his nationalism. It was easy to miss the socialist features that were connected even with the most dramatic nationalist events. These critical moments demonstrate how much the progress of socialism in the Middle East depends on the successful or at least fortuitous solution of nationalist grievances, and also how this close connection between socialism and nationalism can inhibit rational long-range planning.

When Nasser startled the world by acquiring arms from the Soviet Bloc, he also used the Bloc to an even larger extent as a source of credits for the economic reconstruction of Egypt. When Nasser suddenly reacted to the biting American withdrawal of a previously offered loan by nationalizing the Suez Canal Company, he put into execution merely sooner than expected a plan then already under study for acquiring additional local revenues for economic development through ownership of the canal. After the Anglo-French Israeli invasion of Egypt came the Egyptianization of foreign banks, insurance companies, and import firms, all of which made the Egyptian state a still weightier factor in the control of the Egyptian economy. It made the next step easier. The Industrial Organization Law of April 1958 allowed the government to consolidate standing enterprises, to establish guaranteed monopolies for private or public firms, and to control the type, amount, and quality of all goods to be produced.¹⁶ When Nasser attempted during the 1950's to persuade or force other Arab states to join with him in the establishment of a single, united Arab state, he was motivated in part by the undeniable fact that only such a state would possess sufficient domestic re-

¹⁶ Law No. 21, *Official Journal, United Arab Republic*, No. 7 bis A, April 29, 1958.

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sources to allow Arabs of the entire region to make rapid economic progress.

The socialism of the newly independent and underdeveloped countries may look strange to an orthodox socialist. It looks less so if one compares it to the actual evolution of many Western European socialist parties whose ideology in recent decades has, as in the Middle East, often become indistinguishable from the general concepts of the welfare state. The principal support of such socialists now also comes from the salaried middle class, and their principal political concerns are also often nationalist.¹⁷ Middle Eastern states have, however, more unfinished nationalist business.

There are also additional significant differences between Western and Middle Eastern socialism. Socialists in the West have little to say about the accumulation of capital and for some time now have aimed their criticism at abuses of wealth and production. The socialists of the Middle East cannot offer anything but an equality of wants—poverty without exploitation. Nor are they ready to publicize the implications of their problem: it does not seem quite socialist (or nationalist) to depend for capital on the largesse of foreigners (some capitalist, some formerly imperialist, some communist, some socialist) and above all on the sacrifices of the great majority of one's own workers and peasants.

Middle Eastern socialism has never worried about an issue that has long constituted a theoretical and practical problem for Western socialists, and has become a matter of dogma for Soviet communists. No Middle Eastern socialist movement insists on calling itself the representative of the working class. Such movements in the Middle East are always in fact, and usually in theory, based on an alliance among the new middle class, the workers, and peasants, with the first group clearly in charge. This is true even of the most radical socialist movements. As a result, an entire mythology concerning the historical role of the working class has been avoided, although another populist mythology concerning an undifferentiated "general will" tends to take its place,

¹⁷ It was, after all, the Socialist Premier Guy Mollet who enlisted France in the military campaign against Egypt in 1956, in part in order to help preserve French colonial controls in Algeria.

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though with few illusions on the part of the guiding leadership.

Socialists in the Middle East are not burdened with the dogmatic assumption that private ownership of the means of production is the exclusive or inevitable source of exploitation. They are, of course, eager to fashion the means of production, but while this task is unfinished, they are essentially indifferent to property relations. They are skeptical of the virtues of private enterprise, but are not opposed in principle to any form of private enterprise that is productive and non-exploitative. Their socialism invariably envisages a mixed economy, with the government, however, clearly in charge of the mixture. What is even more important, they are alert to the fact that governmental enterprise can also be corrupting, unprogressive, and exploitive.

If Middle Eastern socialism thus tends to be undogmatic, it still lacks sufficient practical theory (in common with everyone else) for the rapid but non-totalitarian development of backward areas. If it lacks adequate theoreticians, it is at least in the hands of politicians who are responsive, much of the time, to real needs.

Socialism in the Middle East is post-communistic. This is a fact of enormous significance. In contrast to both the West and the Soviet Union, all socialist parties were founded later than the communist parties, and almost everywhere they have become more powerful than the latter.¹⁸ Socialism has a competitive advantage because its nationalist loyalty is beyond doubt, and, unlike its European counterparts, works not merely for amelioration but also for radical changes in the social structure. Because the overthrow of the landlords and the rise of the new middle class turned out to be a startlingly simple and almost entirely bloodless affair, there has been no major reaction against socialism as an ideology. Except from the communists and neo-Islamic extremists, who proclaim a "socialism" of their own, criticism has been largely directed toward performance and personalities.

It is, however, a socialism that has not yet received its full test: it calls for sacrifices now for the sake of welfare later, for authoritarianism today in return for democracy tomorrow. We have dis-

¹⁸ Cf. Sidney Lens, "A Report on Asian Socialism," *Dissent*, Winter 1955, pp. 56-65. Also Saul Rose, *Socialism in South Asia*, London, 1959, especially pp. 263-267.

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cussed elsewhere the crucial problems that socialism will eventually have to face.¹⁹ We note here only that if the attempt to create a socialism for the many is only partly successful, there can easily be a reversion to a "socialism" for the few and demagoguery for the many. Middle Eastern socialists will need to prove their capacity, under conditions of great scarcity, to use power and share sacrifices ascetically without being tempted to convert their ideology into that brand which German fascists called "national socialism."

¹⁹ Chapter 11 discusses the tension between power and freedom; Chapters 13-16, the risks and opportunities in the instruments involved; Chapter 17, the possible costs.