
The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa

Manfred Halpern

September 1963

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A REPORT PREPARED FOR
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PROJECT RAND

The RAND Corporation

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P R E F A C E

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A CONTINUING research objective of the Social Science Department of The RAND Corporation has been to explore the interrelation and interaction of military and sociopolitical developments, with a view to gaining a better understanding of the sources and context of possible future conflicts. Particularly for areas that today are in the process of revolutionary transformation, it is essential that we assess the political environment, the pace and direction of social change, the orientation and aspirations of peoples and their leaders, and the implications of developing regional alignments.

One such area is the tier of Moslem countries stretching from Morocco to Pakistan. Recognizing the need for further research into the political and social transformation of the Middle East, The RAND Corporation in 1958 asked Professor Manfred Halpern to undertake the present study. This Report not only examines the fundamental forces at work in the social and political development of the Middle East, but also attempts to identify those problems and issues that are likely to affect United States interests and future relations with the countries of that important region.

The study was conducted under the sponsorship of U.S. Air Force Project RAND. Professor Halpern's research benefited substantially by a fourteen-month field trip supported by Princeton University.

Although the Report makes no policy recommendations, it is being made available to policymakers and planners in U.S. agencies in the belief that they will find it informative and useful.

S U M M A R Y

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TODAY's Middle Eastern revolution is not merely a revolution to change rulers or to meet rising expectations. The cumulative growth of ideas, production, and power generated outside the Islamic system has penetrated that system and is tearing apart its repetitive pattern of balanced tensions. An ancient system connecting man, God, and society is falling apart, and the new forces are still too far out of balance, sometimes even out of touch, with the old and with each other to constitute a stable and resilient new pattern.

The only unit which has possessed sufficient social, economic, and moral strength to survive all the past vicissitudes of Islamic history—the patriarchal family and its emanations, the self-sustaining village and tribe—is ceasing to be the secure nucleus of Islamic life. With improved health measures, such a family becomes too large for the land it has traditionally occupied. With the coming of industrialization, individuals tend to go wherever jobs can be found. Kinship groups are no longer adequate in size or organization to serve as effective units for collective bargaining with the rest of the world. They cannot overcome their present ignorance and poverty unless they participate in a larger world of new skills and markets.

The new nation-states in the Middle East are so far no more stable than their predecessors, since the new ideologies often divide kin and neighbor from each other. Escape from the period of revolutionary turmoil is also hindered by the lack of resources: in almost all of these countries population is growing more rapidly than production, aspirations more rapidly than accomplishment.

[A]

SUMMARY

Social transformation demands analysis that is not parochial. This is a point that needs especially to be made in a study of the Middle East, where the problem of making new choices used to be debated as the issue of "Westernization." Historically, that is indeed how change began. The transformation of the Middle East did not originate, as in Europe, with the rise of new social classes or the growth of new forms of production. These came later, as the fruits of change. The metamorphosis of the Middle East began with the efforts of sultans, whether in Constantinople, Cairo, or Rabat, to maintain themselves, their ideas, and their empires intact by copying Western instruments of defense. Westernization made its mark even to the extent of supplying Middle Eastern states with governing institutions such as constitutions and parliaments.

By now, however, the issue is no longer Westernization from outside but locally-rooted "modernization." Before the modern age began, it was possible to arm, and become more prosperous and more powerful than any neighbor, without changing one's mind about anything one's ancestors held dear. Today, the price of knowledge, status, and power for Middle Eastern countries is conversion to an entirely new outlook. It is not feasible to buy the weapons and learn the techniques of modern warfare, and yet preserve ancient traditions. The Ottomans had this illusion. The new Turks knew that they had to abandon it.

Although certain religious conservatives and secular extremists continue to blame the West for the fact that they must face these issues, the fight is no longer primarily between the modern West and the medieval Middle East. The conflict now takes place among and within Middle Easterners themselves, and until they have dealt with the roots of their problem, change in their region will continue to be frequent, sudden, discontinuous, and violent.

* * *

Today, a new salaried middle class is emerging and is seizing control of Middle Eastern governments. Unlike the traditional bourgeoisie, it is eager to modernize society and the body politic no less than the economy. By stabilizing laws, instilling produc-

[B]

SUMMARY

tion-mindedness, creating new skills, raising purchasing power, increasing savings and capital investments, improving transport and communications, the new salaried middle class could succeed in expanding opportunities for an independent bourgeoisie. By independent we mean a bourgeoisie free of government as its principal contractor or controller, as well as self-reliant enough not to force the government to become its principal agent.

Leadership in all areas of Middle Eastern life is increasingly being seized by a class of men inspired by non-traditional knowledge, with a core of salaried civilian and military politicians, organizers, administrators, and experts. In its tasks and objectives, however, this new middle class differs from its counterpart in the industrialized states. The Middle East moved into the modern administrative age before it reached the machine age. Its salaried middle class attained power before it attained assurance of status, order, security, or prosperity. In the Middle East, the salaried new middle class therefore uses its power not to defend order and property but to create them—a revolutionary task that is being undertaken so far without any final commitment to any particular system of institutions.

Revolutionary change need not come through violence, however. One of the most remarkable, and remarkably neglected, phenomena of modern history is the near absence of violence that has marked the revolutions in all Middle Eastern countries where, since 1950, the new middle class has come to power. In Egypt, for example, a landed ruling class was economically dispossessed, socially displaced, and politically overthrown. A new social class took its place, the greater part of the economy was nationalized or at least placed under effective state control, the legal basis of authority and the structure and functions of political institutions were fundamentally altered, and a religion-bound culture was secularized, all at the cost of less than twenty lives.

This absence of violence alone, however, is not sufficient evidence of stability, nor does it signify that the fundamental revolution of Middle Eastern society has come to an end. If the new middle class fails to consolidate its authority, to achieve internal cohesion and social progress, and its factions engage

[C]

SUMMARY

in ruthless competition for the support of the rural and urban masses, the future is bound to be one of fearful unrest.

The new rulers have extraordinary opportunities. It is unlikely that either the peasants or the urban masses soon will generate leadership and institutions adequate to cope with their problems. While the collaboration of the peasantry is essential, the leadership and organization of constructive peasant action can come at this stage of history only from the new urban middle class.

If the landed peasants neither can nor will stand still in body or spirit, the class of landless workers as a whole has even greater cause to be restless. The latter class consists mainly of landless rural laborers many of whom have been transplanted to the cities. Most city-born laborers have fathers who migrated from the countryside. In the cities they are in touch with change where it is first perceived and experienced. Quickened by hopes of a better life, they are readily available for recruitment by the new salaried middle class—the first class eager to accept and manage social change.

Such upheavals and rootlessness would seem to provide a rich soil for the growth of Communism in the Middle East. Yet communist parties in the area from Morocco to Pakistan are all 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. The leading communist parties of the Arab East today are in Syria, with 1,500 members, and in Iraq, Egypt, and Sudan, with about 1,000 members each.

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

[D]

SUMMARY

The communist parties of the Middle East suffer from being under Soviet discipline, which limits their appeal 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.

Unlike European communist parties, communist parties in the Middle East have 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. Party membership 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 therefore affect their size and internal cohesion more quickly and more deeply than they could any class-bound communist party in Western Europe.

The largest movements of the Middle East are those concentrating on nationalist aspirations. Hence men eager for political action or personal careers are not likely to join communist parties, however nationalist in pretense. They are far more likely to cast their lot with one of 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 parties contributes to the perpetuation of their weakness. By emphasizing their own endorsement of nationalist objectives and underplaying their 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 role and character of Middle Eastern communist parties are changing. Present communist strategy places a premium on non-violent action as most likely to marshal broad support for eliminating or neutralizing American influence in the area. 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

[E]

SUMMARY

change the character of communist parties. A hard core with faith and discipline will probably remain orthodox. But as time passes, will the communist movement continue to attract men eager for a quick and radical overturn of society?

Changes of marching orders during the past decade have already 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.

If communist leaders continue to postpone revolution, 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 threaten Western interests. 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.

Too much optimism would be a mistake. 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.

* * *

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. Socialism has a competitive ad-

[F]

SUMMARY

vantage because its nationalist loyalty is beyond doubt, and unlike its European counterpart, 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.

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.

* * *

Certain special forms of nationalism are the principal political manifestations of social change in the Middle East. The basic problem confronting nationalists after the achievement of political independence is social change. Men who start from the common background of a closed traditional society discover that the social transformation of the modern age leaves them defenseless as individuals, believers, and members of groups, unless they fashion a new society and a new body politic.

Appeals to nationalism alone have their limits. 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

[G]

SUMMARY

with foreign nations, will not keep the imbalances that mark Middle Eastern society from toppling governments and nations. The real issue is whether Middle Eastern leaders will be able to use national aspirations to organize new institutions large enough and flexible enough to deal with social change.

* * *

Soldiers have governed a majority of the Middle Eastern countries almost continuously for at least a millennium. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that during 1962 the army ruled five of the eighteen countries between Morocco and Pakistan and constituted the most crucial organizational support of the government in at least eight others. Since 1930, military coups have overturned governments on at least thirty occasions in this area.

What is novel in the present-day Middle East is not control by army officers. What is new are the groups for which the army speaks and the interests it represents. In this century, army coups have ceased to mirror merely the ambitions of individuals; they reflect larger forces and issues. The army has become the instrument of the new middle class.

At present, army officers in most Middle Eastern countries are drawn almost entirely from the new literate middle class. Enlisted men are almost entirely drawn from illiterate tribesmen and peasants, and have no chance of promotion from the ranks. As literacy spreads and universal conscription is increasingly enforced, the divisions of society will be increasingly reflected through all the ranks of the army. If these divisions remain unbridged, and the army's leadership and its rank-and-file divide to fight for opposing causes, the army may suffer a prolonged eclipse both as a political and as a military institution. In that event there may be a vacuum into which the individual opportunist or fanatic can move.

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The growing potential for conflicts among national and ideological interests, and among the rich states and the poor, could make the Middle East more than ever a breeding area of sub-

[H]

SUMMARY

version, assassinations, and local wars. Foreign powers may be able to keep each other from intervening directly, but scarcely from intervening clandestinely under such conditions, and the power with the least interest in regional stability would have the greatest advantage.

There is another alternative. The richer and more stable Arab countries could take the lead in fashioning bonds that would, by a common sharing of resources and enlarged freedom of regional migration, overcome the perils to rich and poor alike of living in an economic and political slum. If such an initiative is too much to hope for, then outsiders interested in the progress and stability of this area will have much more to compensate for than they ever imagined, not only economically, but in preventive and constructive political action.

Though the Middle East has ceased to be a military, political, or social vacuum, the actions of Middle Eastern states in international affairs remain largely shaped by four weaknesses of which they themselves are acutely aware. Although they are now sovereign, independent states, they know that they remain dependent on the great powers for capital, arms, and technical skills. Although the great majority of them are united by common history, culture, language, and religion, they are rent by so many regional conflicts that they have not yet been able to strengthen themselves by sharing their resources or by dealing, as a unit, with the great powers. There are also divisions within each country, far deeper than in any Western nation, between the very rich and the very poor, the powerful and the powerless, religious traditionalists and secular modernists, radicals, moderates, and extremists, so that most Middle Eastern countries have not yet achieved a popular consensus on the methods and objectives of government. Finally, the nations of the Middle East are uncertain and inexperienced in dealing with a world in motion, having until quite recently lived in a world that was sure of its truths, rituals, and institutions because it knew itself possessed of God's final revelation.

The majority of politically active Middle Easterners has decided to draw upon both the West and the Soviet bloc for support to achieve the goals of their national revolution. Thus

SUMMARY

the West retains a vital link even with the neutralists of this area. For the majority of politically active Middle Easterners, the West remains the main source of values, knowledge, material assistance and inspiration, and a closer approximation of the style of life they want to live than the U.S.S.R. Middle Easterners may borrow techniques from the U.S.S.R., but exceedingly few bother to learn Russian, and fewer still know anything about Soviet culture. They have studied even Marxism primarily in the West and from Western sources. Their criticism of Western actions is usually based on Western values.

The most relevant question, in relation to the security and welfare of the Middle East and ourselves, is not whether the West should ally itself with one Middle Eastern country rather than another, or commit itself exclusively to a particular reformer. The challenge is to recognize the full scope of the revolutions now transforming the Middle East and to help all its nationalists cope successfully with rapid social change.

FOREWORD



The Substance of This Book

THE AREA from Morocco to Pakistan is in the midst of a profound revolution. This book attempts to analyze the causes and character of that revolution; examine the forces, groups, ideas, and institutions now in motion; and estimate the direction which politics may take in the future in the Middle East and North Africa.

I have not been content, therefore, merely to summarize recent insights into the nationalist revolution now in progress in this area, or into the ensuing "revolution of rising expectations." These two revolutions have been particularly dramatic in the Middle East and North Africa. The number of newly independent nations has almost tripled in this region during the past twenty years. The revolution of rising expectations is being accelerated by the pressure of a population that has tripled since the turn of the century but still cultivates only four percent of the region's total land area.

The revolution being examined here is broader and runs deeper than nationalism and its discontents. The five parts into which this book is divided define the scope of the Middle Eastern and North African transformation. First, a way of life that endured nearly 1300 years is being destroyed by challenges for which, as a system of faith and action, it was almost entirely unprepared. Second, a new social system with new social values is taking the place of the traditional society. Third, a new range

FOREWORD

of ideological choices has opened up for a new kind of elite. Fourth, new political instruments are at the elite's disposal. Finally, the fact that new men are using new means to attain new ends in their attempts to deal with the politics of social change entails revolutionary consequences at home and abroad. Only by understanding the totality of this revolution will we be able to see why the cost of change, or of avoiding change, runs so high in the Middle East and North Africa.

By concentrating on the comparative analysis of changing internal politics, this study is also intended to contribute to the understanding of international relations. In order to appreciate the opportunities, driving forces, and limitations of the international system, it is not enough to attend to those dramatic moments when the interests of one nation clash with the interests of another or to appreciate the changing structure of the international system. The world is steadily and rightly concerned with the difficult and still tenuous efforts of the great powers to make large-scale war too costly. But because a truce between the great powers persists, international relations are today being profoundly transformed mainly through *internal* politics. The balance of power, and the orientation, health and stability of the international system, are vitally affected by the success or failure of local elites in dealing with the social, political, economic, intellectual, and psychological modernization of their countries. At the same time, no rulers can pursue these tasks in sovereign isolation. Increasingly, the choice which all of them face is whether to achieve such complex and difficult domestic goals through free international collaboration, or whether to suffer such social change to be directed through the subversive intervention of the stronger nations in the unstable and violent internal politics of the unsuccessful. In the latter case, domestic failure thus also helps to enlarge the areas of hostile confrontation among the great powers.

Such an emphasis on the domestic forces that mold the attitudes and interests of nations is perhaps especially required in approaching an area of the world where people often remain obsessed by the memories of particularly unhappy conflicts with outside powers and with each other; an area where the West has

FOREWORD

been late and often unskillful in adjusting itself to the changing pattern of international relationships; an area where both Middle Easterners and Westerners have barely begun to deal with the political problems of social change.

The Need for Policy-oriented Research Based on Inadequate Data

It must be admitted at the outset, however, that anyone who presumes to analyze the changing forces at work in the Middle East and North Africa treads on uncommonly precarious ground. The systematic study of comparative politics and the art of estimating future trends are themselves quite new.¹ Analyses that focus on the changing present in the Middle East and North Africa for the sake of estimating future forces and trends are also hampered by our lack of knowledge about this area's past. Although the traditions of medievalism in Islam have been yielding to the modern age only during the past century and their long shadows still affect the vision of today's Moslems, it remains difficult to assess that legacy in terms of its contemporary meaning. We know much more about the Islamic community's inherited theology than about the actuality of its past beliefs; much more about its inherited political utopias than its past political practices. "We do not know the social history of Islam," writes the French historian Braudel, and he adds in despair, "Shall we ever know it?"²

We are scarcely better informed about the present. As H. A. R. Gibb has written: "The historian of the Arab world in the twentieth century . . . has at his disposal few—and in all cases incomplete—materials of a genuinely historical nature upon which

¹ On the present state of comparative politics, see Harry Eckstein and David Apter, *Comparative Politics: A Reader*, New York, 1963. None of the most active and organized practitioners of the art of estimating, namely those in the American government, has yet published his reminiscences.

² *La méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, 1949, p. 637, cited by Robert Brunschwig, in "Perspectives," *Studia Islamica*, 1953, p. 5. For a detailed inventory of our ignorance concerning the Ottoman Empire even during the last 200 years of its existence, see H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Volume 1, Part I, London, 1950, pp. 1-18, *passim*.

FOREWORD

to base his study of twentieth century trends. His facts hang in mid-air. But in all truth the situation is worse still. Even in relation to the twentieth century, political and diplomatic history has all but monopolized the interest of students or observers of the Middle East, to the exclusion of fact-finding studies on the actual phenomena and mechanisms of human life. . . . There is not one [volume] which traces the internal social and economic institutions [of Egypt] on the basis of the available documents. . . . The full and true history of the British Occupation has still to be written. . . . There is surprisingly little on the development of the [Arab] cities and their populations, and nothing at all on the evolution of the modern professional classes: doctors, lawyers, journalists, school teachers, industrialists, and civil servants. . . . Too often, also, the studies made by Arab writers other than novelists of the economic, educational, religious, and other institutions are tracts, more or less purposefully and skillfully designed to support a policy or a point of view.”³

Except that it takes too generous a view of political and diplomatic studies, this is a just complaint. There is scarcely a handful of books in any language that analyze the relationship between social, economic, and intellectual forces and contemporary political trends in the countries of the Arab world—east or west of the Suez Canal—or among the Turks, Iranians, Afghans, and Pakistanis along the northern tier.⁴

Even without these materials to draw on, an essay such as the present one must be attempted. The policy-maker and the concerned public need an analytical foundation for judgment before all the returns are in. If one waits until all is known and the die cast, knowledge may do no more than let the dead bury the dead.

³ H. A. R. Gibb, “Problems of Modern Middle Eastern History,” in *Report on Current Research, Spring 1956: Survey of Current Research on the Middle East*, edited by Anne W. Noyes, The Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C., 1956.

⁴ Twenty years ago, no one had ever written a book on American policy in the Middle East and North Africa, nor could any American be found teaching the contemporary politics, economics, or sociology of that region of the world. From its belated beginnings, the political exploration of the Middle East and North Africa has not progressed as quickly or systematically as that of Eastern Europe or the Far East. For a further examination of this backwardness, see Manfred Halpern, “Middle Eastern Studies: A Review of the State of the Field with a Few Examples,” *World Politics*, October 1962, pp. 108-122.

FOREWORD

To this extent, therefore, the study is policy-oriented. From incomplete knowledge of present forces and trends, it projects probable estimates of the future, since no policy-maker in the West or in the Middle East can escape making commitments upon this precarious ground.

The book, however, is addressed equally to those whose main concern is the increase of knowledge. There may be considerable advantage in giving priority to the construction of a broad outline map that will give us an overview of major Middle Eastern patterns and dynamics. It will teach us where to find the gaps in our knowledge, what questions we need to ask first, and which detailed studies are likely to prove to be the most crucial. A map, however imperfect, forces us to make explicit and to expose to criticism our basic assumptions about the lay of the land, its resources, and the direction of its traffic.

The Question of Method

This study rarely pauses to make explicit the methodological framework of its analysis, or the concepts and hypotheses that underlie its conclusion. To show how political, social, economic, and intellectual systems may be linked with one another, and how change is related to stability is a task demanding separate treatment and a language of its own. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that this study is not based merely on existing facts. It does not say simply, for example, that the Middle East has few political parties, that there is some talk, though less effort, to form a few more, and that it would therefore be premature to estimate just what political parties might be able to accomplish. The book goes further and asks what role parties must play if they are to be effective in creating a new political culture in the midst of rapid social transformation. What kind of structure must they build? What kind of functions must they be able to perform? What kind of problems are they likely to face? And then—returning to the existing political parties—how successful are particular countries likely to be in achieving political stability and modernization given the help (or lack of help) of an effective popular movement? The advantage of this type of

FOREWORD

analysis—exploring the structural and functional requirements no less than the actualities of a situation—is that it allows a more systematic treatment of the potentials of the situation, while it makes explicit the criteria of judgment involved.

This study also relies upon a second and related method for drawing broad generalizations from incomplete data. It proceeds on the assumption that institutions, groups, behavior, or ideas performing functionally equivalent roles in a similar context are comparable. Since an army in the Middle East, for example, acts like a political party, much that we have learned about parties can be used to illuminate the role of an army under such conditions. More generally, we are here exploring some sixteen countries that have experienced similar problems in passing from an Islamic past into the modern age. In other respects, systematic contrasts can usefully be drawn between one and another of these countries.

The concern for comparable roles and functions under similar conditions of social change forces us to reject the stereotyped meaning of such familiar labels as “moderate,” “extremist,” “leftist,” or “rightist,” drawn from the history of a different culture, and to ask anew what the major historical issues are about which a Middle Easterner may be a moderate or extremist. It may be idle, for example, to call “conservative” a Middle Eastern regime that does not encourage innovation and, hence rendered powerless to deal with a rapidly changing society, fails to conserve anything. In this part of the world, the meaning not only of “socialism” but of “society” is changing, while “political parties,” “armies,” and “parliaments” play unexpected roles. Even locally bred ideas and institutions no longer mean what they have always meant. Wherever Islam asserts itself as an active political force today, it is not in the form of a traditional religion but as a modern political ideology. The impact of Islam is therefore quite different from what it used to be.

The two methods of analysis on which this book chiefly relies can help us to enhance the range, accuracy, and relevancy of interpretation. They cannot fully compensate for our ignorance of facts, and much of what is said here still rests on selected examples rather than full and complete evidence. Such ex-

FOREWORD

amples, nonetheless, are intended in every case to be a convincing illustration that data in support of a particular hypothesis do exist. They are offered on the assumption that further research would reveal corroborative evidence in other parts of the region. Every hypothesis, however, remains a hypothesis without sufficient proof, so that others may find it possible either to alter or to disprove what has been offered here as further evidence comes to light.

Subjects Omitted

A number of topics vital to any thorough study of the politics of social change in the Middle East and North Africa has been omitted. I do not separately examine each Middle Eastern and North African country in detail to account for political developments within it, or to spell out all the variations between one and another. Many additional years' work by many hands would be required to assemble the necessary materials for the first time, and many times the space occupied here would be needed to examine even the most significant issues and events.

I have also had to overlook a number of area-wide phenomena that help to mold the process of social change. The growing liberation of women—psychologically, intellectually, socially, economically, and legally—is bound to alter the whole style and substance of Middle Eastern relationships. The energy of other important segments of society remains circumscribed. The independently creative or critical intellectual as yet still rarely raises his head. The university is in most countries still hobbled by state control, overwhelmingly large classes, and extremely small salaries. The primary and secondary schools remain greatly inadequate in number and quality. The press, with honorable exceptions, is frustrated by censorship or corrupted by venality and sensationalism. The judiciary is increasingly free to deal rationally and fairly with criminal and civil cases, but usually powerless to enter with the same spirit into cases dealing with political liberty and social values. The great ease of communication within and beyond the region through books, radio, and rapid transportation is creating a new psychic mobility and re-

FOREWORD

latedness. These factors already deeply affect the changing political culture of the Middle East and also the chances for the development of a stable plurality of autonomous centers of power. But none of them could be taken up here.

To analyze the intellectual, moral, and psychological climate of the Middle East, as it affects the relationship between leaders and followers, and between freedom and authority, is a task which, however useful to the present inquiry, demands a major investigation of its own. Such a study would also give more explicit and systematic treatment than this one to the cultural diversities within the Middle East and North Africa. The Saudi Arabian, whose heritage is the proud, parochial freedom of the desert, obviously has a different cast of mind from the Egyptian, who has for so long been dependent on the tyrannically corrupt rulers of a generous Nile; the trading Lebanese have different values from the mountaineers of land-locked Afghanistan. Such distinctions have already been assimilated within the range of problems and alternative courses examined under the topic of political modernization—the chief concern of the present book—but so far as these differences also affect styles and preferences of action, they must be given more attention at another opportunity.

The Place of Israel

Israel is not one of the states considered in this volume. At first, its exclusion seemed logical. This is not intended to be a textbook covering each country of this region, but a comparative study of the political modernization of a certain, interrelated portion of the Islamic community. Even the Arab-Israeli conflict is given only enough space to explain how it exacerbates or helps to distort the politics of social change in the area. Since nearly 95 percent of the population in the region from Morocco to Pakistan is Moslem in its religion and way of life,⁵ it seemed unfruitful constantly to interrupt the flow of thought about the

⁵ The principal religious minorities among the 230,000,000 people who live in this region are: 10,000,000 Hindus, 7,000,000 Christians and 2,500,000 Jews. However, about 30,000,000 Moslems belong to various heretical sects, while in Iran the heretical Shia form of Islam is the state religion.

FOREWORD

consequences of social change in Islamic society with the phrase "except in Israel."

Yet as the book progressed, it became apparent that Islam shared many problems with Israel. Like Islam, Israel presents a society whose modern, Westernized elite will have to learn how to assimilate an oriental majority. Both are intent upon creating secular states despite the presence of important religious political parties. One society faces the problem of converting Zionism, as the other must transform anti-colonialism, into a nationalism appropriate to a generation that has known neither exile nor foreign rule. Israel is challenged by the task of making Judaism relevant to a modern environment quite different from the one that has nourished it, either in Europe or in oriental countries, for the past two thousand years, and thus finding new sources for moral judgment. Moslems face the same challenge in Islam. Israel must renovate Hebrew, as other countries must Arabic, so that it can deal clearly with modern science, politics, and philosophy. Israel has the special opportunity of demonstrating whether large infusions of capital into an underdeveloped economy can succeed in raising both the political and economic standard of living. Its experiments with trade unions, cooperatives, and collectives are immediately relevant to the general social and economic problems of the area. Both Israel and the Arab countries, having declared their commitment to the ideas of the secular nation-state, will fall far short of that promise unless they come to treat the ethnic and religious minorities inside the state as equals.

No book has yet been written on Israeli politics in a perspective akin to that of the present work. When that too-long-delayed task has been accomplished, it would be most rewarding to develop comparisons and contrasts between the transformation of Israel and that of its neighbors.

*Middle Eastern Geography: A Matter of
Convenient Definition*

This study draws material primarily from the following countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan,

FOREWORD

Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. I have ignored the sheikhdoms and principalities of the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf since most of these small tribal societies have not yet experienced the problems or developed the institutions that lie at the center of my analysis. The oil-producing states of Kuwait, Bahrein, and Qatar are rapidly entering the modern age, but so little pertinent material concerning them was available that I had to exclude them from consideration.

Throughout, I have used the term "Middle East" to refer to the entire area from Morocco to Pakistan. I do not mean to cause old "Near Eastern" or new "West Asian" hands any more dismay than necessary. This usage is merely a matter of present convenience. Although I have sometimes reminded the reader of the area covered by referring to the "Middle East and North Africa," I have used the less cumbersome term "Middle East" consistently to indicate the whole region under discussion. The phrase "Arab world" refers here to the area from Morocco to the Sudan and thence to Iraq. The "Arab East" is separated at the Egyptian-Libyan frontier from the "Arab West," or the Maghrib of North Africa, which sometimes also receives separate mention.⁶

⁶ Every book dealing with the Middle East must face the fact that the sound of Middle Eastern languages cannot readily be transliterated into the Roman alphabet. There is an excellent and accurate system of transliteration adopted by the Library of Congress, involving dots below letters, dashes above letters, and two kinds of apostrophes. This is a necessary device for assuring communication among scholars. But one has to know Arabic to recognize Koran in Qur'ān and Saladin in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. I have elected to use a simplified form of the Library of Congress system and to give the common spellings of well-known names for the sake of the general reader.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



NOTHING in this book can be blamed on a lack of opportunities. After ten years in the Department of State, I had wished for a chance at last to describe in a single work the most significant forces and relationships of Middle Eastern and North African politics. I had hoped for a few years of comparative freedom from other work to re-examine the problems and my ideas about them, and also to test these views during a fourteen months' visit to two-thirds of the countries in this area. This book is the realization of hopes that once seemed almost extravagant.

I have benefited from the assistance and criticism of several RAND staff members. Jeffrey C. Kitchen encouraged, and with Victor Hunt and Hans Speier, helped to crystallize this project from the very beginning; Alexander L. George greatly facilitated its completion. These four, together with Bernard Brodie, Herbert Goldhamer, Paul Langer, and Herman B. Fredman, helped to sharpen the analysis by their criticism of an earlier draft. Paul Kecskemeti and Victor Hunt commented extensively on two successive drafts. If this book possesses any merits, it is to a considerable degree because I tried to come to terms with the persistent questions, objections, and suggestions offered by my RAND colleagues.

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If the book has virtues, none of these individuals and institutions can escape responsibility for them. For the faults that remain, of course, they bear no responsibility whatever. The opinions expressed below, taken as a whole, are mine alone.

CONTENTS



PREFACE	v
SUMMARY	A
FOREWORD	vii
The Substance of this Book	vii
The Need for Policy-oriented Research Based on Inadequate Data	ix
The Question of Method	xi
Subjects Omitted	xiii
The Place of Israel	xiv
Middle Eastern Geography: A Matter of Convenient Definition	xv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	xvii

PART I

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST AND THE CLAIMS OF THE PRESENT

1. THE INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY	3
The Present Setting: From Revolution to Revolution	3
The Political Community as a Religious Vision	5
The Political Community as a Historical Reality	5
Islam's Supreme Political Achievement	8
The Polarities of Folk Islam: Isolation and Conquest, Acquiescence and Rebellion	11
Ulema and Sultans: Antagonistic Collaboration between Vision and Power	15
Unity through Factionalism	18

CONTENTS

Saints, Intellectuals, and Soldiers Testing the Limits of the Islamic System	19
Islam as a Common Fate rather than a Common Faith	22
2. THE CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM	25
The Shattering of the Glass	25
The Problems of Reconstruction	30
The Age of Choice	35

PART II

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

3. KINGS, LANDLORDS, AND THE TRADITIONAL BOURGEOISIE: THE DECLINING ELITE	41
Prospects for Kings	41
“Feudalism” in the Middle East	43
The Frailty of the Traditional Urban Upper Class	45
4. THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS AS THE PRINCIPAL REVOLUTIONARY AND STABILIZING FORCE	51
The Birth of a New Class	51
Conflicts within the New Middle Class	60
The Relationship of the New Middle Class to Other Classes	67
Prospects for the New Middle Class	73
5. PEASANTS: THE SILENT MAJORITY AT THE THRESHOLD OF POLITICS	79
A Majority in Misery	79
Fatalism and Its Other Face—Rebellion	87
Toward a Solution of the Peasant’s Problems	97
6. WORKERS: THE GROWING TIDE OF THE UNSKILLED AND UNEMPLOYED	105

PART III

THE RANGE OF POLITICAL CHOICES

7. AMENDING THE PAST: REFORMIST ISLAM	119
The Failure of the Reformers of Islam	119
The Successful Reform of the Law of the Moslems	125
The Triumph of Secular Leadership	129

CONTENTS

8. RESURRECTING THE PAST: NEO-ISLAMIC TOTALITARIANISM	134
Native Totalitarianism: The Sources of Its Appeal	134
Tactics	140
Program	143
The Fate of a Totalitarian Party	148
The Varieties of Islamic Totalitarianism	150
The Potentialities of Islamic and Post-Islamic Totalitarianism	153
9. TOWARD A NEW AGE OF CERTAINTY: COMMUNIST TOTALITARIANISM	156
Islam and Communism	156
The Attractions of Marxism	159
The Attraction of the U.S.S.R. as a Model of Rapid Progress	162
The Attraction of Chinese Communist Models	165
Factors Hampering the Role of Communist Parties in the Middle East: Small Membership	168
Shifting and Unrewarding Communist Strategies	170
The Burden of Soviet Discipline	175
Lack of Internal Cohesion in Communist Parties	177
A Mistaken Communist Image of Middle Eastern Society	178
The Competition of Nationalist Movements	184
The Price of Rivalry	185
Factors Favorable for Communist Activities	186
The Potentials of Communism	192
10. FROM UNORGANIZED INSECURITY TO ORGANIZED INSECURITY: NATIONALISM	196
The Meaning of Nationalism	196
Nationalism as a Necessity	201
The Nation as an Accident	204
The Popularity of Nationalism	207
The Limitations of Nationalism	210
11. TRANSFORMING THE PRESENT: THE QUEST FOR FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY	214
The Radical Requirements of Democracy	214
Freedom and Authority in Traditional Islam	217
The Search for Democracy in the Middle East	221
The Authoritarian Road to Democracy	223

CONTENTS

The New Authoritarians and the Old Toward Representative Government	226 229
12. TRANSFORMING THE PRESENT: SOCIALISM FOR THE FEW, FOR THE MANY, OR FOR THE AGGRANDIZEMENT OF THE STATE?	235
The Tasks of Socialism in the Middle East	236
The Faces of Socialism	239

PART IV

INSTRUMENTS OF POLITICAL MODERNIZATION

13. THE ARMY	251
The Army's Traditional Role	251
From Praetorian Guard to Advance Guard	253
The Army's Special Virtues as a Political Instrument	257
The Size and Composition of the Military Bureaucracies	261
Contrasts in the History of Middle Eastern Armies	265
The Circumstances of Army Intervention	270
Limitations of Army Rule	271
The Army as a Partisan in Conflicts Within the New Middle Class and with Other Classes	274
Making Army Regimes Unnecessary	275
Probable Problems and Trends During the Next Decade	278
14. POLITICAL PARTIES	281
Political Parties as the Chief Architects of The New Political Culture	282
The Harnessing of Charisma	284
The Novelties of Voluntary Political Association	285
The Uses and Abuses of Ideology	287
Accountability in One-Party Regimes	291
Morocco and Tunisia: Modernizing Parties in Action	294
Egypt: Learning from Failure	304
Turkey: From the One-Party to the Multi-Party System	312
15. TRADE UNIONS	318
Obstacles to Effective Organization	318
The Trade Union under Governmental Control	320
The Trade Union as the Government's Junior Partner	324

CONTENTS

The Trade Union as an Independent Force	326
The Trade Union as Equal Partner of a Political Party	329
The Trade Union as a Sudden Avalanche	334
The Role of Trade Unions in the Political Modernization of the Middle East	335
16. THE CIVIL BUREAUCRACY	340
From Oriental to Modern Bureaucracy	340
Recruiting Bureaucrats: Too Many and Too Few	343
The Changing Status of Bureaucrats	345
The Role of the Bureaucracy in the Modernization of the Middle East	346

PART V

THE COST AND CONSEQUENCES OF MIDDLE EASTERN CHOICES DOMESTICALLY, REGIONALLY, AND INTERNATIONALLY

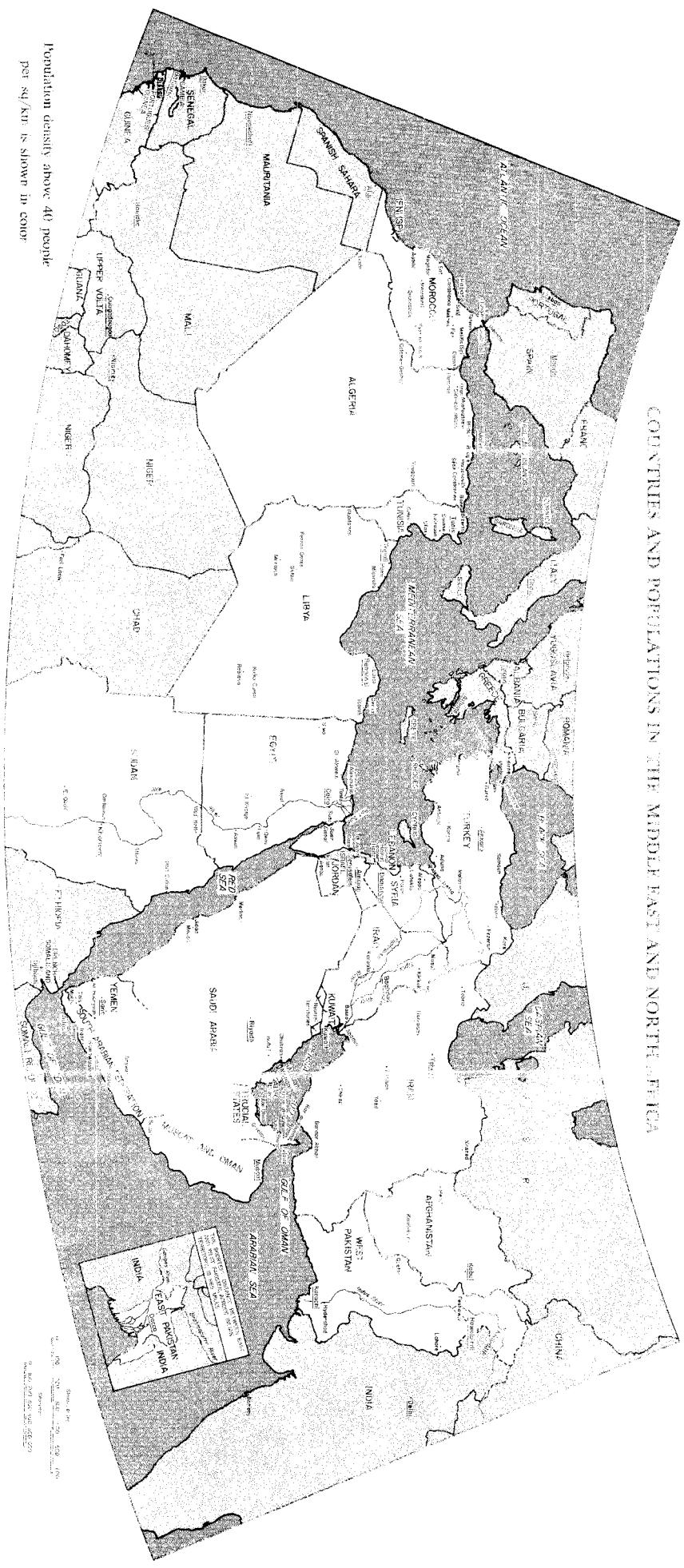
17. THE PRICE OF POLITICAL STABILITY	351
Problems of Decision-Making	351
The Economic Cost of Political Stability	356
To Set a Course	361
18. REGIONAL RIVALRY AND THE PROSPECTS FOR UNITY	365
Is There a Middle East?	365
Conflicts Within and Around National Frontiers	367
Nationalism vs. National Interests: The Struggle for Arab Unity	370
The Arab-Israeli Conflict	378
19. THE INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST	388
The Vulnerability of the Area	388
Defending the Middle East Militarily While Losing it Politically	393
The U.S.S.R. Enters Middle Eastern Politics	399
Roots of Neutralism	403
Opportunities and Limitations for Soviet Policy	406
The Relative Contributions of Neutralist and Pro-Western States to the Security of the Middle East	409
Limitations and Opportunities for Western Policy	414
INDEX	421

THE POLITICS OF
SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH AFRICA

PART I

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST AND THE CLAIMS OF THE PRESENT

COUNTRIES AND POPULATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA





CHAPTER 1

THE INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY



The Present Setting: From Revolution to Revolution

WITHIN the region from Morocco to Pakistan—the span of this study—there were only seven independent nations twenty years ago and the world was scarcely interested in them. The United States had diplomatic representatives in only five of the seven countries, the U.S.S.R. in only two. By 1963, eighteen countries in this region, with a total population of about 230,000,000, had become fully sovereign. Their problems filled front pages around the globe.

This nationalist revolution, dramatic and pervasive as it is, is only the political symptom of a more profound and yet unfinished social transformation of Asian and African society. This larger transformation involves not merely a change in rulers but a change in what men believe, how men act, and how men relate to each other.

To gain the political freedom to run one's own society is no mean achievement. Men who have lost their traditional faith and social structure have little chance of recovering or refashioning themselves or their society as long as foreigners control local political, economic, and intellectual institutions for alien ends. That is one powerful reason why the battle for national independence was everywhere given priority in Asia and Africa, even where the elimination of poverty or ignorance or exploitation was no less obvious a target.

The nationalist revolution has put Africans and Asians themselves in charge of the fire that is now melting and transmuting

LEGACY OF THE PAST

the form and substance of their faith and society. Can they put the resulting fragments together in a new form suitable to the modern world and the new expectations of the people? Asians and Africans are entering the modern age centuries later than the West, and hence are vulnerable to the superior power of others. These new nations are intent upon rapidly overcoming their poverty and powerlessness, yet most of them possess fewer resources and skills than those who took the road to modernization before them. More invidious frustrations and more intense conflicts than marked the modernization of the West are therefore likely to dramatize African and Asian politics as this majority of the world at last joins in making the transformation of man's existence a universal quest. It is in the context of this transformation that we explore the political tasks and choices facing the Islamic countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

Any study of transformation must begin at the beginning of change. In the case of Islam, there is a special profit to be gained from contrasting the Islamic past and present. Traditional Islam, like modern Islam, was a society almost continually beset by rivalries, assassinations, rebellions, and wars. Yet it survived over large areas as a single political system and always as an interrelated pattern of faith and action for nearly 1300 years. What was the secret of its extraordinary endurance amid almost constant instability? Why is a system that has proved itself so resilient in the past faced by revolution today?

An attempt to answer these questions in the first part of this inquiry may help to define with greater precision the character and scope of the forces of change which challenge the Moslems of the Middle East, and so clarify the range of policies that may therefore be relevant. Only by understanding the past will we see why the cost of change (or of avoiding change) runs so high in the Middle East.

It is appropriate to begin with the birth of Islam, for its official calendar starts not with the birth of its Prophet Mohammed but with Islam's first political act—the founding of the Community of Believers in A.D. 622.

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

The Political Community as a Religious Vision

Divine and therefore perfect, perfect and therefore complete, complete and therefore final, final and therefore unalterable—such was the constitution the Prophet Mohammed received for the Moslem community from God in the middle of the seventh century of our era. It was a constitution that did not separate the realm of God from that of Caesar, or the realm of ethics from the realm of law. As detailed in the Koran and the *Shari'a*—the corpus of Islamic jurisprudence—God's realm was not circumscribed. His word covered with equal authority matters of worship, ritual, politics, economics, and personal relations. By conducting himself in conformity with this established pattern of righteousness, the Moslem could hope to establish a perfect society on earth.

The term Islam designates, therefore, not only a religion but also a community and a way of life. For the first time in Arab history, this community transcended the tribe, for it is composed of all who are ready to surrender themselves to the same God.¹ Its ruler's supreme purpose is to execute God's revealed law, being himself subject to it. Its learned men exert themselves to understand the law, and advise both ruler and ruled in its meaning.

Such is the vision of Islam held by the “ulema”—literally, the “knowers,” the scholar-legists of the Islamic code of conduct. Until the nineteenth century, all their books and teachings were based on this view. In the twentieth century, Moslems who think and write nostalgically about the past recall that world. In fact, it never existed.

The Political Community as a Historical Reality

The conduct of righteous politics proved to be no easier for Moslems than for other peoples. The Islamic attempt began as an inspired response to great needs. Arabia in the seventh century heard prophets mourning the multiplicity and corruptions of

¹ “Moslems” are those who have surrendered themselves to God, “Islam” their state of surrender.

LEGACY OF THE PAST

faiths while men tired of the constant warring among tribes in the absence of a clearly transcendent authority. But the Prophet Mohammed alone was inspired to establish a Community of Believers that would permanently overcome moral and political instability in a society organized to serve God. He succeeded in laying the emotional, intellectual, and political foundations for a new social system that was to endure for over a millennium. But it was not quite the community he had in mind.

The new community was born in compromise. Mohammed, who had been forced to leave his Meccan tribe in order to find honor as a prophet elsewhere, had initially organized his followers in a brotherhood divorced from all regional and tribal allegiances. The great majority who became Moslems in Mohammed's lifetime and thereafter, however, were not individual converts but families and tribes who made the decision to join the larger community of Islam on the basis of their own customary solidarity. Alongside the demand for the unity of all Believers, there were thus, from the first, these other organized and competing claims for loyalty.

The new community of Islam never acquired institutions that could permanently resolve such conflicts of loyalty and the constant battle for power which this multiplicity of allegiances entailed. Of the four caliphs who succeeded Mohammed, only the first died a natural death. In retrospect, orthodox Moslems remember them as the four pious caliphs. For they were succeeded by the Umayyad branch of the Prophet's family, which reasserted its ancient political pre-eminence in Mecca to become the first dynasty in Islam. Within a hundred years after the Prophet's death, the Umayyad dynasty expanded Islam into an area reaching from France to India—larger than the Roman Empire at its zenith—but at the cost of turning the new Community of Believers into an Arab Empire. "For many centuries after the Muslim conquest, the vast majority of the Caliph's subjects were not Sunni [Islamic orthodox], and hated Sunnism as the emblem of an oppressive regime and of a foreign privileged ruling class of Arabs."²

² Bernard Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," *Economic Review*, November 1937, p. 22.

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

The Umayyad dynasty was overthrown toward the beginning of the second Islamic century by the Abbasids, another branch of the Prophet's family, who led a movement to refashion the Arab Empire into a Moslem Empire. The dream of a Community of Believers united to carry out God's laws never ceased to inspire Moslems and to stimulate action to turn this vision into a reality. But all such efforts, including that of the Abbasids, produced new rivalries and discontents, splintering Islam in the very task of creating unity. Perhaps only a community that experienced so much disunity and lawlessness would hold on so dearly for so long to the ideal of a Community of Believers joined under divine law.

Certainly the environment of the Middle East and North Africa itself was inhospitable to movements for unity. This region of the world has never resembled the neat cluster of well-articulated colored blocks that map makers draw. Most of the population lives in a scattering of large and small oases, far separated from each other by high, rugged mountains and broad deserts. However absolute was the Caliph in Baghdad or Constantinople, his powers of supervision and execution diminished almost geometrically with the distance from the capital. The thin coastal oasis of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia was in its entire Islamic history of 1250 years united with the Arab Empire to the east for only about 100 years; only twice, for about 120 years altogether, was it united within a single North African empire. Egypt, mostly desert but containing one of the most reliable sources of water, was usually strong enough to assert its autonomous political existence within any Islamic Empire.

Segmented geographical isolation and sharp competition for scarce resources helped to perpetuate that spirit of separatism and rivalry which, in most conflicts, elevated the kinship of common blood above the kinship of common faith. Traditional Islam did not succeed in developing sufficient spiritual and material resources to alter this environment. It could not establish institutions above the kinship group that could assure the continuance of any particular state, provide for the equal application of authority in all its parts, or ease the peaceful transfer of power.

Traditional Islam gave an appearance of continuity and stabil-

LEGACY OF THE PAST

ity that was deceiving. For 600 years, it is true, a single family supplied all the Sultans for the Ottoman Empire, the largest and most enduring Islamic state. In fact, however, power in the Ottoman Empire was usually shared among various autonomous groups and rulers. Between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, for example, one finds Egypt pursuing its customary independent course, and Iraq supporting its own Mamluk dynasty (from 1749 to 1831). Moreover, Mamluk rule did not extend to Mosul, which was governed separately for over a century by the Jalili family. Meanwhile, the Azm family ruled in Damascus; other families held Jerusalem; and the Aleppo region was so torn with strife, civil wars, and depredations that between 1765 and 1785 hundreds of villages disappeared. It would be "monotonous and repetitious," writes one historian, "to describe each one of these petty lords ruling autonomously within the Ottoman Empire and to relate the incidents of his rise to power and his local tyrannies."⁸

Islam's Supreme Political Achievement

Islam could scarcely have survived for so long as a political system and as a contributing civilization, however, if its longevity had depended only on the uncertainties of petty tyranny. Its survival is all the more remarkable in view of the many threats from outside.

Over three hundred years ago, the Islamic world was already almost encircled by the superior strength and enterprise of Western sailors and soldiers and Russian Cossacks. "The noose was round the victim's neck," writes Arnold Toynbee, "and, what was more, he had by then already been foiled in divers attempts to break out of the toils. This failure was a signal one in view of his possession of the interior lines . . . and he was now inexorably condemned to die by strangulation whenever an alien executioner might choose to draw the fatal bow-string tight. . . .

⁸ Sydney N. Fisher, *The Middle East, A History*, New York, 1959, p. 254. This particular period of regional dissidence in the Ottoman Empire differs from other such periods only in the inability of the Sultans to oust the disloyal. Even in earlier days, the defeat of rebellious local leaders merely produced temporary acquiescence.

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

"Why had both the West and Russia been so slow in taking the offensive against an hereditary enemy at their gates? And why, after they had at last tasted blood, had they not managed to devour more than the extremities of this Tityos' carcase? In a list of reasons for the Islamic World's rather surprising reprieve we may include the initial self-confidence with which the Muslims had been inspired by the memory of extraordinary previous achievements; the subsequent tactical victories that masked their strategical defeat in their attempts to break out of the toils of Western and Russian encirclement; the long-lasting effect of these impressive Muslim successes in inducing Westerners to take the Muslims at their own valuation; the leading Modern Western peoples' loss of interest in the Mediterranean for some three hundred years after their conquest of the ocean towards the close of the fifteenth century; and the mutual frustration of the rival competitors for the spoils of the Islamic World after the Western Powers and Russia had at last become aware that the once formidable titan now lay at their mercy."⁴

These are valid points, but it would be misleading to write an exposition of Islamic society merely as the tale of divorce between vision and power, and to accredit its long endurance to an accident of good fortune. This is not the whole truth any more than is the argument that Islam was one perfect moment in history foiled, according to one's lights, by secular lusts of the later Umayyad or Abbasid dynasties, the destruction wreaked by invading Turkic and Mongol tribes, the weakness and errors of later Ottomans, or the encroachments of the imperialist West. To understand the traditional Islamic system, we must see it in its entirety, not merely as a turbulent sequence of events or as a compendium of its most glorious or desperate moments.

Each of the main participants in the Islamic system—sultan, scholar-legist, saint, soldier, tribesman, villager, intellectual, and devotee of religious brotherhoods—called himself "Moslem." In one sense, this was a valid identification. Each lived under conditions created by the presence of the others; all roles were entwined in a single pattern of action. Yet, in another sense, this

⁴ Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, London, 1954, Vol. viii, pp. 219-222.

LEGACY OF THE PAST

identification was misleading. Far more than the medieval European or the traditional Japanese, every Moslem also retained his spiritual, political, and social autonomy. Despite its original ideal, Islam had many faces, for what was demanded of each Moslem in practice was not theological or political conformity. The decisive criterion of membership in the Community was acquiescence in the largely unwritten code which defined the rules of social collaboration and conflict.⁵ The Moslem Community hoped for, but rarely ever insisted on, other proofs that an individual was a Believer.

Traditional Islam survived for more than a millennium in a harsh and uncertain environment because it was capable of converting constant tension and conflict into a force for constant political renewal and social survival. This extraordinary political and social system of action—mobile in all its parts yet static as a whole—is rare in human annals for its endurance. This resilient system has been one of traditional Islam's greatest, yet least appreciated, achievements. The Islamic system's ability to convert tensions into balances deserves closer examination, both for the sake of developing a political theory that reflects the actual practice of the traditional Islamic system and for the sake of understanding why such a system could not continue to function in the modern age.⁶

⁵ "There would seem to be no word in Arabic, or indeed in any Islamic language, meaning 'orthodox,'" writes Wilfred Cantwell Smith in *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton, 1957, p. 20. "The word usually translated 'orthodox,' *sunni*, actually means rather 'orthoprax,' if we may use the term. A good Muslim is not one whose belief conforms to a given pattern, whose commitment may be expressed in intellectual terms that are congruent with an accepted statement (as in the case generally of Protestant Christianity), but one whose commitment may be expressed in practical terms that conform to an accepted code." This statement aptly defines the "good Moslem." We have somewhat expanded this formulation to make room for all Moslems within the pale, whether good or bad. Heretic Moslems are those who fashioned a similar but separate system of action.

⁶ Chapter 2 explores the reasons for the disintegration of this traditional system. For a discussion of traditional Islamic political theory based on ideal Moslem prescription, see Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, Cambridge, 1958.

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

The Polarities of Folk Islam: Isolation and Conquest, Acquiescence and Rebellion

Most Moslems have lived and died in the small, closed kinship group of the family and tribe. Whatever the original motive for conversion to Islam—whether piety, fear, profit, or politics—the folk community⁷ could find in the Islamic way of life a broader, more profound understanding of ultimate and secular imperatives, and a larger scope for political and social mobility than it had usually possessed before.

Still, its relationship to the Islam of the caliphs or scholars-legists remained uneasy. Folk Islam could appreciate caliphs as enforcers of the larger code of revelation and conduct, and of peace among settled and nomadic tribes. There were advantages in the rule of a sacred stranger who could bring peace and justice, but a stranger by his very existence did not fit into the consensus of kin, and therefore was bound to inspire fear and suspicion no less than awe and respect. Even the kinship group's own leaders could not command or legislate in defiance of the existing tribal consensus.⁸ A secular-minded sultan who ruled by exploiting rivalries and represented neither kin nor the larger code was an obvious menace. The early splintering of the new Community of Believers renewed the threat of unprincipled external authority to the integrity of the kinship group. As a result, a considerable number of families, villages, and tribes sought parochial isolation in mountain strongholds or desert vastness. For most, however, there was little security. The very existence of a multitude of closed kinship groups in an environment of great scarcity, of unstable centralized power, and the absence of any intervening, stable, powerful property-owning class were permanent incitements to tribal imperialism. Islam provided a new cause or rationalization for conquest. The splintering of Islam allowed all manner of men to assert the resuscitation of Islam as their justifi-

⁷ "Folk" Islam in this book refers to the traditional way of life and the beliefs of the common people, regardless of whether they lived in city, village, or desert.

⁸ Emile Tyan, *Institutions du Droit Public Musulman*, Vol. I, *Le Califat*, Paris, 1954, p. 87.

LEGACY OF THE PAST

cation for building their own empires, without in fact heeding their moral ties with all Believers.

One of the greatest Arab sociologists and historians, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), has analyzed the doom of continuous rise and decline of all such caliphates, sultanates, and kingships in a fashion applicable to the entire period of traditional Islam, including its last remnants in contemporary Saudi Arabia and Yemen.⁹ When a tribe found itself blessed with more *asabiyah* (loyalty, courage, and will based on strong group solidarity) than any neighboring tribe, it would move out to conquer. Conquest by force or the threat of force was the only way in which a state could be formed. A tribe was organized by lines and obligations of blood. In its patriarchal egalitarianism, it required no institutions of state. A state involved control over men with whom one had no automatic ties of kinship. Hence to form a state meant to form an empire, and thus create a new and uncertain pattern of dominance and submission. Each conquered tribe sought to the utmost to protect its integrity for the sake of survival and for future struggles for predominance.

The conqueror himself, according to Ibn Khaldun, was secure in his rule because he had defeated others and had enlarged the respect of his tribe by virtue of his victory and the distribution of booty. The son who succeeded him could not claim the respect due to a victor; he usually demonstrated his prowess by building monuments and encouraging luxury, and secured his power by finding allies in many parts of his empire. Since his own tribe was no longer fit for war, yet being closest to him was most prone to produce rivals, the king began to rely increasingly on mercenaries. As a result, the *asabiyah* that united him with his tribe weakened. The grandson, having to his credit neither conquest nor construction, became the tool of the mercenary army, the only local group with force at its command, or else fell prey to conquest by a tribe with a stronger *asabiyah*.

Whether in three generations, a dozen generations, or a single

⁹ Ibn Khaldun, *The Mugaddimah, An Introduction to History*, New York, 1958, translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal, esp. Vol. I, pp. 252-286, 305-307, 311-447; Vol. II, pp. 103-155. (Vol. I, pp. 353-355, summarizes his thesis.)

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

one, this schema covers the history of all parts of the Islamic world. Wisdom, energy, imagination, and shrewdness have sometimes allowed a particular leader to delay the doom spelled out by Ibn Khaldun. There were clear-cut limits, however. The sources of wealth—including booty, tribute, taxes, trade, and harvests—were circumscribed and uncertain, and the ruler sought to marshal them for the uses of his dynasty. In the most illustrious phases of Islamic history, schools, hospitals, mosques, as well as writing and art, experienced the ruler's patronage, as did, in the darkest periods, the military commander, the torturer, and the executioner. Solicitude for the material welfare of his subjects as a whole, however, was required neither by the *Shari'a* nor by sultanic tradition. Defense against the political power of unbelievers, the administration of the Islamic code of justice, and enforcement of public morality were the only duties prescribed for the ruler by the *Shari'a* and even the fulfillment of these obligations often suffered due to weakness, intra-Moslem rivalries, and expediency. The bureaucracy was appointed to function only as an extension of the sultan's person. The soldiery were, while he remained strong enough to control them, the sultan's personal property or personal henchmen, without permanent links to state or society.

For most of his subjects, the sultan's power was thus absolute but almost irrelevant. The caliph Ma'mun (813-833), though himself one of the most liberal and philosophical of rulers, is quoted as saying: "The best life has he who has an ample house, a beautiful wife, and sufficient means, who does not know us and whom we do not know."¹⁰

Yet this is not the full story of rise, conflict, decay, and renewal in Islam. Seldom was the struggle between kinship group and supra-tribal authority merely political. Even in its political disunity, Islam remained a transcending bond among kinship groups—though not in the way that had originally been intended

¹⁰ Cited by G. E. von Grunebaum, *Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, The American Anthropological Association, Vol. 57, No. 2, Part 2, Memoir No. 81, April 1955, p. 26. "It should perhaps be noted," Grunebaum adds (p. 136), "that despite theoretical differences and actual hostilities between Sunnite and Shi'ite governments, their administrative practices would seem to have been more or less the same."

LEGACY OF THE PAST

—by fostering an undivided political loyalty to Mohammed's caliphs. Instead, by placing all loyalties and relationships under the authority of one God, Islam reinforced a more ancient test of political legitimacy—the ruler's ability to protect the moral and physical integrity of the Middle East's most immediate and enduring community, the kinship group.

Even before the coming of Islam, the kinship groups of the Middle East had long acted on the implicit assumption that faith and community constituted a single web. This web was composed exclusively of personal relationships—whether to neighbor, nature, or spirits. Any ruler, whether imposed lord or the kinship's own victorious chieftain, could justify his status only by his success in his personal relationships, whether with his own group or with ultimate powers, including God. He might be blamed for the drought no less than the taxes.

After the coming of Islam, kinship groups continued to grant their full loyalty only in personal relationships, now reinforced by God's final standard for judging such relationships. More than ever before rebellion seemed to be a duty whenever the ruler, by either impiety or injustice, morally isolated himself from the community.

In seeking to set the world in tune again with the moral laws of the universe, the kinship groups often linked themselves with a movement equally devoted to personal relationships—the religious brotherhoods. While many scholar-legists, as guardians and interpreters of orthodox Islam, became defenders of caliphal and sultanic authority, large numbers of Moslems bound themselves to each other in brotherhoods dedicated to personal unity with God and with ritual brothers. These brotherhoods took various forms.¹¹ Some were craft and trade guilds dedicated to the autonomous regulation of the spiritual, economic, and, whenever possible, political welfare of their members. Some fraternal organizations, by their devotion to contemplation,

¹¹ Bernard Lewis, "The Islamic Guilds," *The Economic Review*, November 1937, pp. 23-37; also Hans Joachim Kissling, "The Sociological and Educational Role of the Dervish Orders in the Ottoman Empire," in G. E. von Grunebaum, editor, *Studies in Islamic Cultural History, The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 56, No. 2, Part 2, April 1954, pp. 23-35; Franz Taeschner, "Futuwwa, eine gemeinschaftsbildende Idee im mittelalterlichen Orient und ihre verschiedenen Erscheinungsformen," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*, Vol. 52, 1956, pp. 122-158.

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

ecstatic exercises, or mutual assistance, helped to make acquiescence to superior power bearable. Others were openly or covertly organized as fighters for "virtue." Between the ninth and the twelfth century, several brotherhoods took the form of Isma'ili heresies which by their religio-political rebellions kept the Islamic realm in constant turmoil, and succeeded in establishing several major rival centers of power. The largest and most enduring of them, the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt (971 to 1173), was at least the equal in power and prosperity of the orthodox caliphate of Baghdad.¹²

Like conquests inspired by tribal *asabiyah*, rebellions inspired by religio-political mysticism served not only to destroy existing authority in Islam, but also continually to renovate it. All successful rebellions produced states. All states, in turn, inspired new rebellions. The rebellious and state-forming activities of the religious brotherhoods continued to the nineteenth century, when the Mahdi Mohammed Ahmad created a state in the Sudan and the Sanusi a state in Cyrenaica.

Ulema and Sultans: Antagonistic Collaboration between Vision and Power

In the first two centuries of Islam, the ulema had been courageous and creative in trying to avoid a divorce between law, morality, and politics by expanding and revising the unalterable constitution God had revealed to the community.¹³ An empire needed governing, and on this subject the Koran was silent, inadequate, or too restrictive in many fields. By relying as guides first on the sayings and actions of the Prophet, then of his Companions, and finally on the invention of such sayings and actions¹⁴ and on the actual customary law of the conquered areas, the ulema greatly expanded the available corpus of law. So

¹² Bernard Lewis, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, Cambridge, 1940; also his article, "Some Observations on the Significance of Heresy in the History of Islam," *Studia Islamica*, Vol. I, pp. 43-63.

¹³ See Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford, 1950. For this and the later period, see also Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny, editors, *Law in the Middle East, Vol. I: Origins and Development of Islamic Law*, Washington, Middle East Institute, 1955.

¹⁴ Including the invented saying of Mohammed, "Whatever is good, I said it," and his invented reassurance that "My community will not agree on error."

LEGACY OF THE PAST

powerful had been the impact of the original revelation, however, that the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence which emerged during the first 200 years differed relatively little in spirit or detail.

Yet this pious creativity and invention became dangerous as the Islamic Empire splintered and the caliph became the captive of his mercenary troops. To the secular interests of rival sultans and armies, the ulema could not counterpose the institutional power of any priestly hierarchy or established church. To save the spirit of the law, the ulema safeguarded its letter. By the tenth century, the ulema closed the "gate to individual interpretation" of the *Shari'a*.

A living community, however, could scarcely abide by such a decision. The rulers continued, as they had almost from the first, to develop administrative law (encompassing the entire realm of politics and government) as well as criminal, civil, and commercial law apart from *Shari'a* law. The people, in turn, frequently sought to avoid the law courts of sultans and ulema by resorting to private vengeance or the arbitration of tribal chiefs and saintly men. If nothing else would help, they attempted to secure justice through nepotism, bribery, personal influence, and casuistry, or to restore it through rebellion.

In such a sundering of the values and activities of the various components of Islamic society lay the seeds of destruction. We have already explored the creative defenses of folk Islam against such moral and political division. In their search for certainty in this highly uncertain environment, sultans and ulema discovered that, however much at odds their final aims, they also needed each other.

The sultans recognized that the rule of naked force is the least secure of all authority. They required an ideological justification for their power consonant with the pre-Islamic and Islamic folk insistence upon the unity of politics and religion, even though they refused to accept the sharing of sovereignty implicit in this folk tradition. The ulema also could not countenance the unorthodox religio-political concepts championed by folk Islam. The ulema became the ideologists of the state, for they could not deny legitimacy to the actualities of Islamic history lest they imply that the Community of Believers had fallen away from the sacred law,

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

and hence that the Community's judicial and religious activities were void.¹⁵ "The concessions made by us are not spontaneous," said Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, the greatest of medieval Moslem theologians, "but necessity makes lawful what is forbidden. . . . We should like to ask: which is to be preferred, anarchy and the stoppage of social life for lack of a properly constituted authority, or acknowledgment of the existing power, whatever it be? Of these two alternatives the jurist cannot but choose the latter."¹⁶ In this way, the doctrine of the necessary unity of faith and politics, which justified rebellion to folk Islam, also became the justification employed by the ulema for demanding obedience to kings.

Though it would appear an unrewarding division of labor for the ulema to uphold one kind of norm while the powerful conformed to a different kind of practice, the role of the ulema was by no means without profit to the latter. For the role and doctrines of the ulema reflected and served well certain fundamental social interests. The minority of ulema who counted politically—the muftis appointed by the sultan to issue formal interpretations of the *Shari'a*, the kadis who not only pronounced legal judgment but usually also supervised urban or provincial administration, and the ulema who acted as advisers to the sultans—almost invariably came from the most prominent families of the town or empire.¹⁷ Almost all education was in their hands; almost all officials were educated by them. In the Ottoman Empire, their occupations became increasingly, though not exclusively, hereditary, like most other crafts. They also became tax-exempt. Thus "we can picture the bureaucrat" in the Middle East, no less than in

¹⁵ H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 26. Part I and II, London, 1950 and 1955, have provided indispensable materials for the present analysis.

¹⁶ In *Iqtisad Fi al-I'tiqad*, cited by I. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Vol. II, Heidelberg, 1929, p. 93.

¹⁷ See Claude Cahen, "Zur Geschichte der städtischen Gesellschaft im islamischen Orient des Mittelalters," *Saeculum*, Vol. 9, 1958, No. 1, p. 67. An audit of "Listes chronologiques des grands cadis de l'Egypte sous les Mamelouks, établies, annotées et documentées," by Kamal S. Salibi in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, Vol. 25, 1957, shows that a majority (or 76) of the cadis between 1267 and 1517 were related to each other or to officials of similar rank in other important towns. Since power created wealth in traditional Islamic society more often than wealth created power—and since power was unstable—this relationship between ulema and prominent families does not imply that the same families remained dominant. Rather, this type of relationship predominated even though the fortunes of specific families waned.

LEGACY OF THE PAST

China, “as a scholar-gentleman, with his roots in society, sensitive to the varied complexities of individual social and family situations, and adapting the law and his own behavior to fit them, accommodating himself to state power, . . . but checking it simply by being what he was.”¹⁸

The ulema’s role in the service of the sultan was not without benefit to the rest of the community, for their ideology had a double-edged character. By supporting all existing authority—that of the successful usurper no less than the dynastic heir—the ulema were able to safeguard not only their own position, but also prevent both ruler and community from quite forgetting the ideal code of conduct. By constantly reiterating that code, they maintained an implicit criticism of actual authority. By occupying many of the subsidiary positions of power, these ulema were able to modify the exercise of sultanic authority. They could filter or entangle royal commands through a web entwining the social, economic, and legal interests represented or mediated by the ulema.¹⁹

Unity through Factionalism

Another autonomous set of tensions and balances existed in Islam to bind the entire society through conflict no less than through collaboration. Although kinship was Islam’s most solid and enduring tie, relatives and kindred families and tribes often fought each other until menaced by a common enemy.²⁰ Almost all villages, tribes, and families in the Middle East were, and often still are, divided into rival factions. These factions, cutting across class and status lines, acted as rival networks for marshal-

¹⁸ *Confucianism in Action*, edited by David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, Stanford, 1959, p. 17. The introduction and essays in this book, first called to my attention by Professor Paul M. A. Linebarger, and Max Gluckman’s *Custom and Conflict in Africa*, Oxford, 1955, suggested rewarding perspectives for this analysis of Islamic society.

¹⁹ A number of the more pious ulema refused to serve the government in any capacity. Their role in the Islamic system is discussed in a later section of this same chapter.

²⁰ Tribal blood ties were not immutable. Defeated, decimated, or dependent tribes were sometimes given the option of becoming clients of other tribes, and ultimately merging with them. Individuals were sometimes also given this privilege.

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

ling influence and protection, and for undermining the influence of others. They were, in a sense, the secular equivalent of the religious brotherhoods, providing for collaboration among individuals unrelated by blood. The resulting alliances were often fickle and hence there was much political instability, but the very system that produced conflict also produced means for new collaborative combinations. Even when tribes were pacified or their chiefs granted bribes, individuals readily continued to conspire for power. In a society divided by lines of blood, factionalism provided an important solvent, freeing men for collaboration regardless of kinship ties.

Saints, Intellectuals, and Soldiers Testing the Limits of the Islamic System

There were three groups whose members were by their very nature not firmly tied to the network of balanced tensions that in actuality constituted Islam. Since it assumed that God's final truth had been fully revealed, the Islamic community found it difficult to make room for intellectuals bent on a search for truth. The recruitment of standing mercenary or slave armies to protect sultans against their Islamic rivals or Islamic subjects created elements of preponderant force difficult to match elsewhere in Islamic society. (Originally, the entire Islamic community had been expected to supply armed men for wars that were holy because they were exclusively directed against non-Moslems.) Although the continual generation of saintly men must surely have been desired by the prophet of Islam's original vision, his successors often found saints difficult to bear.

By their less fettered existence all three—intellectuals, saints, and soldiers—often clearly revealed and challenged the limits of the Islamic system. During most of Islam's history, the saints and soldiers who raised Islam's spirit and power seemed also to be the principal threats to the survival of the system. The saints, by their extreme, sometimes even heretical piety, endangered the system of balanced tensions that in fact held the Moslem community together; the soldiers threatened it by their exceedingly secular and unilateral concern for power. The pious and the men of

LEGACY OF THE PAST

arms helped, as we shall see, to bring about the decay of the traditional Islamic system. It was the intellectuals, however, who ultimately succeeded in destroying it.

Throughout Islamic history, some of the most pious Moslems refused to accept public office. They did not see how justice could triumph when those who knew the *Shari'a* attempted to reconcile it with their loyalty to sultan, family, and faction. Sometimes such saintly ulema or mystics were imprisoned or killed for their conscientious objection. When they publicly asserted the supremacy of absolute truth or the absolute good, they threatened the compromise by which the Islamic community lived.

The military found it easier than any other group in Islam to make its views prevail. It often had the strength to master its master; it made and unmade sultans. Because the army was usually recruited among slaves or mercenaries, and hence alien to the population among whom it was stationed, the soldiery commonly did not hesitate to extort a high price for its presence. It ravaged and wasted the community's resources in almost perennial warfare among Islamic military commanders. By possessing a preponderant power that could only imperfectly and infrequently be checked by other elements of the Islamic system, the military made it more difficult for the balanced tensions of Islam to remain in creative and renovating motion. By its overbearing weight, the army gradually made the Islamic system more static. In this way, and by its pre-emptive sapping of the region's material resources, it helped to bring about the decay of Islam.

That decay was slowed, however, by the fact that even this most powerful and detached force was vulnerable to the operations of the Islamic pattern of action. The army might have assured its supremacy had it been able to convert itself into a stable, exclusive military caste. But it could not muster the strength, either through brute force or institutional transformation, entirely to put an end to social and political mobility in Islam. The army's own ranks frequently splintered, reflecting personal, factional, tribal, and regional conflicts.²¹ Army regimes at times succumbed to the attacks of rival armies organized by other au-

²¹ In Algiers, between 1671 and 1818, for example, 14 of the 30 rulers rose to power as a result of a military mutiny and the assassination of their

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

tonomous groups in the realm—the tribes and the religious brotherhoods. In addition, the army could be infiltrated. The Ottoman army had at first been composed of kidnapped or recruited Christian children converted into Moslems and bound to service as the Sultan's personal property. By the seventeenth century, this Janissary army became essentially a guild that, like other crafts, had its particular rituals and saints and gained its membership through inheritance or co-option.

But an army that had entirely adapted its outlook and organization, whether in a spirit of exploitation or integration, to the style of the Islamic system was unprepared for an enemy whose strength was derived from an entirely different style of life. Most Middle Eastern armies were easily defeated by modern Western imperialists. A few Moslem rulers, among them the rulers of the Ottoman Empire, sought refuge in copying their enemies' modern weaponry and methods of training. They discovered too late that these novel methods depended for their effectiveness upon the development of new men and relationships, and that they had therefore embarked on a course that would undermine the very system they sought to save.

The intellectuals held the most precarious position in traditional Islam. The educated man who accepted life as it was had ample opportunity to serve the system as bureaucrat or one of the ulema. But the independent intellectual, searching for truth rather than believing it to have been already revealed with finality, was rare. The essential spirit of Islamic civilization, reinforced by rote learning and political tyranny, discouraged their growth. Philosophers who expressed their novel ideas and interpretations in deliberately esoteric style survived, but, like Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd), at the price of being almost unread by his own community. Philosophers who spoke plainly often suffered physical harm; some, like Suhrawardi (d. 1191) were executed.

Certainly, the ulema and sultans were right in believing that granting freedom to individual reason would jeopardize all other

predecessor. See Charles-André Julien, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord*, Vol. II, Paris, 1952, p. 292.

LEGACY OF THE PAST

established Islamic relationships. It was, indeed, the emergence of a significant number of individuals claiming freedom for themselves in thought, technology, politics, and society that ushered in the modern age in the Middle East and the destruction of the traditional Islamic system of action.

Islam as a Common Fate rather than a Common Faith

Traditional Islam bound orthodox and heretic, scholastic and mystic, ruler and people in a single connected system of roles, values, orientations, and action. The combinations possible within that system were varied and unstable, but the system itself left play for all these uncertainties within rigidly defined patterns. It was a system in constant motion, like a prayer wheel, yet always anchored in the same place. Islam could provide all participants with a universal language of terms and symbols, just as the language of nationalism and social welfare has become the common tongue of Asian and European, capitalist and communist, today. This common language reflected, however, not so much a common faith as a common fate. It was the language of all who accepted, exploited, enjoyed, justified, or rebelled against the limits within which life had to be lived. Whatever one's attitude, none could escape the terms of the encounter.²²

To describe Islam in this fashion, however, is to pay a price. In order to clarify the interaction of groups, interests, and beliefs, and show how opposing poles were bound in tension to each other, we have been indifferent to the historical direction and variegated complexion which Islamic society has taken in different periods, to its religious depth, and to the rich flowering of civilization which it produced. The neglect of that cultural unfolding is an injustice that cannot be remedied here, for our concern with the Islamic past is only with the problems it poses for a changing present—the focus of this book. Even so, the historical direction of the Islamic community that led to the present must be briefly indicated.

²² A fuller and systematically conceptualized analysis of the traditional Islamic system of action is being prepared by the author under the auspices of Princeton University's Center of International Studies.

INHERITANCE OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

Long before the renaissance of Western Europe, Islam showed great flashes of creativity, critical reason, and vigor. Between the ninth and thirteenth century, one may at times find Moslem rulers encouraging the translation and discussion of Greek philosophy. A number of philosophers and historians wrote of themselves as individual human beings and analyzed the actual process of their society. Literature and science showed remarkable accomplishments. Merchants, for a time, plied a cosmopolitan trade unhindered by Islamic rules against banking. Isma'ili heretics were accused of teaching that laws were merely enacted in order to hold down the masses and to maintain the worldly interests of those who rule.²³ Farm workers turned religion into an ideological weapon against landlords. In what is probably one of the first examples of the use of the sit-down strike (given the Moslem posture of prayer), a landowner complained in the late ninth century that the fifty prayers a day ordered by a heretical Karmatian preacher interfered with the work of his laborers.²⁴ Revolutions of laborers, artisans, and peasants continued into the eleventh century. Yet by the end of the thirteenth century, Islam had remained resilient enough to defeat the Christian Crusaders, and attractive enough to convert the Turkish invaders into Moslems.

Unlike Western Europe, however, there was to be no renaissance or reformation. Islam continued to give birth to new empires, including by the sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire, the largest and most enduring among them, but the tug of war among the same forces continued, and the cast of characters did not change. The moral inspiration of Islam was never transformed into institutional power sufficient to sustain political authority permanently, yet also to limit its sway. The interplay of opposing interests among autonomous groupings in Islam never entered a lawful and public arena in which conflicts might find more lasting reconciliation.

Instead, the Islamic system's characteristic mechanism for constant renewal began to warp not long after the establishment of

²³ Ibn Hazm, quoted by Lewis, *The Origins of Isma'ilism*, p. 93.

²⁴ Tabari, quoted by Lewis, *ibid.*, p. 92. The Karmatians preached the sharing of all property, but may have cared little about praying. Their sect won followers in large parts of Iraq, Syria, and Arabia between the ninth and eleventh centuries.

LEGACY OF THE PAST

the Ottoman Empire, and sooner or later in other Moslem states. In an area of scarce resources, the predominance of the military had been achieved at the expense of merchant and peasant. That imbalance was reinforced and became petrified as Islamic military and commercial expansion was foiled by Europe's growing power and greater trade with America and India, and the army could only strengthen itself by exploiting its own rulers and people.

The continued reiteration of the orthodox vision in the face of a corrupted reality finally discouraged creativity. It became impossible to use an orthodox vocabulary to speak clearly and honestly on current issues without hypocrisy or creating illusions. The persisting superiority of secular authority; the ever more characteristic ties of blood between ulema, who constituted the community's principal intellectual and moral leadership, and the politically and economically prominent families; and the lack of resources for altering a style of life based on perennial scarcity encouraged a spirit of acquiescence. Moslems became convinced that a man's heart mattered more than his behavior, eternity more than history. Even folk Islam turned its discontent inward and sought a better world through mysticism or dissipated its frustrations through politically innocent exercises akin to those of the holy-rollers of American Protestantism. Its occasional rebellions confined themselves to protests against sultans who violated vested interests or established customs. The various Islamic brotherhoods seldom raised any longer the larger issues of social justice and morality.

As a result, the new emphasis on acquiescence strengthened Islam's endurance even while the checks and balances and the vitality of the Islamic system were deteriorating. Islamic society thus lingered basically unchanged until the nineteenth century, and was therefore especially unprepared to meet the challenges of the modern age. Foreign powers were able to gain control of the Islamic world before it could regain its own vigor and sense of direction.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM



The Shattering of the Glass

EVENTS in the Middle East seem to repeat the past. The newspapers are filled with sudden deaths of Middle Eastern regimes and alliances, with tales of rivalries and rebellions. Yet the issues and the context in which they are fought are entirely new. The modern age has brought about a dying more important than the death of kings; it has also introduced a greater chance to be creative and a greater need to make choices than has confronted any previous generation of Moslems. The stakes are greater, too, because there are more Moslems alive today than at any time in Islam's preceding history.

Today's Middle Eastern revolution is not merely a revolution of rulers or rising expectations. The cumulative growth of ideas, production, and power generated outside the Islamic system has penetrated that system and is tearing apart its repetitive pattern of balanced tensions. A system connecting man, God, and society is falling apart, and the new forces are still too far out of balance, sometimes even out of touch, with the old and with each other to constitute a stable and resilient new pattern. Many vital elements of Islam are likely to persist for centuries to come, but they will need to be related to each other in new ways. The traditional system of which they once formed a part cannot be recovered, for important segments are already missing, and the rest have therefore lost their essential links, and thus their relevance and effectiveness.

The head of the Islamic community, the caliph, no longer

LEGACY OF THE PAST

exists. Protests from other Moslem communities did not deter the Turks in 1924 from abolishing his office. Conferences among Moslems in Cairo and Mecca in 1926 and in Jerusalem in 1931 did not succeed in reviving him. The Caliphate has ceased to be even an issue in Moslem politics.

The Islamic empire is also dead. The demise of its last incarnation, the Ottoman Empire, is mourned neither by Turks nor Arabs. No Islamic bloc of nations has since emerged, either in the U.N. or outside, nor are there any significant forces now working in that direction. The Islamic World Congress, a non-governmental body founded in Karachi in 1949, has suffered from lack of effectiveness since its very beginning as a result of the patent efforts, first of Pakistan and later of Egypt, to control its operations and policies for national ends, and for a time, from its exploitation by neo-Islamic totalitarian groups for prestige and funds. A similar Congress organized by Saudi Arabia in May 1962, which instituted an Islamic League, was intended primarily to counter Egyptian and socialist influences in the Islamic world. Pan-Islam, a mere specter when Sultan Abd al-Hamid unsuccessfully invoked it during the last quarter of the nineteenth century for the political purpose of stemming secularism and disunity in his Empire, no longer comprises a living community.¹

The ulema are no longer the guardians of the core of the community's law, or the only educated interpreters of its tradition, or the advisers of the ruler. The tenor of their political discussions, however, has not changed much with time, except in those countries where the pressure of reformist governments has been strong enough to induce the ulema to echo or sustain the new secular ideas with their own traditional vocabulary. Left to their own initiative, the ulema could deprive Ali Abd al-Raziq of the certificate placing him among the ulema because he wrote a book in 1925 suggesting that the state can and should be separated from the religious institutions of Islam.² At the Islamic Colloquium in Lahore in mid-winter of 1957, Syrian and other

¹ The attempt to resurrect Islam as a partisan political ideology is analyzed in Chapter 8.

² *al-Islam wa-Usul al-Hukm (Islam and the Fundamentals of Authority)*, Cairo, 1925.

CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM

delegates demanded the withdrawal of a paper by Professor Muhammad Daud Rahbar, who argued that certain texts in the Koran clearly referred to the here and now of the Prophet's time, that these texts are no longer relevant, and by their presence demonstrate the acceptability of further evolution of thought.³

Consequently every Moslem state that has established a new constitution, or a civil, criminal, or administrative code during the past thirty years, has had it drafted by Western-trained or Western-inspired lawyers rather than by ulema. In fact, when Pakistan—the one state formed in modern times intentionally along Islamic, rather than ethnic or historical, divisions—questioned its ulema on major issues of state and society, the inquiry became a turning point in the country's ideological orientation. The testimony of its leading ulema was so divided, confused, and ambiguous that the influence of the ulema materially declined thereafter.⁴ In Tunisia, the unwillingness of the French to abandon the medieval theological curriculum of Zeitouna University in Tunis produced a prolonged student strike in 1950. The protests of the ulema against the changes finally instituted by the independent Tunisian Government in 1958 found no response among Tunisian intellectuals or politicians. Similarly, the efforts of the Moroccan Government to convert its ancient medieval university at Fez into a new secular institution have elicited only approval.

The institutions of popular Islam, the guilds and religious brotherhoods—organizations of worship, mutual help, and political discontent—have dissolved or decayed. The economic basis of the guilds has been undermined, for their goods could not compete with the cheaper and more efficient products of modern industry. Even the saintliness of the leaders of religious brotherhood—traditionally assumed to be inheritable—seems to have lost its efficacy.

³ Reported by G. E. von Grunebaum, "Rückblick auf drei islamische Tagungen," *Der Islam*, Vol. 34, 1959, p. 142. Rahbar's paper is reprinted as "The Challenge of Modern Ideas and Social Values to Muslim Society," in *Muslim World*, October 1958, pp. 274-285.

⁴ See *Report of the Court of Inquiry constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953*, Government Printing, Lahore, 1954, commonly known as the "Munir Report."

LEGACY OF THE PAST

In the past, many of the empires and rebellions of the Islamic realm owed their origin to the alliance of a religious brotherhood, or at least its founding saint, with a major tribe. The Almohad, Almoravid, Fatimid, and Wahhabi states, among others, were formed in this way. Such a combination can still cause unrest, but it can no longer hope to seize the reins of government. No tribe can now match the technology and armaments of a central government. Coup, not conquest, is today's avenue to power. Hence charismatic leadership, to be effective, must now resort to the machinery of urban parties and factions.

The only unit which has possessed sufficient social, economic, and moral strength to survive all the past vicissitudes of Islamic history—the patriarchal family and its emanations, the self-sustaining village and tribe—is ceasing to be the secure nucleus of Islamic life. With improved health measures, such a family becomes too large for the land it has traditionally occupied. With the coming of industrialization, individuals tend to go wherever jobs can be found. Kinship groups are no longer adequate in size or organization to serve as an effective unit for collective bargaining with the rest of the world.⁵ They cannot overcome their present ignorance and poverty unless they participate in a larger world of new skills and markets. In many Middle Eastern countries, the disintegration of the traditional family unit has gone so far that the patriarchal family, with its carefully protected veiled women, is already beginning to yield among urban workers to the sustaining authority of the wage-earning mother. In Iraq, about 10,000 of the armed civilian militia, the Popular Resistance Forces, established by the regime of General Abd al-Karim Kassim, were reported to be women.⁶

While traditional links are shattered beyond repair, new connections are not readily at hand. The social distance among individuals in the Middle East is growing wider under the pressures of the modern age. The educated and the uneducated were in the past separated by the amount of knowledge they possessed about

⁵ This point has, of course, already been admirably demonstrated, and in detail, for other areas undergoing similar transformation. See Marion J. Levy's *The Family Revolution in Modern China*, Cambridge, 1949, especially pp. 273-365.

⁶ *New York Times*, April 9, 1959.

CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM

the same things. Now those who have had a modern education know something belonging to a different realm of being. Sheer physical mobility leads to the discovery that life outside the family offers choices not dreamt of by one's father. The radio, movies, newspapers, and books allow a young man for the first time to choose his own intellectual ancestors and spiritual brothers. Modern scientific thought makes possible, indeed requires, a re-examination of all traditional relationships and structures. Whether technician, intellectual, or politician, a member of the new educated generation finds the traditions, skills, and values of his fathers deficient or irrelevant. Knowledge has thus become an issue and instrument of battle.

As a result, moral and intellectual contact is broken between generations. Faced with this gap, the new generation has generally chosen to make a revolutionary leap. The Ataturks and Nassers—men in their thirties when they gained control of their country—act as if age, once the one sure title to respect in this part of the world, no longer mattered. Indeed, they act almost as if they had no ancestors.

There is also a greater gap than ever before between the rich and the poor. In the past, the rich usually feared to be ostentatious lest the sultan suddenly seize their wealth. They wore, if better materials, still the same cut of clothes as the poor. They died of the same diseases. Now they no longer live alike, dress alike; they need no longer die of the same diseases. Today, when it has become possible for the first time in the history of the world to alleviate and perhaps even overcome poverty, the difference between rich and poor ceases to be a condition and becomes an issue.

There has always been an important gap between city and countryside in the Middle East. Islam was originated and elaborated in the cities, and the Koran itself, reflecting the traditional distrust between the settled and nomadic population, upbraids the bedouins for not being good Moslems.⁷ Since the Middle East is still largely a peasant society dedicated to repeating itself in tune

⁷ "The Arabs of the desert," begins Verse 97 of *Sura IX*, "are keener in disbelief and hypocrisy. . . ." (Koran, translated by E. H. Palmer, London, 1949.)

LEGACY OF THE PAST

with the seasons, the very rhythm of its life has now become an issue. The mechanization and routinization required by modern machine and modern bureaucracy for the sake of efficiency and change demand an entirely different rhythm of life. There is a sharpening contrast between those largely urban elements now committed to production-mindedness and the discipline of the eight- or ten-hour day, and that largely rural majority which remains attuned to the rhythm of season. The politics of progress thus becomes a battle between two different cultures and two different ages.

The modern age that first became visible in Western Europe between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries and reached the Middle East by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is thus shattering the traditional community of Islam. The new nation-states in the Middle East are so far no more stable than their predecessors, since the new ideologies often divide kin and neighbor from each other. Escape from the period of revolutionary turmoil is also hindered by the lack of resources: in almost all of these countries population is growing more rapidly than production, aspirations more rapidly than accomplishment, opinions more rapidly than consensus. And there is also the great pain of starting now, so far behind other nations.

A European, Hermann Hesse, has written about the modern West that "now there are times when a whole generation is caught . . . between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standards, no security, no simple acquiescence."⁸ To be thus caught is all the more destabilizing in the Middle East, which has had, not Western Europe's five centuries, but, on the average, five decades in which to adjust itself to the modern age. The people of the Middle East cannot escape having to find answers appropriate to telescoped time.

The Problems of Reconstruction

As early as about A.D. 1105, the great Moslem theologian al-Ghazzali could write that "There is no hope in returning to a tra-

⁸ *Der Steppenwolf*, New York, 1929, p. 28.

CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM

ditional faith after it has once been abandoned, since the essential condition in the holder of a traditional faith is that he should not know that he is a traditionalist. Whenever he knows that, the glass of his traditional faith is broken. That is a breaking that cannot be mended, and a separating that cannot be united by any sewing or putting together, except it be melted in the fire and given another new form.⁷⁹ It was possible for al-Ghazzali to put his faith together again by joining reason and mysticism with fear and hope in God. His was an inward journey at a time of intellectual doubt, spiritual corruption, and political turmoil; but it was a time that failed to give birth to a new age. Such a return is much harder today. The existential foundations of Moslem life have been decisively altered. Those Moslems who ignore the material changes about them, or the vital spiritual and intellectual achievements of societies which do not accept God's final revelation to mankind, are likely to find few companions for their pilgrimage. Yet how is a modern Moslem to begin the reconstruction of his world? A popular, radical Pakistani poet of the twentieth century has written in a poem entitled, "There Is No Messiah for Shattered Glass":

Be it a pearl, a looking glass, or a drinking cup,
Once broken, it is broken forever.
What is shattered is better given up as lost,
For tears can mend it never. . . .
Fruitlessly you gather and cling to these pieces,
And continue to pin your hopes in them:
Remember, no messiah can patch them together. . . .

Perhaps in these very fragments, lies
The pearl of your grandeur
That grandeur which the mighty and elegant envied
Even in your days of humility. . . .

These goblets, mirrors, gems and pearls
As Wholes a price they fetch.

⁷⁹ In *Al-Munqidh min al-dalal (Preservation from Error)*, cited by Duncan B. Macdonald, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, Chicago, 1909, p. 180.

LEGACY OF THE PAST

Once broken into pieces,
They bring but toil and tears
And prick and bleed you to death.

In this ever-building world, wherein
These cups and glasses are molded,
Everything can be replaced; all pockets can be filled.¹⁰

Twice before the coming of the modern age, Islam successfully assimilated the concepts of other cultures without essentially changing its own character. Why not again? In its first two centuries of existence (from about 622-820), Islam brilliantly adapted laws, customs, and institutions from the peoples among whom it was born as well as from those it conquered. It was relatively easy to accept ideas from societies with similar forms of social organization and give them an Islamic cast. During the ninth century, Islam assimilated from Hellenism scientific facts, and also ontological concepts and methods of logic for the foundation of an Islamic scholasticism, but rejected Greece's critical ideas regarding nature and justice, and the dignity of the free individual. Islam was then free to choose or not to choose. It was at the height of its power, and did not need to deal with Greece as an intellectually and economically more productive and politically more powerful society.

Islam picked only those aspects of Greek thought which would buttress its own traditional position. The majority of rulers and ulema were right to consider the remainder of Greek philosophy subversive. If Islam's God were no longer to be thought all-powerful but instead lawful and just, could the all-powerful caliphs, some of whom had begun to think of themselves as deputies of God rather than successors of Mohammed, be less lawful and just? If law and justice were to be thought accessible to human reason, could not both the Koran and the caliph's commands be reviewed in the light of reasonable men's judgment of what is just and lawful? As a result of this conflict of minds in the

¹⁰ Faiz Ahmad Faiz, "Shishon Ka Masiha Ko'i Naheen" (There Is No Messiah for Shattered Glass), in *Dast-i-Saba*, Lahore, 1953, translated especially for this book by Eqbal Ahmed.

CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM

Islamic world, Arab translations of Greek philosophy became available to help bring about the renaissance of Europe. Among the orthodox of Islam, however, the advocates of human reason lost, and even those who applied it subsequently to the interpretation of dogma were fewer by far and their fate more problematical than those who applied their reason to the codification and clarification of revealed law. Orthodoxy chose not free reason but a rigidity capable of being bent only by the particular balance of tensions at any concrete moment.

The modern age, however, issues a challenge, or invitation, of quite a different order. As long as a Moslem holds that the comprehensive order revealed by God in the seventh century and subsequently hallowed by tradition is final and cannot be amended, he will be unable to study the world independently and scientifically in order to fashion his own world himself. The Christian, breaking out of the middle ages into an era of scientific thought, could at least retain the medieval notion that God—or now nature—operates by laws, and that the nature of God—or now the nature of nature—could to a large extent be ascertained by reason. The Moslem, by contrast, emerges from an age in which tyranny, anarchy, hunger, and death seemed often beyond remedy, an environment helping to reinforce his religious dogma that God was all-powerful, and that the moments of life were not a succession of cause and effect but separate God-created miracles. Only by setting his judgment against the received interpretation of life, whether through ulema, ancestors, or accustomed nature, can a Moslem now alter his history and environment. Only by using his individual judgment against that tradition can he escape the deepest of all Islamic inhibitions or prohibitions—that against innovation.

The reformation of Islam, however, involves far more decisive steps than reformation did in the West. It is not a matter merely of altering the relationship between Church and State, for there is no church in Islam. No one is ordained; there is no hierarchy; each mosque is locally endowed. (The ulema are scholar-legists, not priests.) Indeed, reformation cannot be confined to the realm of religion: in God's revelation to Mohammed all human thoughts, actions, and institutions are related to the sacred, and

LEGACY OF THE PAST

have meaning only relation to it. Thus, reformation in Islam means changing a way of life. But once that integrated pattern of relationships is altered, each part of it loses its original significance and potency, perhaps even its meaning, unless it can be transmuted and integrated into a new form of life. Reformation in Islam inescapably touches not only God's relation to man, but also man's relation to truth, ruler, wife, and neighbor.

Such a reformation and renaissance are well under way in the Middle East. Many observers have missed this fact because their attention is drawn instead to the exceedingly few Moslems who have been at work during the past century deliberately reforming Islam to preserve its integrity as a system of faith and action. It may well be that these few seek to accomplish the impossible. Can any closed system like Islam be made to mesh with an open and dynamically changing society, yet succeed in remaining a closed system?

But if the modern Moslem must contend with an inherited system that was fixed and closed, he also received from the past an uncommonly flexible style for dealing with a world in motion. He has long known how to combine his awe for the powerful, the learned, and the successful with his more enduring respect for the consensus of the community. He can adapt resiliently to the permanent tension between justice and power, and ratify the inescapable with shrewd forebearance. Such customary flexibility has allowed the still tradition-bound masses to accept today's secular reformist governments, and has made it easier for the reformers to respond to the modern world with creative assimilation.¹¹

The reformation of Islam, in contrast to that of Christianity, is not likely to be heralded and defined through theological disputations. Rather, the change in the Islamic way of life will become visible through the reformation and renaissance of Moslems. This great venture is already in progress, and the Islam that will emerge will be definable as Islam has always been

¹¹ These conclusions are developed in greater detail in Chapter 7, on Reform Islam. Moslems who react to the greater uncertainties and insecurities of modern change by emphasizing the rigidities and certainties of the past are discussed in Chapter 8.

CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM

defined in practice—as the pattern of interaction which relates Moslems to each other and which, if they are fortunate, a majority among them also consider to be good.

Such a changed Islam, however, is bound to create a different network of relationships than traditional Islam. Precisely for that reason, some Middle Eastern leaders deem it prudent to call their new ways by old names, while others emphasize the thoroughness of their reforms by renouncing old symbols entirely and speaking only of socialism, nationalism, and other modern ideas. The road to modernization for all societies involves a march without a final prophet, a final book, or even assurance of final success. This universal fate, however, is differently shaped in each part of the world by unique beginnings. Just as British and French democracy or Russian and Chinese communism differ because of their historical origins, so will the traditional Islamic way of life, in its transformation, help to mold the nature of modern ideologies in the Middle East—hence our concern for the character and depth of the Islamic revolution.

The Age of Choice

Social transformation, it is worth repeating, is by now a worldwide phenomenon and therefore demands analysis that is not parochial, either Western or Islamic. This is a point that needs especially to be made in a study of the Middle East, where the problem of making new choices used to be debated as the issue of "Westernization." Historically, that is indeed how change began. The transformation of the Middle East did not originate, as in Europe, with the rise of new social classes or the growth of new forms of production. These came later, as the first fruits of change. The metamorphosis of the Middle East began with the efforts of sultans, whether in Constantinople, Cairo, or Rabat, to maintain themselves, their ideas, and their empires intact by copying Western instruments of defense. Westernization, once started, snowballed as Western powers took advantage of the fact that these Moslem rulers lacked money, skill, and strength to preserve themselves. By direct Western action, that is, by way of imperialism, Westernization made its mark even to the extent of

LEGACY OF THE PAST

supplying Middle Eastern states with governing institutions such as constitutions and parliaments.

By now, however, the issue is no longer Westernization but “modernization.” It has become a native movement. The term Westernization has itself become parochial and misleading. However much he may prefer to continue to draw upon Western Europe and the United States for knowledge, ideas, and assistance, the contemporary Middle Easterner recognizes (perhaps in contrast to some of his fathers) that being modern does not mean becoming English or French or American. The modern age, with its science, technology, and values, is transforming both East and West impartially, and the roads to modernization that can now be chosen as models include India, Yugoslavia, Japan, Ghana, or China no less than the United States, Germany, or the U.S.S.R.

Westernization could not help but become a locally rooted movement. Before the modern age began, it was possible to arm, and become more prosperous and more powerful than any neighbor, without changing one's mind about anything one's ancestors held dear. Today, the price of knowledge, status, and power for Middle Eastern countries is conversion to an entirely new outlook. It is not feasible to buy the weapons and learn the techniques of modern warfare, and yet preserve ancient traditions. The Ottomans had this illusion. The new Turks knew that they had to abandon it.¹²

Social change in the Middle East has taken place unevenly and remains incomplete. Here the modern age has deprived more men of customary satisfactions, and denied more men the fulfillment of their newly raised expectations, than it has so far expanded opportunities for a richer life. It has served to undermine

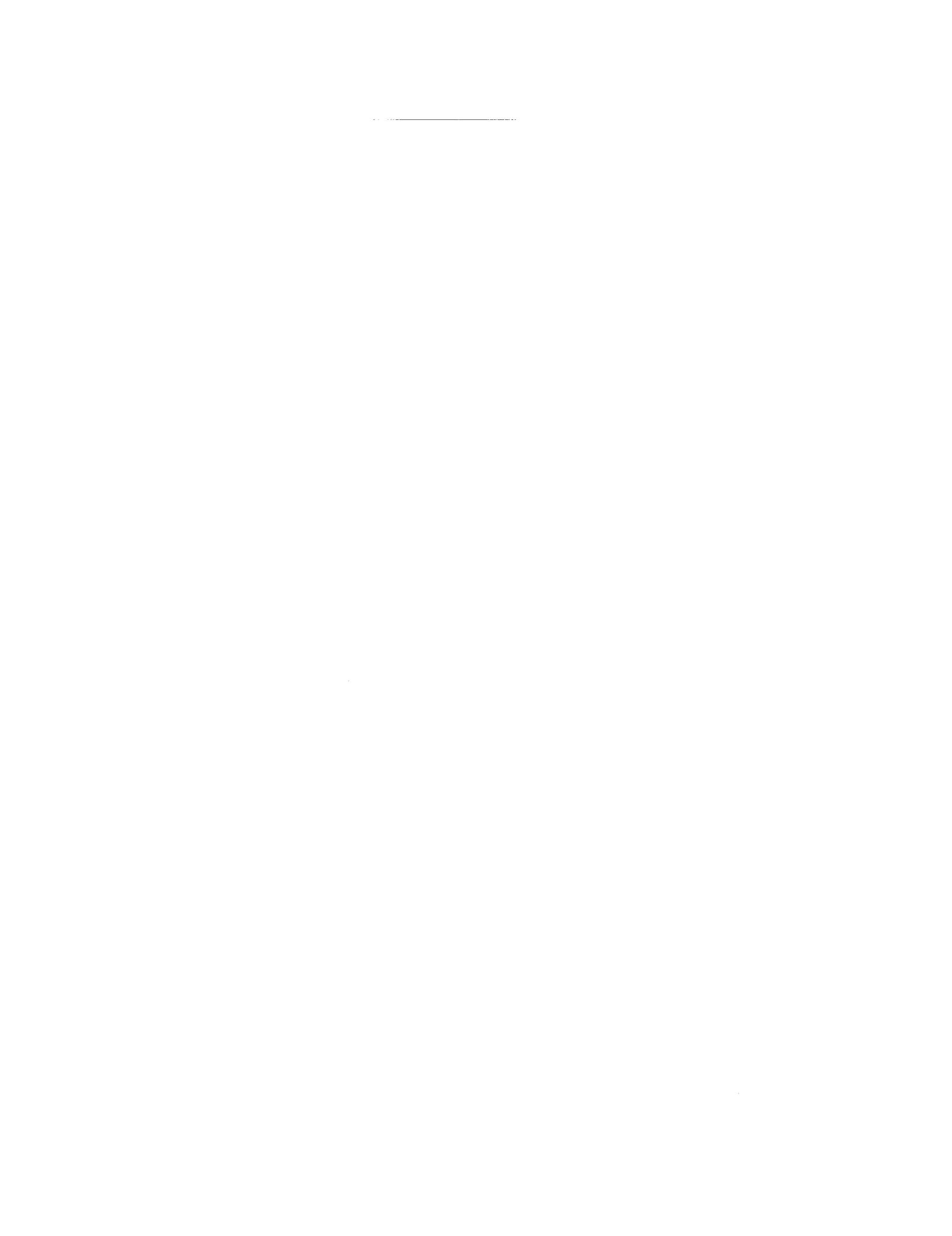
¹² “Before the impetuous torrent of civilization resistance is futile: it is quite without mercy towards the heedless and refractory. In the face of the might and superiority of civilization, which pierces mountains, flies in the sky, sees everything from the atoms invisible to the eye to the stars, and which enlightens and investigates, nations striving to advance with a medieval mentality and primitive superstitions are condemned to perish or at least to be enslaved and humiliated. But the people of the Turkish Republic have decided to live to eternity as a civilized and progressive community, and have torn to pieces the chains of slavery with a heroism unequalled in history.” Ataturk in a speech at Inebolu, 1925. (Translation by Joseph Bell.)

CHALLENGE OF THE MODERN AGE TO ISLAM

old institutions more decisively than it has yet initiated the effective development of new ones. Almost everywhere, social change has outrun institutional reforms.

To exercise effective leadership in the Middle East means above all to overcome these imbalances. It means fashioning a social structure that can accommodate newly emerging social classes and new relationships among individuals. It means forming political institutions resilient enough to overcome the present crisis of uncontrolled change, and capable of transforming further changes into evolutionary, stabilizing development.

Concern with the roots of social relationship and political institutions has thus become the test for the relevance and survival of leadership. Whether to create such new roots, who is to deal with them, what price to pay for the work, and who is to pay for it—these have now become the principal issues upon which men divide their political loyalties in the Middle East. Although certain religious conservatives and secular extremists continue to blame the West for the fact that they must face these issues, the fight is no longer primarily between the modern West and the medieval Middle East, or between the local “Westernizers” and the traditional masses. The conflict now takes place among and within Middle Easterners themselves, and until they have dealt with the roots of their problem, change in their region will continue to be frequent, sudden, discontinuous, and violent.



PART II
THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

THE social structure which characterized the Islamic community for over a millennium is being decisively altered. This is a powerful part of the reason why caliphs can no longer rule this society, ulema can no longer guide it, and the military serves new masters. This is also why all politically active Moslems are looking for new ideologies and institutions that might hold their nation together for the task of building a new society.

The four chapters which follow explore the emergence of new social classes and the changing environment for traditional classes. Together they define the "nation" which is now coming into being in most of the Middle East, the "public" with its changing aspirations, and the shifting balance of power among the groups that now supply the decision-making elite.

CHAPTER 3

KINGS, LANDLORDS, AND THE TRADITIONAL BOURGEOISIE: THE DECLINING ELITE



Prospects for Kings

IN 1951, there were ten kings upon the throne in the (then) seventeen sovereign countries between Morocco and Pakistan, almost all of them in theory and practice the final authority in the state. Today there are only six kings left, and almost all of them have suffered in the interval at least one severe crisis challenging their right to rule. A decade hence, there will probably still be kings. Those that survive, however, will not do so merely by virtue of being royal. When faith and society are in upheaval, and symbols cease to have a common meaning for all men, it is difficult for a king to hold himself above politics. Kings will henceforth succeed or fail, like other politicians, by their performance in resolving conflicting domestic pressures. As late as 1925, Reza Khan, the Iranian cavalry officer, still thought it necessary to make himself King of Kings in order to gain status and power enough to reform and stabilize his country. The army officers who have assumed power three decades later have as much power as most kings, but they no longer see advantage in being known in any guise but that pertaining to their task.

Kings can choose how to play the politics of social change. They may resist all changes and reforms except those which specially benefit their own dynasty. They may passively provide a facade of fictitious harmony behind which battles for political control of the state may continue. Or they may become figure-heads for forces already dominant in the capital but in need of the king's charismatic mantle to spread their hold in the country-

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

side. All such employment of royal power, by its very nature, involves a more tenuous status than that civil service category known in Washington as "temporary indefinite."

On the other hand, there are two alternatives for perpetuating royal authority in the midst of revolutionary change. The king himself can strive to become the principal force for modernization. Or, he can use his strength to establish a constitutional framework in which others are responsible for political decision. In that event, the king may reserve his power as a symbol of unity above particular parties by acting as moderator, but never engage himself as final authority except in crises that party politicians cannot remedy.

Modern Middle Eastern kings seem especially prone, however, to fall repeatedly between these two stools, finally never to rise again. They tend to take all powers into their own hands for the announced purpose of modernization, yet then utilize it ineffectively. Or else they spend much of their power in balancing political elements against each other without allowing any of them to carry out a long-range program or create an institutional framework that might safely contain such rivalry. In neither case does the king escape popular blame for everything that is done or left undone—whether it be the low pay of teachers or the wrong orientation in foreign affairs. The recent conversion of the Iranian, Jordanian, and to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabian monarchs to modernization seems marked by an inadequate capacity for building public institutions and political organizations, and a continuing distrust of most of the salaried middle class which must supply the essential cadre for such an effort. There is, however, more at stake in the failure of a king than of a prime minister. One prime minister can readily be replaced by another; only a revolution can replace a king.

The present Middle Eastern kings, in their striving for tenure, can draw no reassurance from memories of the past. All present kingdoms were founded on the same traditional and unstable pattern. By conquest, or by grant from a more powerful king, each kingdom was erected as an empire over towns and tribes. In each of these territories the power and survival of rulers has always fluctuated with the rebellions of towns and tribes and of their own

THE DECLINING ELITE

mercenary armies. Even when a dynasty endured, its power varied greatly from generation to generation.

That Middle Eastern kings should have come to be regarded by some Western powers as pillars of conservative strength is thus remarkable, especially when the twentieth century finds the Islamic royal institutions no more solidly anchored than in the past, yet at the same time faced with radically new tasks. This image of the stability of Middle Eastern kings is, in fact, a very recent Western illusion. During the nineteenth century, Western nations conquered or circumscribed the power of Middle Eastern kings and sultans as it fit Western purposes. The alliance between kings and Western nations dates from the era when both became conscious of their dependence upon each other for the maintenance of their respective positions. Such collaboration could not serve to build strong, enduring, conservative bulwarks both because of the character of traditional kingship in the Middle East, and because of the nature of the feudal and traditional bourgeois elements with which such royalty might most closely ally itself.

"Feudalism" in the Middle East

Contrary to the popular view, the so-called feudal rulers of today's Middle East are neither feudal nor ancient—hence both the depths of their roots and their stabilizing influence are questionable. Feudalism in the Middle East has not been traditionally a reciprocal relationship, binding lord and serf in mutual, if unequal, service. In the Ottoman Empire, for example, fiefs were granted by the sultan to enable military commanders to secure money and men, or, especially by the time of the eighteenth century, for the purpose of tax-farming. This made it difficult for the majority of feudal lords to become linked to the peasantry or identify themselves with the traditional values of the countryside. In addition, sultans usually took care, especially until the eighteenth century, to make fiefs only temporary, frequently re-dividing them, dispersing holdings, and allocating them in areas where the fief-holder was a stranger.¹ As a result, demesne

¹ A. N. Poliak, *Feudalism in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and the Lebanon, 1250-1900*, London, the Royal Asiatic Society, 1939, pp. 18, 23-25, 61 and 78.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

farms were seldom established, and neither peasantry nor nomadic tribes were effectively brought into those larger political and cultural relationships which were cemented by both European and Japanese feudalism. It may be said about the entire Middle East, as it has been said of Iran, that "whereas the power and privileges of the landowning class have been relatively constant over a long period, its composition has undergone many changes. . . . Never, however, has a stable landed aristocracy, transmitting its estates in their entirety from generation to generation, emerged."²

The European assumption of control over much of the Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries abruptly brought to an end the constant circulation of the "feudal" elite. Once the Europeans established order in the states they took over, the "feudal lords" who had fiefs at that moment could almost for the first time hope to keep them. Hence the "feudal lords" who found it prudent to collaborate with European powers were not aristocrats, Junkers, or squires rooted in established nobility or inheritance on their traditional territories. They were the most recent crop of Ottoman beneficiaries; or Egyptians or Iranians who had bought newly founded villages or state lands since the nineteenth century; Iraqi tribal sheikhs who, toward the end of that century or even later, received their tribesmen and tribal lands in fief;³ Pakistani landowners converted into tax-farmers (*zamindars*) by British initiative; or Tunisian and Moroccan caïds and pashas allowed to acquire large holdings as rewards for recent service to France. Though these lords came to be the

² Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, London, 1953, p. 259.

³ In Iraq, most of the "feudal lords" acquired absolute ownership of their land only in the 1930's and 1940's. "Because in Ottoman times the cultivators [on tribal lands] had no legal title to the land which they occupied, the landlords were able, during the period of the mandate, to use their political power to secure legal title to land which was by custom and tradition the property of the tribe. In much the same way, the English landlords in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enclosed land as their property which was traditionally common property and ousted small holders whose title was based only on custom. As in nineteenth century England, the process is being hastened by mechanization, which gives the big landowners an advantage as against the small cultivator and by inflation, which gives them the impetus to invest." (Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948, p. 107.)

THE DECLINING ELITE

major pillars upon which Britain and France rested the “indirect rule” of their protectorates and mandates in the Middle East, few of them were in a position, as were once the truly feudal lords of Europe, to commit with assurance the loyalties of the people dwelling in their domain.⁴ What linked the peasants or bedouins to them was force, ignorance, poverty, and, in some cases, blood—not reciprocal obligations or respect of noble lineage. In an age of choice, this kind of “feudalism” is much more fragile and is bound to break sooner than the European variety.

Western expectations with regard to Middle Eastern “feudalism” were, perhaps, understandable in the nineteenth century when the phenomenon was imperfectly understood, when land was still the most productive form of Middle Eastern wealth, and when the cementing of such alliances seemed the easiest and most prudent course. As long as British or French military forces could intervene directly, the erroneous premises were not too noticeable. By the middle of the twentieth century, the fragility of “feudalism” and the inability of Western powers to compensate for it by military and political intervention had grown painfully evident.

The Frailty of the Traditional Urban Upper Class

It was in the small traditional bourgeoisie⁵ of the Middle East that much Western hope for the future stability of the area used to rest. This was a hope based on very little substance, however. Except to some degree in Lebanon, the bourgeoisie of the Middle

⁴ The Western illusion began early and lingered long. In 1829 the Governor General of Bengal, Lord William Bentinck, remarked, “If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many respects, has this great advantage at least of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of British dominion and having complete control over the mass of the people.” (Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, New York, 1954, p. 304.) The consequences of collaboration in the realm of foreign affairs between the West and the traditional elite of kings, landlords, and bourgeoisie is discussed in Chapter 18.

⁵ The term “bourgeois” is used here in preference to “middle class” to allow for the fact that their income, and often during the past hundred years, their power and prestige, allowed members of this group to live upper class lives. For additional distinctions between these two terms, see Chapter 4.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

East constituted for centuries a much smaller portion of the population than its counterpart in Europe. Trade has always been uncertain, confiscation frequent, taxation heavy, inheritance fragmentive. Power led to wealth far more often than wealth led to power. Since power was unstable, there was almost continuous mobility. The bourgeoisie lacked the resources and skills to multiply wealth by increasing production. As middlemen, they operated, at least between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, in a commercial backwater of the globe. They could not, therefore, as during the comparable period in European history, become the backbone of independent cities or the cashmasters of kings. In fact, their activities did not touch the majority of the people, who produced little for sale and bartered only for bare necessities.

Although orthodox Islam spoke highly of merchants—the Prophet's wife had been in the caravan business, and cloth and cotton merchants were numbered among the first caliphs of the seventh century—trade and manufacturing were increasingly left to non-Moslems. After the ninth century, the military usually took precedence in power and status over all other groups, and its sway, rivalries and exactions were often destructive of production and trade.⁶ In this situation, the non-Moslems had the advantage of being able to retain links with each other and maintain trade even while Moslem dynasties and tribes fought with each other. Jews and Christians (Arab, Copt, Greek, and Armenian)⁷ have thus played in the Middle East a role similar to that of the Chinese in the commerce of Southeast Asia. Because an appreciable proportion of the bourgeoisie was non-Moslem in a largely Moslem society, it could not hope to perform the leading or mediating role of a middle class in relation to politics and society. Instead it functioned as a middle or lower caste in a particular economic task.

This caste, being unfettered by Islamic traditions and in almost continuous contact with non-Moslem areas, adjusted more quickly, intellectually, economically, and politically, to the com-

⁶ S. D. Goitein, "The Rise of the Near Eastern Bourgeoisie in Early Islamic Times," *Journal of World History*, Vol. III, No. 3, 1957, pp. 583-604.

⁷ Hindus played a similar role in what was to become Pakistan.

THE DECLINING ELITE

ing of European power into the Middle East.⁸ Its members became the favored middlemen—at the cost of making their social and political status even more problematical in a future Middle East independent of European rule. European overlordship, however, also made it more difficult for either Christians or Moslems to create a new, industrially productive bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was deprived of the political power to protect its own growth in the face of competition from the greater capital resources and efficiency of European production, and the cheapness and superiority of European goods.

The general increase in trade and public order that followed the establishment of European predominance in the Middle East led, under these terms of competition, to only a small increase in the size and economic power of the bourgeoisie.⁹ Its political role, however, grew considerably. Together with men from the newly created modern professions (in the early twentieth century usually sons of landowners and the bourgeoisie), it was the first class to experience, as a whole group, the discontent and frustration that arises from the disparity between well-founded aspirations and actual opportunities. It became, almost everywhere, the financial and social core of moderate nationalist movements typified by the Egyptian Wafd party. The political and social influence of this small bourgeoisie was not seriously challenged until World War II, when shrewd trading in scarce items and inflation suddenly swelled its number with *nouveaux riches* whose sense of social and political responsibility remained largely unformed.

Under the growing pressure for change from below, the bourgeoisie usually allied itself with the landlords, who were politically the dominant group in almost all Middle Eastern countries until the 1950's.¹⁰ This step was in line with its traditional

⁸ A. J. Meyer, "Entrepreneurship and Economic Development in the Middle East," a paper delivered to an Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Society, Washington, D.C., August 27, 1957.

⁹ In 1951, for example, it was estimated that after 39 years of French rule, Moroccans owned less than 5 percent of companies in Morocco capitalized at more than 100 million francs.

¹⁰ "In Syria, for instance, out of 109 members of the 1946 Parliament whose occupation was known, 96 were landowners, 7 merchants, 4 lawyers, one a landlord and a merchant, and one a contractor." (Warriner, *Land and Poverty*, p. 134.)

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

proclivity to seek greater social status and economic security by reinvesting its earnings in land rather than long-range productive facilities.

In the field of political organization, the potential of the bourgeoisie suffered after World War II from its simultaneous loss of contact with the rest of the politically active population and from its own internal splintering. Thus the bourgeois leadership of the Wafd, which had been one of the Middle East's few genuine political parties with a mass base, began to withdraw from the task of guiding through the social revolution the following it had gathered for the nationalist revolution. Some bourgeois, as a substitute for domestic support, began to look to Britain or France—until the mid-1950's their best and sometimes their only market and source of credits—as their political protectors. Others, especially the *nouveaux riches*, became more desperate in their search for domestic reassurance and turned to anti-modern groups like the Moslem Brotherhood, who promised to turn popular frustrations primarily against foreign rulers and foreign capitalists.

There were a few "senior government officials and successful business and professional men," who seemed to show "even in crises, a degree of sanity which the politicians have lost." Of this group, the *Economist* wrote in 1951: "A high proportion of them have—either at home or abroad—had a European or an American education. Almost all are sufficiently in touch with Western thought not to take the more extreme nationalist pretensions at their face value. They are interested enough in their country's affairs to make a move, here and there, to perform some simple physical act such as founding a social center or establishing a clean drinking-water supply; they are only too ready to criticize the corruption and time-serving of those in office. But they are not prepared to take a broader moral stand; they will not face the buffets of public life; they are not the stuff of which martyrs are made. Their social conscience is not sufficiently developed to make them want to risk anything for their opinions."¹¹

¹¹ Their failure was greater than they or the *Economist* could imagine on December 22, 1951, when it wrote these lines and added, "For all its apparent instability, the social system in Egypt does not yet contain enough disruptive

THE DECLINING ELITE

The education of the bourgeoisie, though superior to that of any other segment of Middle Eastern society, did not always enhance their insight or power. Just as education widened the horizon of many landlords only sufficiently to increase the social and physical distance between them and their peasants—turning them more resolutely into absentee landlords—so it often made the bourgeoisie more enterprising or more far-seeing, but therefore only inclined to enjoy themselves more before the deluge.¹² Among its professional men were a number of highly skilled, Western-trained constitutional liberals; the constitutions, codes, and books they wrote demonstrate great mastery of the law, but they also show too often a fatal neglect of the social, economic, and political conditions that can sustain lawful authority.

The bourgeoisie does not appear to be capable in most Middle Eastern countries of strengthening itself politically and economically as a class through its own initiative and resources. It has given rise to a number of remarkably capable leaders, but as a group it seems to lack the habits of courage and enterprise, and, in its present environment, lacks also the requisite safety for private individual investments of work and wealth. It is eager for acquisition, but still devotes itself to commerce far more than industry, and its gains go primarily into ventures that produce quick and high profits, and if these seem uncertain, then into land, buildings, jewelry, or into Swiss or American banks. The larger part of what it sells are raw materials, and hence more subject to price fluctuations than industrial goods. The organizational, managerial, and financial resources it can command remain circumscribed by the fact that almost all private enterprise is still family enterprise.¹³ In most countries of the Middle

elements to threaten their privileged position. . . ." Four weeks later, on January 26, at least 67 persons were killed and wounded and millions of dollars worth of property destroyed in the "Black Saturday" riot in Cairo which also brought about the fall of the Wafd government. Six months later, civilian rule had yielded altogether to Nasser's army coup.

¹² For a vivid portrayal of this bourgeoisie by an Egyptian novelist, see Albert Cossery, *The Lazy Ones*, Norfolk, Connecticut, 1952.

¹³ The economic shortcomings even of the Lebanese bourgeoisie, one of the most enterprising in the Middle East, are carefully documented by Arthur E. Mills in *Private Enterprise in Lebanon*, The American University of Beirut, 1959, and by Yusif A. Sayigh, *Entrepreneurs of Lebanon, The Role of the*

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

East, therefore, the government has already become the largest employer and investor. In Syria and Lebanon, where private enterprise has been responsible for a high rate of growth since World War II, and in Pakistan, where development has so far been slow, the shift toward a preponderance of public investment is clearly evident.¹⁴

Today, a new salaried middle class is emerging and is seizing control of Middle Eastern governments. Unlike the traditional bourgeoisie, it is eager to modernize society and the body politic no less than the economy. By stabilizing laws, instilling production-mindedness, creating new skills, raising purchasing power, increasing savings and capital investments, improving transportation and communication, the new salaried middle class could succeed in expanding opportunities for an independent bourgeoisie, whether it be drawn from members of the traditional upper class, or from the most successful members of the salaried new middle class. By independent we mean a bourgeoisie free of government as its principal contractor or controller, as well as self-reliant enough not to force the government to become its principal agent. The renewed commercialization of the Middle Eastern economy did not sufficiently strengthen the traditional bourgeoisie. The task of industrializing the Middle East therefore falls largely on the salaried new middle class whose character and role is analyzed in the next chapter.

Business Leader in a Developing Economy, Cambridge, 1962. The political acumen of this bourgeoisie in avoiding a repetition of the civil war of 1958 remains to be tested.

¹⁴ See A. J. Meyer, *Middle Eastern Capitalism*, Cambridge, 1959, pp. 32-46; Charles Issawi, "The Entrepreneur Class," in *Social Forces in the Middle East*, edited by Sydney Nettleton Fisher, Ithaca, 1955, pp. 116-136.

CHAPTER 4

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS AS THE PRINCIPAL REVOLUTIONARY AND STABILIZING FORCE



The Birth of a New Class

THE traditional Middle Eastern elite of kings, landowners, and bourgeoisie is declining in power or has already yielded its place. Workers and peasants are only beginning to enter the realm of politics. As for a middle class, the consensus of observers is that it barely exists. "Nationalism" and "social change" are nothing more than abstractions. Who shapes politics and makes the fundamental decisions in the Middle East and North Africa?

Two different answers are usually given. Individual personalities and small cliques, reply many Western policymakers. A "new indigenous intelligentsia . . . rootless [and] possessing no real economic base in an independent native middle class,"¹ is the explanation increasingly being accepted by social scientists. Here we shall argue that both these views overlook the emergence of a new social class in the Middle East as the principal revolutionary—and potentially stabilizing—force.

In our unproductive search for middle classes in underdeveloped areas, the fault has been in our expectations. We have taken too parochial a view of the structure of the middle class. A study of both Western and non-Western historical experience suggests that the British and American middle classes, which have commonly been considered prototypes, were actually special cases. Moreover, with the growing scope and scale of

¹ Morris Watnick, "The Appeal of Communism to the Peoples of Underdeveloped Areas," in *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, edited by Bert F. Hoselitz, Chicago, 1952, pp. 158-159.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

modern enterprises and institutions, the majority of the middle class even in the United States and Great Britain is no longer composed of men whose independence is rooted in their possession of productive private property. Bureaucratic organization has become the characteristic structure of business (or charity or trade unions) no less than of government, and the majority of the middle class is now salaried. They may be managers, administrators, teachers, engineers, journalists, scientists, lawyers, or army officers. A similar salaried middle class constitutes the most active political, social, and economic sector from Morocco to Pakistan.

Leadership in all areas of Middle Eastern life is increasingly being seized by a class of men inspired by non-traditional knowledge, and it is being clustered around a core of salaried civilian and military politicians, organizers, administrators, and experts.² In its style of life, however, this new middle class differs from its counterpart in the industrialized states. The Middle East moved into the modern administrative age before it reached the machine age. Its salaried middle class attained power before it attained assurance of status, order, security, or prosperity. In the Middle East, the salaried new middle class therefore uses its power not to defend order and property but to create them—a revolutionary task that is being undertaken so far without any final commitment to any particular system of institutions.

This new salaried class is impelled by a driving interest in ideas, action, and careers. It is not merely interested in ideas: its members are not exclusively intellectuals, and, being new to the realm of modern ideas and eager for action and careers, they may not be intellectuals at all. Neither are they interested only in action that enhances their power: they also share a common commitment to the fashioning of opportunities and institutions that

² For example, when Tunisia became independent in 1956 under the leadership of the Neo-Destour Party, a party controlled almost entirely by the new middle class, the election for a Constituent Assembly rewarded this class in the following way: To fill 98 seats, the country voted for 18 teachers and professors, 15 lawyers, 11 civil servants, 5 doctors, 4 pharmacists, 2 journalists, 2 commercial employees, 1 engineer, 1 appraiser, 5 workers, 17 farmers, and 17 businessmen and contractors. By contrast, every Middle Eastern parliament prior to 1950, except that of Turkey, contained a majority of landowners and a minority of professional men and industrialists.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

will provide careers open to all who have skills. This involves them in actions quite novel to their society, and hence also distinguishes them from previous politicians. They are not concerned merely with safe careers. They know that, without new ideas and new actions dealing with the backwardness and conflicts of their society, careers will not open or remain secure. The men of this new class are therefore committed ideologically to nationalism and social reform.

Obviously, there is also a part of the new middle class that has neither deep convictions nor understanding. In contrast to the dominant strata of its class, this segment excludes itself from the process of making political choices, and hence does not alter the present analysis. It is also true that some members of the new middle class are interested only in ideas (hence inspire and clarify, or merely stand by), only in action (hence rise spectacularly and fall), or only in safe careers (hence merely serve). Among the last, clerks especially compose the largest yet relatively most passive segment of the new middle class. Our analysis focuses on men interested in ideas, action, and careers because such a description fits the most influential core of this group.

There are also opportunists among them but, by now, of two different kinds which are often confused by those who are taken advantage of. There is the politician who, largely for the sake of satisfying the aspirations of his new middle class constituency and so also staying in power, takes advantage of whatever opportunities may offer, east or west, at home or abroad. There is also the free-floating opportunist—Stendhal's novels describe him very well for a period in French history when values and institutions were similarly in doubt—who represents no one but himself, but represents himself exceedingly well, being loyal only to the art of survival. Some sell their skills as political brokers; some come close to selling their country. In the twentieth century it has become essential, however, to be able to distinguish between those, however perverse they may appear, who are out to gain greater elbow-room for the new middle class they represent and those, however smooth, who also make deals because they can fashion no connections unless they continually sell themselves.

In the Middle East, this salaried new middle class assumes a

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

far more important role than the local property-owning middle class. Although the latter is about as numerous as that portion of the new middle class which is actually employed,³ it has far less power than the salaried group. Neither in capital, organization, nor skills do the merchants and middlemen control anything comparable to that power which can be mustered by the machinery of the state and hence utilized by the new salaried class. In this part of the world, no other institutions can mobilize as much power and capital as those of the state. By controlling the state in such a strategic historical period, this new salaried class has the capabilities to lead the quest for the status, power, and prosperity of middle-class existence by ushering in the machine age.⁴

³ In this analysis, the term "new middle class" excludes the property owning middle class. However, it includes both those who are now drawing salaries and a far larger group—a "would-be new middle class" which resembles this class in every respect except that it is unemployed. The "would-be" salariat is discussed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter.

From a different perspective, Professor Morroe Berger defines the middle class as including (1) "merchants and small manufacturers, self-employed, whose income and influence are not great enough to place them among the really powerful men in political or economic life" and (2) "independent professionals such as doctors and lawyers; employed managers, technicians, and administrative workers such as clerks and bureau chiefs; and the civil service." He concluded that, in 1947, these amounted altogether to about half a million persons in Egypt, 51 percent of them merchants; that is, mostly small retailers. ("The Middle Class in the Arab World," in *The Middle East in Transition*, edited by Walter Laqueur, New York, 1958, p. 63.) Thus defined, the salaried middle class and the property-owning middle class together amount to about six percent of the gainfully employed population or about three percent of the total population in Egypt. If one also includes the agricultural middle class, as does Professor Hassan el-Safty ("The Middle Class in Egypt," *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, April 1957, pp. 47-53), the total figure for Egypt in 1947 increases to 16 percent. The middle class is probably as large, or else smaller, in other Middle Eastern countries. By contrast, a new middle class composed of the salariat—whether employed or unemployed—must be estimated to number (no one has yet counted them) a far higher percentage. Aspiration is politically as relevant a criterion for such a census as education and position.

⁴ The present work is not the first to notice the emergence of this new class in underdeveloped areas. Professor T. Cuyler Young, drawing in part on his experiences as Political Attaché at the American Embassy in Tehran during 1951-1952, was the first to publish an analysis of the role of the new middle class in the Middle East in "The Social Support of Current Iranian Policy," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1952, pp. 125-143. Professor John J. Johnson was the first to suggest that in Latin America "the urban middle groups are vitally, if not decisively, important in an area where one still commonly hears and reads that there is no middle class to speak of [and] where, in the view of traditional scholarship, individuals hold the center of the stage." (*Political Change in Latin America: The Emergence of the Middle Sectors*, Stanford, 1958, pp. vii-ix.)

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

In the West, a variety of organizational structures and devices—both governmental and private—have gradually made individual entrepreneurship a rare commodity. Stock companies, subsidies, insurance, tariffs, as well as large governmental, business, and union bureaucracies have served, among other things, to reduce individual risk and enlarge institutional predictability. The pressures that make for organization and organization men are much more desperate in the Middle East. In most of the countries of this region, there are few important jobs in the modern sector of the economy available outside the large organizations and institutions that constitute, or are guided by, government. Those who cannot get into them or cannot hold on to them usually count for little, and often cannot make a living. For most there is little hope for safety or prosperity in separate personal endeavors. Indeed, more organization is urgently needed for aggregating separate interests, bargaining among them, and executing a common will.

Among these two and the present essay, there are common intellectual links. In his preface, Johnson states that he "first became fully aware of the importance of the urban middle sectors in Latin American politics during the fifteen months in 1952-53 that [he] was with the State Department as Acting Chief of the South American Branch of the Division of Research for American Republics." At that time, a number of us in the Division of Research for Near East, South Asia, and Africa had contributed to an analysis in January 1952 of the causes of *Political Instability in the Middle East* which was to become a prototype for a series of such studies of other underdeveloped regions. An evaluation of the role of the "urban middle sector" was one of the principal themes of that study.

If at least one of the collaborators of that 1952 study has changed his mind, and substituted "middle class" for "middle sector," it is because the latter term is finally too broad: Johnson includes within it the "poorly paid white-collar employee in government" as well as the "wealthy proprietors of commercial and industrial enterprises." Class is a term with peculiar advantages. The anthropological term "acculturated" includes those who have forsaken pottery for aluminum no less than those who have left Islam for communism. The parochially historical term "Westernized" defines only one portion of those who now make modern political choices. The sociological terms "traditional," "transitional," and "modern" designate way-stations in social communication and psychic mobility insufficiently related to conflicts over political ideology and power. The political term "elite" is often used to designate any dominating power group without concern for the social classes from which it may be drawn. Once the term "class" is freed from its ideological strait jackets and defined dynamically in terms of the evolving interests, opportunities, and behavior of a class in the midst of the transformation of a *society*, and not merely of its *economy*, "class" may well continue to serve us as the most useful category for relating changes in social structure to changes in political power.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

The intelligentsia, that is, those with knowledge or awareness to see that a social and political revolution is in progress, form the largest and politically most active component of the new middle class. But they are not the only component of this class. Some members of this new class are already middle class in their pattern of consumption but still searching for ideas (hence new in a society once sure of its truths). Others are interested only in ideas about means and not, like the intelligentsia, also about ends, and the concern for truth of the intellectuals does not interest them. The intelligentsia, however, is the predominant force of this class, in part because its knowledge inescapably exposes the weakness or irrelevance of tradition. Just as in Russia in the nineteenth century, however, the intelligentsia is more rebellious than self-confident. Its thought is "by its very nature unspecific, unformulated, unfixed . . . sensitive to every intellectual wind from Europe, alert to the changing history of both Russia and the West. For all their dogmatism at every stage, some of the most energetic minds of the intelligentsia passed from one ideological stage often to its extreme opposite in their insistent search for a total system which should somehow resolve all the largest questions of national destiny."⁵

They are new men. They are often the very first in the history of their family to be literate. They often discover their best friends at school or in a political movement, not among kin or established brotherhood or faction. They are the first to trust strangers on grounds of competence or shared ideology.⁶ They are ready to trade new dogmas for old. They are also the first publicly to confess their uncertainties. Until Gamal abd al-Nasser no Egyptian politician had begun a statement of his philosophy with the confession: ". . . I feel that I stand before a boundless world, a bottomless sea—and a trepidation restrains me from plunging into it since, from my point of vantage, I see no other shore to head for."⁷

⁵ Herbert E. Bowman, "Intelligentsia in Nineteenth Century Russia," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Spring 1957, p. 15.

⁶ Some of the men appointed to the cabinet by the Iraqi army conspirators of 1958 had until their appointment neither heard of the revolution nor met their new chiefs.

⁷ Gamal abd al-Nasser, *Egypt's Liberation: The Philosophy of the Revolution*, Washington, 1955, p. 17.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

In Russia the intelligentsia was often known as the *raznochintsy*, the "men of varied ranks," on the justifiable recognition that they sprang from all classes, but also on the unwarranted conclusion that they therefore belonged to none. To make this assumption about the Middle East is to suppose that the classes from which they come, in contrast to the one in which they are now gathering, are solid and neatly distinguishable in their relationship to each other and their role in society. That is not the case, and one of the principal reasons in the Middle East as it was in Russia for the departure from their previous classes of men eager for ideas, actions, and careers is that these classes can no longer maintain their customary relationships to each other, or play their traditional role in what is becoming a modern society. It is their new role that defines their class membership, not the accident of their birth in a particular traditional social class. "The French expression '*sorti du peuple*,' like the English 'sprung from the working class' does in fact indicate both origin and breach with them."⁸

In the Middle East (as in other rapidly changing, underdeveloped societies) the new intelligentsia acts in behalf of the older ruling classes only until it is strong enough to win control of the government. When this occurs, however, the intelligentsia no longer remains socially unattached but acts in the interests of the new middle class of which it is an integral part. It cannot preserve the privileges of the older ruling classes if it hopes to propel any Middle Eastern country into the modern age. Similarly, it cannot offer the immediate rewards sought by workers and peasants, because its plans for the modernization of the country call for mobilization of the underlying population for new roles and productive sacrifices.

In the Middle East, as in Russia, the new middle class springs largely, though not exclusively, from groups that had not hitherto been important, and hence had more reason and less deadweight to take advantage of new knowledge and skills. Le Tourneau's description of North Africa could readily be applied

⁸ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, London, 1954, p. 159.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

to the rest of the Middle East. One can still find among the middle class, he points out, "a good number of members of the old leading families, the ruling aristocracy, the trading bourgeoisie, or even, but in lesser proportion, intellectuals of a traditional kind." Since the turn of the century, however, "things have changed, and young men from the hinterland now form the essential backbone of the middle class." The political parties reflect this change: "The Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto has as leader a pharmacist from Setif, M. Ferhat Abbas [until recently Premier of Algeria's Provisional Government]; his principal lieutenants are doctors, lawyers, and teachers among whom almost no one is a descendant of a 'grande famille' of earlier days. The same holds true for the Tunisian Neo-Destour, whose leader, M. Habib Bourguiba, is a lawyer born to a humble family of the Sahel, and for the Moroccan Istiqlal, whose governing committee is, in large part, composed of former students of the Moslem College of Fez."⁹ In Egypt, Nasser illustrates the type perfectly: the son of a postmaster, he graduated in 1938 from the first class of the Egyptian Military Academy that had admitted students from other than the upper classes. He was among the first to take advantage of a new avenue to knowledge and status. Such men are not merely strays or a stratum of spokesmen for other classes but the creators of a new class system more appropriate to the new tasks and relationships of the emerging modern age in the Middle East.

The new middle class itself does not define or crystallize its character from the very outset, but only as its various strata come to intervene in the process of modernization and assume additional roles in it. It originates in the intellectual and social transformation of Middle Eastern society, not as a homo-

⁹ Roger LeTourneau, "Le Développement d'une Classe Moyenne en Afrique du Nord," in *Development of a Middle Class in Tropical and Sub-Tropical Countries, Record of the XXIX Session Held in London from 13-16 September 1955*, Brussels, International Institute of Differing Civilizations, 1956, pp. 106-110. The group that split off from the Moroccan Istiqlal party under Mehdi Ben Barka's leadership in 1959, the National Union of Popular Forces, is even more clearly the product of a class shaped by modern secular education and the values of the new middle class.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

geneous socio-economic class but as a secularized action group oriented toward governmental power. After capturing political power, it also attains hold of its own economic base. By controlling government in the Middle East, it also comes to own or control the countries' largest and most significant means of production. It becomes a salaried middle class with the power to decide its own salaries and responsibilities. The attainment of salaried status by this stratum of the middle class in turn also legitimizes the drive for the same status by the remaining would-be salaried middle class and usually gives that demand priority among political problems.

Unlike the traditional elite of landowners and trading bourgeoisie or the tradition-bound artisans or peasants, it is thus the first class in the Middle East that is wholly the product of the transition to the modern age. Unlike the emergent new generation of peasants and urban workers, it is already powerful and self-conscious enough to undertake the task of remolding society.

The new middle class has been able to act as a separate and independent force because: (1) prior to its seizure of power, it is freer than any other class from traditional bonds and preconceptions, and better equipped to manipulate armies and voluntary organizations as revolutionary political instruments; (2) once it controls the machinery of a modernizing state, it possesses a power base superior to that which any other class in the Middle East can muster on the basis of prestige, property, or physical force; (3) it is numerically one of the largest groups within the modern sector of society; (4) it is, so far, more obviously cohesive, more self-conscious, and better trained than any other class; (5) its political, economic, and social actions, in so far as they come to grips with social change, are decisive in determining the role other classes will play in the future; and (6) it has shown itself capable of marshalling mass support. Wherever the salaried new middle class has become dominant in the Middle East, it has become the chief locus of political and economic power and of social prestige. There are few classes anywhere in the world of which this much can be said.¹⁰

¹⁰ Hence we cannot accept the Marxist idea that the intelligentsia, since it does not start from an economic base of its own, is unable to act in its own interest but must ally itself with one class or another. In areas like the Middle

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

Thus there can rise to power a Nasser as "Saladin in a Grey Flannel Suit,"¹¹ greeted as hero or devil, but conceivable in these dimensions largely because he symbolizes and represents a whole class—a class which is the principal actor of the age. Those who disagree with his policies or methods may continue to think of him as devil, but they at least must recognize that this kind of devil cannot be exorcised. As the representative of a particular policy, Nasser can be foiled. As the representative of a class, and his class is the product of the Middle East's movement into the modern age, his kind cannot be made to disappear by military intervention. To acknowledge the growing presence of such a class is also to deny the long-held Western myth that the passing of the remaining older ruling elites in such countries as Iran or Jordan would leave an internal social and political vacuum.

Conflicts within the New Middle Class

To seek to create a modern prosperous economy, a modern society, and a modern nation is a noble objective. However, the task itself involves painful decisions about who shall receive rewards, or shall no longer receive them, and who shall change position, and when and how. There are obviously different ways of eliciting sacrifices, sharing sacrifices, and establishing goals for which such sacrifices are to be made. There are, correspondingly, different ways of minimizing the antagonism

East, Soviet analysts have talked about a "national bourgeoisie," composed of local industrialists, merchants, and bankers, a "lower middle class" which employs little or no outside labor, an "intelligentsia" of students and clerks, even a "military intelligentsia." (See Walter Z. Laqueur, "The 'National Bourgeoisie,' A Soviet Dilemma in the Middle East," *International Affairs*, July 1959, pp. 324-331.) They have failed to perceive, however, the central role of the class which contains such men as Ataturk, Nasser, Kassim, and Bourguiba and which not only leads the nationalist revolution, but is the harbinger and architect of a decisive change in the social structure of the Middle East.

There are fundamental reasons for this failure of recognition. Perceptively, the Marxist philosopher Georg Lukacs has noted: "In such periods of transition, society is not dominated by any system of production. . . . In these circumstances it is, of course, impossible to speak of the operation of any economic laws which would govern the entire society. . . . There is a condition of acute struggle for power or of a latent balance of power . . . : the old law is no longer valid and the new law is not yet generally valid." He adds, "As far as I know, the theory of historical materialism has not yet confronted this problem

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

of conflicting interests and values as the new middle class translates its objectives into the mission of the entire nation. It is also possible for nationalists representing the new middle class to hold different conceptions of the national interest in relation to foreign nations. What, then, determines these choices on the part of the new middle class?

The factors that readily come to mind—the burden of the past, available skills and resources and the awareness and opportunities to utilize them, differences in individual character and temperament, the force of ideas and the exigencies of particular local power constellations—are all relevant and important.¹² An elite in power, whatever the social class from which it springs, faces problems and temptations in the very business of maintaining itself in power which will often distinguish it from those who have the same hopes and interests but not the same responsibilities. Membership in a particular social class is by no means the sole determinant of policy decisions. Differences in political choices among members of the new middle class, however, also reflect differences among the strata of that class and the variant character of its class consciousness.

Such differences are real enough, but they usually become politically important only after the new middle class has achieved power. Earlier, all its members normally concentrate on the battle for power, mobility, and status in order to open up the

from an economic perspective." (*Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 243 and 249.) As far as the present author is aware, this vacuum remains.

¹¹ C. L. Sulzberger's phrase in *The New York Times*, March 26, 1958.

¹² Not that we know by any means enough about how these factors operate. It would be most instructive to make a number of case studies, to examine, for example, the dynamics involved in the change by different age-groups in the control over large parts of the same political movement (e.g., from al-Fassi to ben Barka in Morocco's Istiqlal party); the change of outlook within the same family (e.g., the change from Abbas, father, recipient of the French Legion of Honor to Abbas, son, recent Premier of the Provisional Algerian Government in Exile); and the change within a single spirit (e.g., Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story: A Study in Loyalties*, London, 1946) and contrast these with the fate of a party which remains under the control of a single age-group for several decades (e.g., the Wafd in Egypt), of a family which maintains its role as a mediator above political factions for several generations (e.g., the Shehabs of Lebanon), and of a man who never changed his mind (e.g., Nuri of Iraq).

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

controlling positions in society and administration. Soon after the triumph of the new middle class, however, it becomes apparent that there is simply not room for all of them—that some will be “in” and most will be “out.” It also becomes clear that, although they are agreed on the need for the transformation of their society, they are not of the same mind as to what to do with their historical opportunity.¹³

Such differences, however, are never merely political, or merely social, or merely economic. All three realms are entwined as, for example, in one of the most profound of all tensions within the new middle class—between those who are salaried and those who would be like them but are not. Only a minority of the Middle East’s new middle class actually holds jobs and draws salaries. The rest either can find no jobs consonant with their skills and values, or else work for status quo regimes which deny this group status and power. It would be quite misleading to exclude the “would-be” new middle class from this middle class. Both components of the middle class possess modern rather than traditional knowledge, and both are eager for a forced march into the modern age. Both are striving for the status, power, order, and prosperity that ought to go with middle-class existence. They resemble each other in every respect except success. This would-be middle class will therefore enlist itself in any movement that promises the kind of education that creates modern skills, the kind of job that opens a career, and the kind of action that gives a mere career individual rewards and social importance.

The inclusion of this group among the new middle class may be unexpected to those who restrict themselves to the classical economic definition of classes. In areas like the Middle East, however, where a modern economy is still to be created, and where control over the state and the forces of social change is more potent than ownership of property, property relations alone cannot serve to define class relations. In the midst of a profound transformation of society, it would also be quite wrong to define

¹³ At such a point, the intelligentsia may well split again and speak for different competing factions within the new middle class—another reason why it is not possible to use “intelligentsia” and “new middle class” interchangeably.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

a social class statically, in terms of occupation, or employment at a particular moment in time. Each class must be defined in terms of its political, social, and economic role in the process of social change. In the present instance, that means taking account of all who either already perform the role of a member of the salaried middle class or who are bent by revolutionary action, if necessary, to gain a chance to perform this role and no other.

How searing the difference can be between the new salaried class and the would-be middle class, whose basic orientation must be defined by middle class deprivations instead of middle class achievements, is illustrated by the situation in Iran. The Iranian example also demonstrates on how many levels that difference can recur, and how quickly the pressure of frustration can mount in the Middle East. In the 1920's and 1930's there were jobs in Iran for all who were educated, and there was only one cause of frustration. Status was still largely the fruit of traditional rank rather than individual accomplishment. "Those who had been educated abroad [and] had good family background and professed unquestionable loyalty to the political system . . . were given top administrative posts. . . . The graduates of the University of Tehran and other colleges (plus some high school graduates during the 1930's) were assigned less important government positions and formed the majority of the lower echelon of the civil service. They tended to come from families where the fathers had been merchants, guildsmen, and clergymen."¹⁴

Within a decade, the causes of discontent had multiplied enormously. Those members of the new middle class who had ideas and careers found their opportunities for status and action circumscribed. By the early 1940's, the "surplus of government employees was glaringly evident at all levels, [hence] the prestige of civil service jobs also dropped. . . . The duties proved to be routine and the job gave . . . no responsibility or sense of social participation." Inflation, the result both of

¹⁴ Reza Arasteh, "Education for Bureaucracy and Civil Service in Iran," an unpublished manuscript presented to the Faculty Seminar of the Program in Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University, May 1959, pp. 38-40. Arasteh has now enlarged upon this subject in *Education and Social Awakening in Iran, 1850-1960*, Leiden, 1962.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

planned and unplanned scarcities in the economy, took its toll. "The civil servant was no longer able to maintain his accustomed standard of living, and since then it has become necessary for him to take on a second job, equally uninspiring." He had also become socially isolated, "that is, he feels alienated from his family and he also senses the abyss that lies between him and the under-privileged, illiterate masses." He had also become more conscious of "the divergency of [his] interests with the upper-class elite whose mode of life is even more Western than [his] own."¹⁵

But that is not all. Just at a time when the status of those members of the new middle class having careers is becoming increasingly insecure, they are also being exposed to the growing challenge of a would-be middle class demanding careers, status, and power. Approximately 18,000 students graduated from Iranian colleges between 1851 and 1958. A smaller number studied abroad. Yet in 1958 alone, 9,321 students were enrolled at the University of Tehran and more than 10,000 additional Iranians were studying in universities abroad.¹⁶ There are few jobs open for them in the government, and even fewer in private business.

Yet a still larger number are waiting—waiting to get into schools in which there are no vacancies in order to wait for a job that does not exist. "Because the University of Tehran and the universities in the provinces can accept only a third of those who apply, competition is very keen, and family influence often plays a part in acceptance." But the number of those who actually apply is only a partial measure of frustration. "Looking at it one way, the present 20,000 (approximately) Iranian college students constitute only 10 percent of secondary school enrollment, and two percent of the graduates of elementary schools." However, if we compare the number of college students with the potential college age group in the total population (some 1,760,000), or merely in the major urban areas (some 440,000), then the

¹⁵ Arasteh, "Education for Bureaucracy and Civil Service in Iran," pp. 39-43.

¹⁶ By contrast, only 16,229 students were enrolled at various levels of the Koranic schools, once the only educational institutions. (Ernst A. Messer-schmidt, *Iran*, Cologne, 1953, p. 48.) The figures for the religious schools apply to 1952/53.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

number of students who actually reach college is far below one percent.¹⁷ "There is sufficient evidence to indicate that this large college age group . . . constitutes for a non-technical society like Iran an unrestful group and a potential source of change."¹⁸

In Egypt there has occurred the same closing of opportunities during the past decade. In 1947, about a third of all Egyptians with primary education or above held government jobs. The entire educational system was designed largely to prepare students for the civil service and, until recently, salary and promotions depended on the type of school certificate, rather than on the nature of the work or the skill of performance. In 1953, about 41 percent "or 46 percent, depending on how closely one calculated," of total expenditures went for government salaries and wages.¹⁹ Meanwhile, although a third of all Egyptian children of school age had no opportunity even for primary education, there were almost twice as many university students in proportion to the population as in industrialized Great Britain, and all would be clamoring for appropriate jobs. In Iraq between 1950 and 1955, about 10,000 Iraqis graduated from the Colleges of Law, Commerce, Arts, and Sciences, but only 1,250 of them found jobs in government and business.²⁰

Partially overlapping the distinction between the working and jobless sections of the new middle class is the difference between the younger and older members of this class. "Youth" is not a passing phase in this region where half of all the people are under 20 years old, and where population grows so quickly and opportunities so slowly. In this situation men in their forties may still have almost all the naïveté of youth—being untouched by careers, status, and power—yet have none of youth's innocence, for they know what they have missed.

The plight of youth is obvious when the elite is recruited only from traditional classes. This plight is not resolved when the new

¹⁷ In the United States, 22 percent of this age group goes to college.

¹⁸ Arasteh, "Education for Bureaucracy and Civil Service in Iran," pp. 17-28, *passim*.

¹⁹ Morroe Berger, "Civil Service and Society," an unpublished paper prepared for a Panel on Comparative Public Administration, Fiftieth Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 1954.

²⁰ *Al-Hawadith* (a Baghdad daily), September 17, 1955.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

middle class comes into its own. Initially, it grows worse. Those who have arrived often come to the top in their thirties (Ataturk, Nasser) or their forties (Kassim, Ayub). What they do can have more far-reaching results in the lives of their people than the actions of any preceding government. Yet almost all of them become authoritarians who do not intend to relinquish the reins of power until they die. Nor do members of the leading echelon of administrators and directors in government, business, journalism, schools, etc. mean to depart before the particular head of state to whom they owe their position. The older group of nationalists often learned patience and perseverance in the long struggle for power when a foreign state could always be made to bear the blame for the postponement of success. The younger men now find no target for their frustration except their own ruling elite.

When youth wins out early and retires late, all the young men who mature for action thereafter are unlikely to be able to acquire a stake in the status quo and hence in moderation. When the age group that made the revolution lingers, yet does not increase the range of employment for those with talent, energy, and ideas, then the young are likely to remain radical (i.e., insist on going to the roots of the problem) or else extremist (i.e., using violence to substitute a dogmatic answer of their own). The characteristic extremism or radicalism of contemporary Middle Eastern student groups must therefore be taken more seriously than it might be in countries where one might smile comfortably at Clemenceau's jest that men who are not socialists at twenty have no heart, and men who remain socialists at forty have no head.

The sharp and often bitter competition among members of the new middle class, however, does not inhibit the acquisition of a common historical awareness that each of them suffers from the same burden of the past and the same frustrations of the present. In the very fact of their separate individuality lies the essence of their common fate.²¹ Coming into being by influx from all social

²¹ Some may concentrate on preserving their status, some on enlarging it, others on attaining it. Such competition, however, does not touch their class membership. Separate individuals, to amend only slightly a formulation by Karl Marx (*The German Ideology*, New York, 1938, p. 49), form a class only in so far as they play a common role in relation to social change, and

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

classes—uniting the Western-educated son of a landlord with the army-trained son of a postmaster—the new middle class is the first in Middle Eastern history for whom family connections can no longer help automatically to establish class membership. Also, being itself composed of new men, it is the first which cannot hope to rest on inherited status or existing opportunities. It is the first class for whom communication depends on successful persuasion of other individuals; it cannot base itself on the implicit consensus of the past. The new middle class is distinguishable from all other classes in the Middle East by being the first to be composed of separate individuals. It is therefore also the first class for which the choice between democracy, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism is a real and open choice.

The Relationship of the New Middle Class to Other Classes

The fact that the goals of the new middle class demand the mobilization of the entire society in no way implies that the role it assigns to others in its national design will correspond to the interests felt by other classes. Even the communists, whose ideology declares their dictatorship to be in the interests of the proletariat, cannot escape this clash of class interests. "It took some time until the lesson had . . . been learned; communism must cease to be 'proletarian.' . . . 'Revolution' no longer signifies 'liberation of the toilers' but 'all power to the planners.'"²² No

have to carry on a common battle against another class or seek collaboration with it. Otherwise, they may be on hostile terms with each other as competitors.

²² G. L. Arnold, "Collectivism Reconsidered," *British Journal of Sociology*, March 1955, p. 12. The issue of antagonism between the planners and the workers had actually been raised decades before the Russian Revolution. As early as 1899, a Polish revolutionist named Waclaw Machajski had raised this point in *The Evolution of Social Democracy*, and in 1904, in *The Intellectual Worker*, he restated his thesis that the theory of socialism had not been worked out in the interests of the proletariat but of a new force, "the growing army of intellectual workers and the new middle class." Their revolution would produce a state capitalism in which the technicians, organizers, administrators, educators, and journalists would constitute the "great joint stock company known as the State, and become, collectively, a new privileged stratum over the manual workers." (Daniel Bell, "One Road from Marx: On the Vision of Socialism, and the Fate of Workers' Control, in Socialist Thought," *World Politics*, July 1959, pp. 491-512.)

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

other rulers, at least in underdeveloped areas, can escape this conflict. If most Middle Eastern peasants and workers want more worldly goods, they want them for the sake of living well here and now; for the sake of gaining the prestige of offering larger dowries, of having more leisure. The contrast between postponing rewards and reaping them now is great enough, especially in a part of the world where scarcity and uncertainty have always loomed so threateningly, to create valid and deeply felt distinctions between political parties; indeed, between styles of life. Hence there is no reason to assume that the contradiction—even between those who demand immediate satisfactions for workers and peasants and those who claim to represent their "true" interests in the long run—can be "non-antagonistic."²³

Such contradictions need not, however, become overtly antagonistic. This is not because nationalist ideologists deny that such conflicts are genuine, but because the sense of class interests is still blurred. The new middle class has only recently been emerging as a class and tribal and family loyalties remain predominant among many of the peasants and workers. Although the disciplined organization of a majority of urban workers into trade unions in Morocco and Tunisia within a decade or less demonstrates how quickly the Middle East is changing, the mobilization of peasantry and workers by the new middle class has scarcely begun in most countries of this region. Charismatic and nationalist identification between leaders and followers frequently creates much overlapping enthusiasm even when there are few overlapping interests. And peasants and workers are often content to yield much for concrete rewards, regardless of the political system that grants them—especially greater justice from the courts, more honesty from the administrators, more wells, more schools, more food. The Middle East is only beginning to enter the age of choice, and hence of experiencing the price of making friends and enemies among one's own people. Middle Eastern political and social stability, therefore, has scarcely yet been tested.

The new middle class is not the first class that has sought to

²³ Cf. editorial in *Peiping People's Daily* on "non-antagonistic contradictions," reprinted in *Pravda*, April 15, 1957.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

take the leading role in modernizing the Middle East. There were individual rulers in the nineteenth century who recognized that the survival of their power, the prestige of their dynasty, and the security of their domain depended on the modernization at least of their army, bureaucracy, and trade. Mohammed Ali (in power 1805-1848) in Cairo, and Sultan Mahmud II (in power 1808-1839) in Constantinople were among the earliest such rulers. Later, when Middle Eastern empires were succeeded by independent states, the bourgeoisie and large landowners assumed this task, but once again limited their performance largely to what was required to enhance their own status and power. Hence trade and bureaucracy remained the principal foci of modernization. To reflect the participation of a somewhat broader group in politics, party cliques and quasi-parliamentary structures were developed. Since European influence in the Middle East was usually strong enough during this period to curb the army's growth, it was modernized only sufficiently to make it an adequate repressive force. There was little or no response to pressures for modernization from below, and no general commitment to deal with social change.

This older bourgeoisie was in its structure, interests, and relationships, and hence in its political role, quite different from the emergent new middle class. The former maintained itself in urban enclaves within a "feudal" society.²⁴ It never attained the strength to unite city and countryside into a single economic unit, or the courage to reshape that larger society which was, nonetheless, beginning to crumble around it.

Many of the small businessmen—the principal pillars of the propertied middle class—have tended here as elsewhere "to develop a generalized hostility toward a complex of symbols and processes bound up with industrial capitalism, the steady growth and concentration of government, labor organizations, and business enterprises, and the correlative trend toward greater rationalization of production and distribution."²⁵ Their interests

²⁴ This distinction between the role of the bourgeoisie and the middle class is also employed by G. D. H. Cole, "The Conception of the Middle Classes," *The British Journal of Sociology*, December 1950, pp. 275-290.

²⁵ Martin Trow, "Small Businessmen, Political Tolerance, and McCarthy," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1958, p. 274.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

therefore differ from those of a salaried new middle class accustomed to life in an organization, and their range of interests and their links with the new class are too limited in the Middle East to give them a leading role in shaping the direction of a society in upheaval.

In part, of course, even the salaried middle class is aware of itself only as an interest group with pragmatic, specific, and relatively short-run demands. It may concentrate on conspicuous consumption—acquiring Cadillacs, building steel mills regardless of their relative economic utility, or improving armies that are already strong enough to maintain internal security and protect the frontiers against all but the large industrialized powers. To allocate savings and scarce foreign exchange to the satisfaction of the immediate desires of the new middle class in this manner is no different from allowing them to be used by peasants for larger dowries—the conflict is then between interest groups, not between different orientations toward social change. The interest of one group is satisfied at the direct expense of another's.

It is quite apparent, however, that the pace and pain of social change had become too great by the second half of this century for the new middle class to avoid acquiring a larger historical consciousness of its role.²⁶ The new middle class has become the first bearer of civic spirit on a national scale in the Middle East because it cannot translate its ideas into action or achieve careers or status unless it creates a nation of individuals linked by consciousness and material fact—a nation that economically, socially, and politically can survive social change. For almost every individual in the Middle East is now in motion, even those who are still standing still. Things are not the same for those who toil or die in traditional fashion if their neighbors now have modern implements to plant modern cash crops and can keep themselves healthy with modern medicines. When people come to be called traditionalists by their neighbors, the old spell has been broken.

The new middle class not only possesses the kind of empathy

²⁶ In Lebanon, however, there appears to be a peculiar obstacle to such a change: various religious and ethnic groups have become political interest groups, each entitled to a proportionate share of jobs in parliament, bureaucracy, and education.

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

that allows its members to see themselves "in the other fellow's situation."²⁷ Even in traditional Islam, it was not infrequent for an artisan to become the leader of a religio-political rebellion, or for a soldier or tribal chief to become Sultan. Some could envisage playing such roles; others could not. What characterizes the new middle class in the Middle East is that it is the first that has the capacity to envisage new types of roles to be played in a new kind of world.

In the midst of a profound social transformation which it helps to shape and sharpen, this new middle class will, of course, not remain a stable or static element. In part it will give birth to new strata from within itself; in part it will be midwife to other classes kindred to it—namely those which are usually termed upper and lower middle classes. Indeed, these are already beginning to appear in their modern version.

Given the predominant role of the new middle class in the government, and hence in the social and economic development of the country, the modern upper middle class is very likely to develop to a considerable extent from among the ranks of the former. Even the members of modern professions, almost exclusively sons of landlords and the traditional bourgeoisie earlier in this century, are being increasingly drawn from the same broader ranks as the salaried middle class. If such social and economic development grows apace, the modern upper middle class of politicians, professional men, and administrators may well come to dominate society and give it a moderate orientation.

This upper middle class which starts, as it were, from scratch, may be joined by private entrepreneurs taking advantage of the new political stability and the economic foundations built by the government. It seems, however, rather rare for members of traditional bourgeois families to take advantage of their capital and connections to acquire new skills relevant to an industrial economy.²⁸ To have become rich in traditional fashion often shrouds incentives to the learning of modern skills. As for self-

²⁷ The key concept defining transitional and modern man in Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, Glencoe, 1958, pp. 49-54, 69-75.

²⁸ See Bert F. Hoselitz, "Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, October 1952.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

made modern capitalists in the Middle East, much will depend on the ideology of the salaried middle class. In Egypt, even the most efficient large private enterprises have been nationalized for the sake of centralizing control over investments and distribution of benefits. In Syria, capitalists threatened by the same policies during 1961 allied themselves with opposition movements drawn from the would-be middle class and succeeded in installing a tenuous new regime pledged to a mixed economy.

Members of the traditional elite who are not landlords or traders have sometimes gained access more readily to the modern upper middle class. Sons of the traditional bourgeoisie in a number of Middle Eastern countries have transformed themselves into one of the most influential elements of the modern upper middle class by virtue of their training as officers in the army. Trained in modern technology and administration, and assigned a national mission, this group had the opportunity and incentive for a successful transition. Similar to them in origin and second to them only in power are many of the Western-trained members of the upper levels of the bureaucracy. And there are, it must be added, a number of kings who seem anxious to make the same transition —among them those of Afghanistan, Iran, Jordan, and Morocco. But be they general, bureaucrat, or king, they are likely to fail politically unless they can relate themselves to the aspirations of the rest of the new middle class. For they themselves number in no country of this region more than a few hundred. Even if some of them have independent incomes, nevertheless all are dependent upon civil and military bureaucracies without whose loyalty or cohesion they can no longer function at all.

The modern lower middle class is, in the Middle East, composed of two distinct groups. There are those whose "western education is limited, and more probably has been cut off at an early stage. Self-education seems to be a recurrent feature among them."²⁹ But there are also those in the lower middle class who, instead of being able to capitalize on a modicum of modern

²⁹ Leonard Binder's description of the Pakistani lower middle class is probably applicable to the rest of this region [drawn from an unpublished manuscript delivered at the Dobbs Ferry Conference of the Social Science Research Council, 1957].

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

knowledge, suffer from a peculiarly modern disability. They are well trained, but in classic subjects (e.g., *Shari'a* law) or in the wrong language (e.g., Urdu, when English is essential to government and business). In any but the modern age, they would have been able to rise to a status equivalent at least to that of the modern middle class. Now they can only hope to eke out a lower middle class existence. In short, both components of the modern lower middle class in the Middle East consist of men who are frustrated in their social mobility. They are not like the traditional lower middle class, composed predominantly of small artisans and shopkeepers and minor clerks, most of whom implicitly accept their station in life.³⁰ They are not, like the middle and upper strata of the new middle class, capable of translating their ambition into reality. Hence, organizing their discontent is likely to offer a major potential for political action.

Prospects for the New Middle Class

Thus the character and terms of the struggle for power in the Middle East become clearer. The changes now under way in the social and political system appear to have three successive, though often overlapping, phases: first, the battle between the new middle class and the traditional ruling class; second, the drive by the successful new middle class to supply cadre for all five groups that compose the elite in modern society (political leaders, government administrators, economic directors, leaders of masses, and military chiefs);³¹ and third, the struggles among

³⁰ In Turkey, where the modern age began earlier than in most of the Middle East, the mid-nineteenth century saw the appearance of the Young Ottomans, many of them minor bureaucrats, whose level of expectations had risen since they had become the Empire's new experts in communication and administration. Yet they lacked the lubricants of money and family status to advance themselves. At that point in history they allied themselves almost entirely with the ulema who were beginning to lose prestige with the growth of secularization. (See Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Princeton, 1962.) In twentieth century Egypt, such men often allied themselves with the Moslem Brotherhood (see Chapter 8).

³¹ These five categories are drawn from Raymond Aron, "Social Structure and the Ruling Class," *The British Journal of Sociology*, March and June 1950, p. 9. Aron points out that "The fundamental difference between a society of the Soviet type and one of the Western type is that the former has a unified

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

strata within the new middle class for predominance, increasingly involving other new classes, especially uprooted peasants and workers.

In terms of these phases, it is apparent that the most important political struggle in the Middle East is no longer between the new middle class and the traditional ruling class. The new middle class has already come to power in almost all but the least developed and regionally least influential countries.³² At this extraordinary moment when the traditional ruling class has been defeated and the peasants and workers have not yet organized themselves to make their own demands, politics has become a game played almost entirely within the new middle class. Thus, it is a political era resembling none that preceded it and probably none that will follow it, and one that is likely to prove particularly volatile and productive.

It will be volatile, in part, because politics within the new middle class will involve competition for a very limited number of powerful positions by persons who, even in behalf of issues, must often substitute the force of personality (itself still evolving) for the strength of established political parties. Compromises will be hard to arrange. Because the majority of the people are unrepresented, one of the most persuasive arguments for compromise among executive policy-makers in other countries—the anticipated reaction of a free legislature—will continue to be irrelevant. Disagreements among policy-makers in authoritarian regimes will usually mean ouster for one or the other.

Although repression of one faction of the new middle class by

elite and the latter a divided elite" (p. 10). From that perspective, the Middle Eastern situation fits somewhere in between, since the elite is drawn from a single, small, and embattled class which strives for the unification of the elite but seldom succeeds for long in preventing clashes. The pressure for a unified elite in the Middle East, moreover, is based on historical exigencies (the availability of a large number of members of the new middle class for a small number of careers in the new institutions of society) and political expediency (the need for loyal supporters in an environment in which the majority does not yet share the outlook of the new middle class). Conformity to an ideological dogma which justifies the unification of the elite (for example under the guise of the "dictatorship of the proletariat") characterizes only the communists in the Middle East.

³² The displacement of the landowners and traditional bourgeoisie as the political elite does not necessarily imply their demise as a social class. Where

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

another faction is common, membership in the same class seems to make a difference. Rival movements are outlawed, but individual members—men with whom, after all, one went to school, worked in common clandestineness, and with whose ideas one may once have toyed oneself—are often allowed to write editorials or remain in the bureaucracy. And the more important opposition leaders are, with startling frequency, appointed to Embassies abroad, being jailed only if they insist on returning. The centuries of repression which the new middle class fought to end more clearly and courageously than anyone else are, at present, in disrepute. For the first time since the Middle Ages, and in contrast to recent status quo oligarchies such as the late Nuri al-Sa'íd Pasha's in Iraq, the elite and the main opposition, both drawn from the new middle class, speak a mutually comprehensible language derived from a common experience. Thus a genuine political dialogue is at last in progress in the Middle East.

The vital question now—vital because the outcome affects all aspects of society—is which segment of the new middle class shall predominate, what ideological orientation it will prefer, and what factors help or hinder the progress of competing factions.

The thrust toward revolutionary action on the part of the new middle class is overwhelming. It is itself the product of an unfinished and uncontrolled revolutionary transformation of society. It intends therefore to organize social change rather than become its victim. Even those who do not possess this broader vision, but who nevertheless would like to live in the same style as the average man in the more conservative industrialized nations, will have to upset the status quo much further before they can hope to enjoy the benefits of a stable new status quo. Unlike the great majority of the Western salaried middle class, this new class cannot afford to perpetuate the traditional norms and laws of society, even though it is already being threatened by the confusion of standards and the growth of extremism in its own ranks. The

such a demise of what was always a small group is in fact in progress, as in Tunisia, and where a strong egalitarian strain makes it difficult for any member of the new middle class to raise himself socially or economically high above his fellows, it may, strictly speaking, be wrong to speak of a *middle* class. Even here, however, "middle" still serves to define its aspirations and style of consumption, whatever its final destiny.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

largest component of the new middle class in most countries, and the most rapidly growing, will be the young with few links to tradition or to the previous generation, with inadequate knowledge and skills, and with little chance of status or of any useful job. Both the burden of the past and the threat of the future impel the salaried middle class to become the principal revolutionary force, creating new standards and institutions relevant to a modernizing society.

There is no inescapable doom that revolutionary change must come through violence, however. One of the most remarkable, and remarkably neglected, phenomena of modern history is the near absence of violence that has marked rapid, structural changes in all those countries where, since 1950, the new middle class has come to power. In Egypt, for example, a landed ruling class was economically dispossessed, socially displaced, and politically overthrown. A new social class took its place, the greater part of the economy was nationalized or at least placed under effective state control, the legal basis of authority and the structure and functions of political institutions were fundamentally altered, and a religion-bound culture was secularized, all at the cost of less than twenty lives.³³ This is a remarkable performance in contrast to the French Revolution of the eighteenth century, or the Chinese and Russian Revolutions of our time.

The absence of violence alone, however, is not sufficient evidence of stability, or a clear sign that the fundamental revolution of Middle Eastern society has come to an end. The new middle class will be able to signal its conversion from a revolutionary into a stabilizing force only when it has succeeded in limiting the realm of politics to the domain of public authority, thus allowing the social, economic, and private business of men once again to become autonomous realms. That cannot happen until there is

³³ Two soldiers were killed during the brief fighting that accompanied Nasser's coup in 1952, eleven strikers were shot during riots or subsequently court-martialed and hanged in 1952, and six members of the Moslem Brotherhood, as they might under the laws of any country, were sentenced to death in 1954 for having conspired to assassinate Nasser.

Where the toll of violence was greater, the causes so far lay largely either in the resistance of the entrenched rulers to the emergence of the new middle class (as in Algeria), or in a deep division within the new middle class (as in Iraq).

THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

sufficient capacity and consensus for dealing with social change, and until political leaders need no longer convert all aspects of existence into issues of power.

In most countries of this region it is improbable, certainly within the next decade, that the new middle class will have succeeded in establishing firm economic, political, and psychological foundations for the growth of individuals and groups that can be autonomous in action yet share in a broad consensus of values. Instead, most of the governments will still be struggling to establish their own authority, and assure physical survival for their citizens. The status and prosperity that ought to accompany middle class existence is likely still to elude most of its members, and even the term "middle class" will retain ironic overtones. They will still be caught in the middle of time, between an age not yet quite dead and one not yet quite born. They will still be suspended between a traditional folk that is being uprooted but not yet sure what leadership to follow over the longer run, and a political elite, drawn at last from their own class but unable as yet to satisfy their aspirations. The new middle class will not be able to escape soon from the harsh struggle for the sheer biological and psychological necessities of life. Hence it will not soon escape from an age of revolution into an age in which both freedom and authority are assured.

The salaried new middle class possesses one advantage over all previous ruling groups. The tasks it must perform in order to create status, power, and prosperity for itself no less than the nation require the establishment of modern, integrating institutions which can mobilize the spirit and resources of the entire nation. At the same time these institutions, by their very nature, are also peculiarly adapted to control by the new middle class.

While it is almost inevitable in the present historical situation that the new middle class will acquire power, there is nothing inevitable about its orientation or its permanent success. Under the inspiration of particular personalities, ideologies, or environmental changes, this new ruling group may fractionalize more often than act in unison. Overwhelmed by pressure of sheer population, inadequate organizational skill, or lack of courage, it may not be able to cement a working relationship with the

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

majority of the population—the peasants and workers. Yet unlike any of its predecessors, the new middle class has goals which depend for their success on popular support and participation, whether achieved by consent, authority, or terror.

Thus, the new middle class is faced with most extraordinary opportunities. If it fails to consolidate its authority by achieving sufficient internal cohesion and general social progress, and its factions are instead engaged in ruthless competition for the support of the rural and urban masses, the approaching future is bound to be one of fearful unrest.

CHAPTER 5

PEASANTS: THE SILENT MAJORITY AT THE THRESHOLD OF POLITICS



A Majority in Misery

THE conflict of ideas in the Middle East is waged consciously only among a small, largely urban segment of the population. The conflict of loyalties and beliefs is felt with rapidly growing impact among rural masses who are becoming sensitive to the possibility and actuality of change.

Agriculture occupies at least three-quarters of the population, and often more, in the region from Morocco to Pakistan. It does not follow, however, that most people in the Middle East are within reach of food. Only about four percent of the area from Morocco to Pakistan is at present under cultivation. Most peasants do not have enough land. They work exceedingly hard during about six months of the agricultural season. Thereafter, given present traditions and technology, the peasant is unemployed.¹ An ever-growing number of peasants are becoming landless as population rises and the erosion and salinity of the soil spread. Egypt, between 1897 and 1947, increased its cultivated area by 14 percent and its crop area by 37 percent. During the same time, however, its population doubled.² If, during the next decade, this most populous of all Arab states succeeds in completing the High Aswan Dam, it will add another third to the

¹ In Egypt, perennial irrigation and the silt brought continually by the Nile from the highlands of Ethiopia allows an average of five harvests in two years. Hence work is nearly continuous.

² Doreen Warriner, *Land Reform and Development in the Middle East: A Study of Egypt, Syria and Iraq*, London, 1957, p. 17. In 1961, Egypt's population was almost three times what it had been 64 years earlier, or about 27,000,000.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

arable land of Egypt; in the same period, its population will probably also grow by 25 percent. Pakistan, the most populous of all Islamic states, has, since independence, lost more land due to faulty drainage and consequent increased salinity of the soil than it has added by clearance or irrigation.

Those who had little land are coming to possess less. Between 1905 and 1940, the number of small proprietors in Egypt increased by 133 percent; the area devoted to parcels of less than five acres increased by 50 percent. And the greater part of this increase took place in the number of farms of less than one acre, which do not provide minimum subsistence. By 1950, 70 percent of all Egyptian farm owners possessed less than half an acre.³ The number of those owning no land at all has risen to about half the rural labor force.

Most of those who are working on the land work not because the land requires their labor but because they require the work. It was estimated in 1939 that, with half the degree of mechanization as on American farms, 10 percent of Egypt's farmers could do all the work that needed to be done.⁴ In the past twenty years, mechanization on American farms has experienced a phenomenal growth, while in Egypt it is the population that has grown at a phenomenal rate. To increase output per man now would make even more laborers superfluous. To continue to let the superfluous workers share in the low income of the peasants further reduces the standard of living of all. A peasantry in this condition cannot afford to stimulate the growth of alternative industrial employments for themselves by purchasing the products of industry. In fact, the evidence suggests that during the 1930's and 1940's their total food consumption fell as their number grew.⁵

³ Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East*, p. 36; National Bank of Egypt, *Economic Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1952.

⁴ Wendell Cleland, "A Population Plan for Egypt," *L'Egypte Contemporaine*, May 1939, p. 5.

⁵ Warriner, *Land and Poverty*, p. 39. The fall in consumption was related to a fall in real income. "This has been measured by an economist at Alexandria University: . . . the net annual income of the Egyptian peasant has declined from about 13.5 pounds Egyptian in 1913 to around 7.5 pounds in 1951, at 1913 prices. This represents roughly a decline of 40% in the real income of the Egyptian peasant." (Richard Nolte, "Report on the United Arab Republic,"

PEASANTS

In most of the Middle East, tilling the soil does not necessarily promise a harvest. Only in Egypt is there a steady supply of water. A few areas in several other countries are also favored by reliable rivers or rains. In most regions, however, the rains may not come, the desert winds may blow too long, or the locust may get out of control. "In the Syrian Jezira, for instance, wheat gives a tenfold return in a good year, sevenfold in a normal year, while in a bad year it will only give back the equivalent of the seed."⁶ In the Middle East the ownership of land gives status; working the land does not.

Reaping a harvest does not necessarily imply eating it. Everywhere in the Middle East, until 1952, by far the greater part of each country, especially the most fertile areas, was in the hands of large landowners.⁷ It has not been uncommon for a landowner to possess 200,000 acres or more, including perhaps several scores of villages. Since then, the situation has radically changed only in Egypt, but by the end of the decade, the redistribution of large estates was also beginning in Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, and Iran.

Sharecropping remains even now the most common form of farming. The division of crops differs from area to area and the tenant's share varies from one-third to one-twenty-first part of the harvest, frequently falling between one-third to one-fifth. Insistence by the landlord on "free" labor (i.e., personal servitude) sometimes adds to the burden. There is rarely a fixed rent, so that there is no incentive for the tenant to work hard to create a surplus he can retain.⁸ The tenant's security, and hence his incen-

Middle East Report, Report of the 13th Annual Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, ed. by William Sands, Middle East Institute, Washington, D.C., 1959, p. 26.)

⁶ Warriner, *Land Reform*, p. 57. In Iran partial or total crop failure occurs, on the average, probably in one year out of five; in many areas of North Africa, in one out of four.

⁷ Lebanon and Turkey were the only exceptions at that time: there the majority of peasants owned their land. In Iran, by contrast, it was estimated that of about 41,000 villages, 40,000 were owned outright by landlords. (Messerschmidt, *Iran*, p. 48.)

⁸ "The general tendency is for the landowners not to encourage the peasants to make gardens. The reason for this is that the landowners know that the possession of gardens is likely to make the peasants more prosperous, and fear lest easier circumstances may make them independent. There is a minority of

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

tive to improve himself, is further diminished by the fact that hardly anywhere does he possess either a written lease or accepted rights of tenure. Seldom, however, does this leave the tenant legally free to go elsewhere. Indebtedness to the landlord is his usual fate, the result either of bad harvests or the high price of services and commodities monopolized by the landlord.

For most landlords the sharecropping system has the peculiar advantage of storing capital in the most reputable and least fragile form at a high return without the burden of management or operational expenses.⁹ Absentee landownership is more common than not. Sometimes the landlord leases his villages to another who may himself be an absentee. The opportunities for profit are ample enough: in few countries of the Middle East is there a tax on farm income. Where it exists it is not high and not always collected efficiently.¹⁰

For the tenant, the only advantage in the system is that it allows him to retain some lease on life, although his yield is seldom sufficient, after the deduction of the landowner's share and other dues, to provide for his minimal needs. Most peasants, unless they can supplement their incomes by the produce of a garden, flocks, or cottage industry, are barely able to subsist.¹¹ In the rice-growing areas of the Caspian provinces of Iran, the situation is even worse than in the grain-growing areas of the plateau. The produce of 2,000 square meters, if the land is free of pests and well cared for, normally amounts to 450 kilograms. The landlord usually takes 150 kilos (in some villages, 225). A further

landowners who adopt a more liberal policy and take the view that if the peasant has some permanent stake in the land, he is more likely to be contented and, therefore, to work better. . . . In so far as housing is concerned the landlords probably prefer the peasants to own their houses because they (the landlords) are not then liable for the expense of repairs." (Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, pp. 302-303.)

⁹ "Ownership in no way affects the method of cultivation; in a landowner's village, the peasants continue their [separate] strip cultivation, even sometimes on the *mushaa* system [reallocating the strips every few years among the villagers] without in any way changing their methods or working under direction; landownership is a credit operation, nothing more." (Warriner, *Land and Poverty*, p. 23.)

¹⁰ Until the present decade in Pakistan, *zamindari* (landlords) held land on condition that they paid annually to the government a sum in taxes that had been fixed in perpetuity as long ago as 1793.

¹¹ Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, p. 368.

PEASANTS

150 kilos goes for the cost of cultivation. A family, therefore, must live on the residue of 150 kilos of rice a year.¹²

The number of peasant proprietors becoming tenant farmers has been increasing in the Middle East during this century. In most countries the majority of the titles to land remain unregistered, so that the more powerful landlords have been able to force many free peasants to become tenants. Indebtedness and usury, however, militate even more strongly against an independent peasantry. The reasons are the same throughout the area. In Morocco, for example, the average peasant proprietor cannot support a family of four on the proceeds of even a good year; some member of his family must find employment elsewhere. Most farmers, however, do not even realize three-quarters of the income needed for bare subsistence.¹³ As a result, the peasant proprietor often runs short before the harvest, and must borrow and buy just when prices are highest. Being in debt, he must sell when everyone else sells his harvest, that is, when prices are lowest. Hence there is a continuous process whereby, after bad harvests, proprietors lose their lands to merchants and speculators. The new landlord may allow the former proprietor to continue as a tenant or he may lease the land to another.

Beyond even the pale of the sharecropper stands the landless farm worker, who is seldom sure in the morning whether he will earn enough during the day to procure the evening meal for himself and his family. His employment is never more than seasonal; in sickness or drought, he is the first to suffer. When fully employed, he can never hope to make enough to better his position. How fragile his hold on life may be is suggested by official Pakistani estimates that 1,710,000 people, most of them landless workers, died in the famine of 1942-1943.¹⁴ The number of

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 376-8.

¹³ Paul Buttin, in 1953, set this minimum at 416 francs or \$1.20 a day. ("Needs and Salaries of the Moroccan Worker on European Farms," in *Agriculture Moderne Au Maroc*, May 1953.) In that year, the average agricultural wage was about 135 francs or about 40 cents a day.

¹⁴ A. F. A. Husain, *Human and Social Impact of Technological Change in Pakistan*, Vol. 1, Dacca, 1956, pp. 47-48. In the same period, 100,000 died of malaria in the Egyptian provinces of Qena and Aswan where the greater part of the land was in the hands of large companies and where, as Egyptian Premier Nahas Pasha later acknowledged, underpaid and half-starved workers had no resistance to the accidental introduction of a new mosquito from West Africa. (Warriner, *Land and Poverty*, pp. 39-40.)

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

rural workers possessing no land at all is certainly growing. In 1940, they constituted nearly half of all Egyptians actively occupied on the land. The landless now constitute about one-fourth of all peasants in Tunisia, half of those in Morocco, and two-thirds of those in Algeria. In 1949, an Iranian survey of 1,300 villages in the Tehran and Demavend areas showed that 60 percent of the rural families had no land at all, and the situation may well be worse in areas further from the capital.¹⁵ Among those Middle Eastern areas with a predominantly non-nomadic rural population, the province of East Pakistan may be the least affected by this problem. Only 14 percent of its rural laborers are landless.¹⁶

Though the peasants' life has scarcely yet become a desirable one, the peasants' ranks are being swelled in many areas by former nomads who have hitherto always despised a settled existence. For the first time in the Middle East's history, urban society is about to achieve a final victory over the nomad. His freedom to ignore the laws, taxes, boundaries, and purposes of central governments, to raid and to wander, is now being curtailed or abolished. Especially in Iraq and Syria, he is being made to settle down, while the remaining pastoral tribes often lose their best steppe lands to the encroachment of cereal production.¹⁷ Among traditional social groups, the nomadic tribes have repeatedly proved themselves a threat to the integrity of the new national states by fighting for autonomy or entering into alliances with foreign powers.

Few measures have been taken to make it profitable for the nomad to change his whole heritage of values and acquire new skills.¹⁸ He enters the peasant world near the bottom, and without the latter's ancient habit of adjustment. Ironically, the tra-

¹⁵ Gideon Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem in Iran," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1951, p. 185.

¹⁶ Husain, *Human and Social Impact*, Vol. 1, p. 47.

¹⁷ In Egypt, the settled population has historically almost always been able to dominate the nomad, thanks to its control of the Nile. In Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Morocco, Libya, and Iran, nomadic tribes can still play an important, independent political role.

¹⁸ Afif I. Tannous, "The Tribal Community in a Nationalist State," *Middle East Journal*, January 1947, pp. 5-17; Adnan Mahhouk, "Recent Agricultural Development and Bedouin Settlement in Syria," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1956, pp. 167-176.

PEASANTS

ditional nomad is beginning to join the rural poor just as the migration from country to city is swelling the ranks of the urban "nomad," uprooted, displaced, and superfluous, with no fixed place in society.

"The peasant lives, for the most part, in conditions of grinding poverty; the landowner, although he enjoys a comparative affluence, is in constant fear of being despoiled of his wealth by intrigue, or of being cheated of it by a discontented peasantry; and the government official, often inadequately paid, finds it difficult to support himself and his family unless he has some source of income other than his pay. Distrust, insecurity, and intrigue prevail on all sides."¹⁹ These words were written of the peasant's life in Iran, but they also describe the life of the overwhelming majority of Middle Easterners. A large number do not survive long to suffer this existence. "It is not exaggerating to state that the average agricultural worker (*fellaḥ*) is a living pathological specimen, as he is probably a victim of ankylostomiasis [hookworm, leading to abdominal pain, intermittent fever, progressive anemia, and emaciation], ascariasis [an intestinal parasite causing diarrhea], malaria, bilharzia [blood flukes producing urinal discharge of blood and dysentery], trachoma [an infectious disease of the eye], bejel [a non-venereal form of syphilis], and possibly of tuberculosis also."²⁰ In all of Iraq, infant mortality is about 300-350 per 1,000, a figure probably applicable to most of the Middle East.²¹ Flies,

¹⁹ Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, pp. 394-395.

²⁰ A. Michael Critchley, "The Health of the Industrial Worker in Iraq," *British Journal of Industrial Medicine*, Vol. 12, 1955. A Rockefeller Foundation study made at the request of the Egyptian Ministry of Health found that, in five typical villages within 30 miles of Cairo, all villagers had amoebic dysentery, 92 percent bilharzia, 64 percent intestinal worms, 5 percent pellagra, and 6.5 percent syphilis. Two percent annually had typhoid, 6 percent were typhoid carriers, 2 percent had active tuberculosis, 6 percent acute eye infection, and 89 percent trachoma. 6.4 percent were blind in one eye, and 1 percent totally blind. (*New York Times*, May 5, 1952.)

²¹ Doris G. Adams, "Current Population Trends in Iraq," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 1956. The Rockefeller report cited in the preceding footnote states that life expectancy at birth in Egypt is 15 to 20 years, but this average rests on the fact that about half the children die before the age of 5; those who survive beyond 5 may expect to live to about 50. In terms of a scale in which a community with proper sanitary conditions could score 106.5 points, villages in India and China examined by Rockefeller Foundation teams scored about 53.25 points, while the Egyptian villages examined scored only 23.8.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

fleas, lice, and worms are constant purveyors of disease and discomfort.

For most Middle Eastern peasants the coming of the modern era has brought benefits of doubtful value and in some ways has increased their hardships. In the past, the peasant suffered from the raids of nomadic tribes, the devastations of troops defending or attacking the local ruler, the exploitation of landlord and official, and the levies of tax-farmers. For the great majority of peasants, the benefits of the modern age can be summed up by saying that it has become harder to die. While clean water remains an unattained luxury for most of the peasants, there are some water-borne diseases that, at least in certain countries, are no longer allowed to breed or kill as easily as before. Fewer people, for example, are dying of malaria. Above all, fewer are dying of tribal wars and famines. As a result, more Middle Eastern peasants are probably kept alive to suffer misery than ever before in history.

It was in the modern age that perennial irrigation was introduced into Egypt; water-borne diseases like malaria and bilharzia actually became more frequent than before.²² Cotton became king, demanding (and until 1952 applying political pressure to preserve) a large mass of cheap seasonal workers.²³ In the modern age, too, the patriarchal egalitarianism and nomadic freedom of the pastoral tribes broke down because insecure governments, especially in Syria and Iraq, hoped to create stable political allies by making sheikhs the sole landlords of their tribes. In this way they created lords without defined responsibility to kinsmen or government. Government officials for the first time became numerous in the rural areas, but they were

²² In Upper Egypt, where there is no perennial irrigation, the incidence of bilharzia is 5 percent, in Delta Egypt, 45 to 75 percent. (Warriner, *Land and Poverty*, pp. 41-42, citing the investigation of Dr. Mohammed Abd el-Khalik.)

²³ Until the land reforms of 1952, labor in the large estates of the Delta was organized in gangs under overseers. "The gang system is open to obvious abuses, employment of children and exploitation by the gang leader being the worst." It was "not uncommon to see gangs of small girls, from five years upwards, picking cotton, followed by the gang leader with a whip." The authorities did not supervise labor conditions in any way and the agricultural worker, the majority of Egyptian *fellahin*, enjoyed no protective legislation of any kind. (*Ibid.*, pp. 36-38.)

PEASANTS

usually underpaid and hence inclined to bend before the superior influence of the landlords in both the capital and the village.²⁴

The shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture in the modern age has served so far only to increase the gap between rich peasants and poor. Directly or indirectly, the peasant continues to pay most of the taxes. But improvements in agricultural equipment and production, health, education, housing, and food have, in general, reached only those landowners who already possessed sufficient capital and political influence to take advantage of opportunities for modernization.

Nevertheless, although comparatively few have benefited from the improvements introduced by modern science, the masses have become aware that poverty and exploitation are not inescapable. With appetites whetted by the hope of a better life, their present suffering seems all the harder to bear.

Fatalism and Its Other Face—Rebellion

The Middle Eastern peasant is poor and exploited, but hardly anyone in the area expects him to rebel. The assumption of the peasant's passivity, however, is based on a surprising ignorance about his life, even among his fellow-countrymen. "Next to the family the most important social unit in all Moslem countries outside Arabia is the village, [yet] no Moslem writer, in either medieval or modern times has condescended to describe the organization of village life in his country."²⁵

Most landlords who speak readily about the attitudes of peasants are absenteeees living in cities. Their estate managers, con-

²⁴ Landlords wielded such political influence that, in Iraq for example, they paid no income tax on rents drawn from land until 1956, and at least until 1948 paid no property tax on the land itself.

²⁵ Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 5. Hamed Ammar was the first Middle Eastern scholar to break the silence in his perceptive study of personality and culture, *Growing Up in An Egyptian Village*, London, 1954. Without the pioneering studies of Warriner and Lambton, so often cited in the foregoing pages, this chapter could not have been written.

Among volumes not cited, the reader will find particularly valuable Henry Habib-Ayrout, *The Fellahs*, a sympathetic and detailed description translated by Hilary Wayment, Cairo, 1946; Jacques Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*, Paris, 1946; Jacques Berque, *Histoire Social d'un Village Egyptien du XXème Siècle*, Paris, 1957; and John Gulick, *Social Structure and Culture Change in a Lebanese Village*, New York, 1955.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

trolling the peasants' essentials of life, have little difficulty producing the proper peasant vote. The urban intelligentsia and some peasant migrants have for centuries found in the cities escape from the infinitely greater ignorance, poverty, and toil without reward or dignity that prevail in the countryside. The gulf between city and village culture is now even more profound than before. The intelligentsia has remained reluctant until quite recently to return to the hinterland of the majority and discover their needs. Even the peasants themselves, who during the twentieth century have been leaving by the millions for rapidly growing urban slums, seem reluctant to return to the land until the present "idiocy of rural life" has been remedied.²⁶ However, since almost no one speaks for the peasant, it has been possible for Middle Eastern governments dominated by landowners, and also for a number of foreign observers, to take comfort in the thought that the peasant has long ago learned to accept misery, and that his passivity and conservatism will not let him revolt.

If the Middle Eastern peasant is conservative, it cannot be for any of the reasons that are said to make people of his class conservative in other regions. The vast majority in the Middle East are neither owners of their land nor masters of their own labor; neither in knowledgeable partnership with nature nor respected by other classes in their society. They no longer live in communities that are relatively stable and largely self-contained and self-governed.²⁷ There are peasants on middle-sized farms, especially in Lebanon and a few other regions, who do enjoy all or most of

²⁶ There is a wasteland east of the dyke which protects Baghdad from floods where about 40,000 recent immigrants from rural areas live. "The area was also used by the municipality as well as private individuals as a dumping ground for human and animal excreta, and rubbish. In addition the few surface water drains in the east of the city are pumped over the bund into this area, just after receiving the washings from the city abattoirs. The polluted and foul-smelling liquid, which formed a sizeable stream, wound its way through the conglomeration of mud buildings. . ." (A. Michael Critchley, "Observations on a Socio-Medical Survey in Iraq," *Journal of the Iraqi Medical Professions*, June 1956, pp. 71-72, cited by Doris G. Adams Phillips, "Rural to Urban Migration in Iraq," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, July 1959, pp. 405-421.) "Despite this morbid picture," Mrs. Phillips concludes that "migrants from rural areas to the city are better off than they were before," and that it is this "differential between rural and urban levels of living that explains most of the migration."

²⁷ Cf. Maurice Zinkin, *Development for Free Asia*, London, 1956, pp. 1-2.

PEASANTS

these advantages. Most peasants, however, experience a great distance between themselves and their landlords, their government, and even the larger culture in which they dwell. Orthodox Islam is an urban religion with an urban way of life, and hardly any Moslem, in literature or song, by word or deed, admires the peasant's style of life; not even the peasant does so.²⁸

There are matters in which the peasant feels a deep interest, but it would be false to simplify his attitude toward such matters by calling it conservative. The Moslem peasant is conscious, above all, of a recurrent dance of life governed by supernatural forces too powerful, arbitrary, and incomprehensible to need "conserving" or defending. The peasant attempts to enter into a personal relationship with these forces through propitiation, intermediation, or careful avoidance. The rituals and beliefs through which he seeks to come to terms with the sacred are ancient and have been variously sanctified by different religions of the past. It was Islam's contribution to persuade this worshipper of natural forces, objects, and charismatic personalities that all sacredness flows from a single God.

In his concern for survival in the face of forces more powerful than himself, the peasant has not been without a sense of realism. He tests religious prescriptions by their success. But since Islam, like other religions, can explain seeming accidents, failures, and injustices, the peasant recognizes that his worship will not always be rewarded. After centuries of subservience, he may well have come to distrust his own capabilities. But while he acknowledges forces greater than himself, both sacred and secular, he does not cease being "hardheaded, materialistic, questioning, doubting, scoffing at his own superstitions and usages, fond of tests of the supernatural—and all this in a curiously light-minded, almost childish fashion."²⁹ "For centuries before Ottoman Turk and Mamluk entered Egypt, the peasant had pitted his craft against the exploiters and had failed; and failing, the genius of the race, inferior to no other in capacity and depth of feeling, had turned

²⁸ It is the nomad—noble, free, and roaming—whose way of life is traditionally admired above all others by urban and nomad alike.

²⁹ D. B. Macdonald in *Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, p. 4, quoted by H. A. R. Gibb, "The Structure of Religious Thought in Islam," *The Muslim World*, January 1948, p. 22.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

in upon itself in bitterness and sought revenge, as it were, in limiting production to the minimum of its requirements, in a tenacious opposition to all changes, and an almost deliberate harshening of all its conditions of life. The fertility of the soil served only to raise up oppressors on every side, and since, in the *fellah's* experience, it seemed that only by oppression would anything be gained, he also, by a natural reaction, became an oppressor of his own kind. . . . Physical undernourishment and malnutrition, one of the main underlying factors which had brought the Moslem civilization to a standstill, limited the capacity of the cultivator, hardy as he was, to a certain standard of exertion.”³⁰

That which is called the “passivity” of the peasant, in the face of both misery and opportunity, incorporates a multitude of different attitudes for none of which “passivity” is the most suitable term. Fatalism, in its highest religious form, is conducive to hard, careful work done without personal involvement in its failure or success. It demands resignation to those forces which one is powerless to change, but calls for courage in fighting holy wars and for causes in which victory is possible. The term “fatalism,” however, has often been used to describe what is in fact the peasant’s shrewdness when he bends with a wind he cannot resist. It has been used to describe what is actually passive resistance, as when the peasant deliberately accepts a lesser punishment for neglecting or misunderstanding orders he does not wish to fulfill but cannot openly oppose without courting a larger punishment. It has been used to denote what is in fact the peasant’s ignorance of alternative ways of doing things, and of how to acquire or apply new techniques. It has been used as a glib explanation of his disinterest in the political battles of small urban cliques whose victory or defeat changes nothing in his life.

The term “passivity” has been employed to designate what is in fact a deep skepticism—a hard-headed appreciation by the

³⁰ Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 264. They add: “It is historically false to regard the *fellahin* of the Delta and a large part of Middle Egypt as lineally descended from the ancient Egyptians and inured to tyranny. The population of these districts was completely recreated by a continuous process of Arab settlement from the middle of the seventh century and from that time almost down to the Ottoman conquest there was no lack of agrarian revolt.”

PEASANTS

peasant that after centuries of exploitation it remains to be proven that the government's or landlord's sudden interest in his greater productivity will not mean, as it always has in the past, a diminution of the peasant's proportion of the total harvest, or that the cleaner water or better seed will turn out to be as beneficial as the more familiar kind which he and his ancestors have prayed over for centuries. He has no surplus that he can afford to devote to experimentation. He has no way to protect himself except by suspicion and prudence.

There is also the lethargic "passivity" that results from disease, malnutrition, and physical debilitation. In absolute numbers, more people are ill-fed and sick today than ever before, and these people lack the strength to rebel. Many escape into the realm of drugs.³¹

"Passivity" as an ideal—the pietistic inwardness of sufism³²—is only one face of folk Islam. Its other face is rebellion. The two are really complementary. Passivity is the waiting for deliverance in periods when rebellion, murder, or flight are not possible.³³

The "passivity" of the Middle Eastern peasant was no bar to frequent rebellions in the past. Now there are more peasants than ever before who have become aware that new methods, more effective than the wisdom of tradition, can be used to cure poverty, ignorance, and disease. The fact is, however, that there has been no major peasant rebellion in the Middle East in the twentieth century. Central governments are, in general, more capable than before of speedily repressing rural rebellion. At the same time, however, new groups among the urban intelligentsia have come to consider it politically, economically, or morally necessary to reshape the peasant's life. Has this revolutionary century set bars to revolution that no other century could discover?

The peasant remains passive in the twentieth century for a

³¹ Statistics in this field are bound to be uncertain, but Egyptian narcotics experts estimate that about 1,000,000 are "fairly regular" users of hashish in Egypt, while many more mix it occasionally into their smoke, tea, or candy. (*New York Times*, September 20, 1959.)

³² See the discussion of Islamic mysticism in Chapter 1.

³³ The desertion of whole villages under the pressure of exploitation or insecurity has been rather frequent throughout history. In the past two decades alone the migration of peasants to the city has probably amounted to about five million.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

reason peculiar to our era. More than any other social class, the peasantry remains a prisoner of the past. Fatalism is clearly irrelevant in an age that can master nature sufficiently to produce both leisure and prosperity for farmers in other lands. But the traditional kind of rebellion, ritualistic rather than political, conservative rather than revolutionary, concerned with re-establishing the morality of the universe rather than altering the structure of society, this kind has become equally irrelevant.

A British anthropologist, speaking about African traditional society, draws a significant distinction between the old-fashioned rebellion and the modern revolution: "As positions of leadership carry high ideals, and as most men are, well, only men, there develops frequently a conflict between the ideals of leadership and the weakness of the leader. This is the frailty in authority. . . . But in certain types of society, when subordinates turn against a leader thus, they may only turn against him personally, without necessarily revolting against the authority of the office he occupies. . . . This is rebellion, not revolution. A revolution aims to alter the nature of political offices and of the social structure in which they function, and not merely to change the incumbents in persistent offices. . . . These rebellions, so far from destroying the established social order, work so that they even support this order. They resolve the conflicts which the frailty of authority creates. . . . Rebellious tendencies against authority are restrained by the structure of the political system itself. They are controlled by custom which gives men allegiances to various leaders, so that when they attack one leader, they do it by supporting another leader of the same kind, in the name of the ideals of leadership. . . . The kingship is ritualized: national disaster shows the king to be ritually unworthy: the ritual sacredness of kingship prevents anyone but another prince taking the throne."³⁴

In the Middle East, with the encroachment of modern ideas, the ancient ritual of rebellion has begun to lose its potency. Yet peasants have only recently begun to learn how to obtain redress through political processes, by changing the nature of the political offices and of the social structure in which leaders function.

³⁴ Max Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa*, pp. 27-28, 45.

PEASANTS

When Middle Eastern peasants have participated in violent political action in the present century, their purpose, however revolutionary it may have seemed to modern urban observers, was usually still rebellion in the traditional sense. Characteristically, a foreign ruler seemed the source of all evil and needed to be expelled, so that another and local ruler might take his place. Only through the re-enactment of this ritualistic drama did the peasant hope to re-establish social justice.

The peasant may well move from the age of rebellion to the age of revolution before he is fully literate, or fully free in mind and body. In other words, he is likely to become a revolutionary before he can achieve any substantial degree of freedom. Even while he remains at home, he may hear and see enough to discover that an entirely new style of life has become possible. He may make this potentially subversive discovery before he achieves the ability to cure his misery and before others are altogether prepared to do it for him. When the Middle Eastern peasant realizes for the first time that the structure of life can be concretely improved, and that he is being denied the opportunity to improve his own lot, then the seeds of revolution will have been planted.

There may well be an intervening phase before the peasant enters the political market place ready to make individual choices. Those tribal chiefs and family heads who are more concerned than the rest to preserve their existing status as well as the safety of their dependents, or who are perhaps more sophisticated, may pledge their kinsmen's support to new ideologies. For example, in the days of the French Protectorate, Moroccan tribes would attack French outposts to take revenge for the arrest of fellow-tribesmen whose motivations had been nationalist, secular, and reformist. Another transitional style of peasant involvement in politics has also been observed. Rif tribes have followed traditional modes of protest—refusal to pay taxes, avoidance of local market towns, and withdrawal of the men to bleak and inaccessible hills—in pursuit of essentially modern goals, such as work for unemployed laborers, new schools, and the improvement of local markets.³⁵

³⁵ William H. Lewis, "Rural Administration in Morocco," *Middle East Journal*, Winter 1960, p. 52.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

There is a sharp limit, however, to the capacity of a traditional kinship group to react as a closed community to modern opportunities and frustrations. Once the individual peasant emerges to seek help through national political channels, he will not remain uninterested in the clash of rival urban factions.

The spiritual tradition of the Middle East does not exclude material ambition. Islam has always been concerned with establishing a perfect society on earth while its paradise promises above all the fulfillment of the believer's highest material aspirations—a society in which poverty is abolished and man, being at ease, can fulfill all his needs. Moreover, if the Middle Eastern peasant becomes desperate, orthodox Islam instills no sense of sin or fear of hell to keep him from seeking desperate remedies. Since orthodoxy itself acknowledged the limitations of human nature, the comfortable assumption is widespread that few Moslems will be doomed on Judgment Day. The Koran itself has only a limited restraining effect: it is written in an Arabic that differs markedly from the Arabic the peasant knows and speaks. Lacking organization, hierarchy, or ordained rank, and not always free of ignorance and corruption, Islamic religious leaders cannot rely on the appeal of religion alone to keep peasants from following a new social gospel in times of acute crisis.

In the tradition of the Middle East, as in that of Russia, apocalyptic change brought about by a messianic figure through a divinely sanctioned rebellion has not only played a powerful role in popular belief, but has again and again been translated into action.³⁶ In the modern age, the barriers to secular politics begin to crumble as the peasant becomes ever more aware of how his interest is or could be affected by action on the national stage. Moreover, both traditional and modern incentives to action can be combined and utilized by neo-Islamic and communist movements that promise equality and salvation. The nation-state has not yet integrated the peasant to the point where he is likely to feel much concern if fellow Moslems undermine its secular foundations or local communists its independence.

A peasantry alive to the possibility of economic progress

³⁶ Emanuel Sarkisyanz, *Russland und der Messianismus des Orients: Sendungsbewusstsein und Politischer Chiliasmus des Ostens*, Tübingen, 1955.

PEASANTS

through political and social reform will face the same range of choices as the new middle class.³⁷ Understanding the new ideologies will be no prerequisite for political participation. It will be enough to know who offers, or seems to offer, land, bread, and an end to exploitation; or, if the offer is not made good, who promises an immediate breakthrough to the millennium.

In the Middle East, however, the peasantry is only beginning to awaken, and as yet only in a few countries. Villages still remain largely isolated from the rest of the world. In most areas there are no roads, no surplus to exchange for manufactures, no cash for buying, and no trustworthy kinsmen outside the village. In most countries, the new urban middle class has not yet broken through the great cultural barrier that has traditionally separated city from countryside.

Nevertheless, within the past decade, the political involvement of the peasantry has shown extraordinary advances. The growing tide of rural migration to the cities is accompanied by a seasonal flow of migrants returning to the countryside. In this way trusted kin bring news of urban issues and conflicts—news which has already had dramatic consequences in unrest and even rebellion in such remote areas as the High Atlas of Morocco, the Kabylie of Algeria, the Kurdish mountain areas of Syria and Iraq, and the eastern provinces of Turkey.

Political organization has reached the peasant in a number of countries during the past decade. The only attempt in the entire Middle East to found a conservative peasant movement failed. In 1956, Caid Lahcen Lyoussi, the chief of the large Berber Ait Youssi tribe and an intimate of Morocco's King Mohammed V, tried to organize such a group. He argued that all other parties "forget that the largest part of the inhabitants of our country are of the rural countryside; that the element that has produced the glory of our country is of the rural countryside . . . and it is contrary to the interests of the people to confer all political, social, and economic responsibility [on] certain men who ignore all the tribes and the countryside." Lyoussi's appeal, however, appeared to have overtones of Berber tribal parochialism and was soon dis-

³⁷ That is, the range of alternatives discussed in Part III of this study.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

couraged by the King.³⁸ In Morocco, however, both the Istiqlal and its left-wing off-shoot, the National Union of Popular Forces, as well as the Moroccan Union of Labor, have made major gains in recruiting rural membership. In addition, Hajj Ahmed Ben Mansour Nejjai, a former Minister of Agriculture, organized the Moroccan Union of Agriculture to represent especially farmers with medium-size holdings.

In Algeria, peasants provided most of the recruits and auxiliary support for the nationalist guerrilla forces, and they have probably moved further from a rebellious to a revolutionary spirit than any other peasants in the entire region. In Tunisia, property-owning farmers have been organized since May 1949 in the General Union of Tunisian Farmers. This organization of about 60,000 members is affiliated with the dominant trade union movement, the General Union of Tunisian Labor, and through this channel comes under the guidance of President Bourguiba's Neo-Destour Party.

In the Sudan, the Gezira Tenant Union had enrolled about 15,000 members. In Lebanon, many of the Druses, a religious sect of peasant mountaineers, supported the Socialist Party of Kemal Jumblatt, though in large part because feudal loyalties have always called for the support of the Jumblatt family. In Syria, the peasants in the Homs area constitute one of the chief sources of support for the Arab Socialist Resurrectionist Party, in part because its leader, Akram Hourani, is a member of one of the traditionally prominent local families. The Kurdish leader of the Syrian Communist Party, though himself emancipated from traditional beliefs, can count on the support that Kurds would give to any prominent and influential son. In Iraq, the sharp competition between communists and non-communists during the tenure of the Kassim regime suddenly gave rise to a number of peasant organizations.

In Egypt, a "combined services unit" is being established for every 15,000 rural inhabitants. This is at once a school, health clinic, and social center. Resident staffs are instructed to drop the

³⁸ Ashford, *Political Change in Morocco*, Princeton, 1961, pp. 198-201.

PEASANTS

usual official attitude of aloof dignity and to stimulate peasant participation. Two hundred such units were created by June 1956, and another 650 were intended to be in existence by 1963.³⁹

Peasant organizations are a development of only the past decade. Within the past decade, land reforms in Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia, Morocco, Iran, and Pakistan have begun to give the peasant an immediate interest in urban decisions about who gets what, and how soon. It has put city and countryside in touch for the first time in history on issues that vitally interest the peasant.

Toward a Solution of the Peasant's Problems

While peasant involvement in national politics is only beginning, it is already evident that the initiative and prime motivation for rural reform are urban. It is clear that even as rural demands for change increase, only urban initiatives can decisively alter the peasant's life.⁴⁰ There have been very few demonstrations of political violence in rural areas in the Middle East.⁴¹ The peasant's chief responses to increasing poverty and hardship remain faith, migration, or death—not initiation of political organization. The impetus for change comes from the city, where even the more conservative have learned, if nothing more, that land reform gives the prestige of modernity and is a prophylactic against agitation. In the cities the nationalist social reformers are impelled to recognize that true nationhood cannot be achieved while three-quarters of the population remain outside the body

³⁹ Frederick H. Harbison and Ibrahim Abdelkader Ibrahim, *Human Resources for Egyptian Enterprise*, New York, 1958, p. 103. For a contrast with earlier policies, see Gabriel Baer, "Egyptian Attitudes Towards Land Reform, 1922-1955" in Laqueur, *Middle East in Transition*, pp. 80-99.

⁴⁰ In Eastern Europe, where peasants owning middle-sized farms and a tradition of political participation are far more pervasive than in the Middle East, peasant parties played a major role in domestic politics between the two World Wars. Their ultimate failure, however, rose in large measure from the fact that most of them turned their backs on the problems of urbanization and industrialization rather than come to terms with them. (See David Mitrani, *Marx Against the Peasant: A Study in Social Dogmatism*, Durham, N.C., 1951.)

⁴¹ Baer, "Egyptian Attitudes," p. 97, and Warriner, *Land Reform*, p. 55, record the small total in recent times in the Arab East.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

politic, and that neither human progress nor international respect can be attained while the great majority remain poor, inefficient, and exploited. In the expropriation of land, urban leaders see a major source of capital for new investments by the state. The leaders of the new urban middle class are confronted by the political fact that their rule remains insecure as long as the land-owners retain the economic basis of their traditional political predominance. Hence they have a direct interest in the kind of thorough land reform that not only redistributes the land, but also increases output, makes production more efficient, and offers security of tenure and income.

Such a reform would decisively alter the peasant's way of life, but he cannot undertake it by himself. Better seeds, fertilizers, pest controls, and machines can come only from the city. Adequate water and credit can be supplied only by central planning. Urban stimulation, training, and supervision will probably remain inescapable for a long time to come, even in activities where rural labor is the major cost, and where seasonally idle farm labor is available to build roads, schools, and other rural improvements. Urban leadership is especially necessary in setting up and operating cooperatives.

Although the peasant has already experienced progress in some countries and may do so on a far greater scale in the future, poverty remains predominant in most of the area. Egypt is the most dramatic example, not only because it contains within its borders half of all Arabs living between the Libyan desert and the Persian Gulf, but also because it faces a fearful problem that may some day bring other more fortunate areas down to the level of Egypt's poverty. Egypt's agricultural economy is one of the most productive in the world. The land yields nearly as much wheat per acre as in Great Britain. Egypt's yields of corn and cotton are the highest in the world. Its rural areas, unlike those of Iraq and Syria, are not "a neglected hinterland which supplies food to the cities and gets nothing in return,"⁴² for the Nile and the cash nexus unite city and village in a single web. But if Egypt's land produces twice as much per acre as the countries of Western Europe, its labor earns only one-seventh as much

⁴² Warriner, *Land Reform*, p. 56.

PEASANTS

(though the European average includes Spain, Italy, and Greece).⁴³ The causes have been overpopulation, an exploitative land tenure and employment system, and lack of alternative productive opportunities. The example of Egypt demonstrates that high agricultural productivity alone cannot cure poverty. These other problems must also be solved.

The examples of Iraq and Syria also reveal the insufficiency of a purely economic approach to the problem of rural poverty. Iraq, in sharp contrast to Egypt, is far from having reached its maximum potential in the exploitation of its arable land. Three-quarters of the area now under cultivation was not used until 1918, one-third of it not until 1945. No Ministry of Agriculture seemed necessary until 1952. As late as 1959, some five million potentially usable acres were still uncultivated. Improved farming methods would greatly enlarge harvests on the existing six million cropped acres.⁴⁴ Despite these economic opportunities and the large funds available from oil revenues to utilize them, the Iraqi peasant, on the whole, has been no better off than the Egyptian peasant. The Iraqi government, until 1959, took no steps to alter the traditional links that bound peasant to landlord and land.⁴⁵ The regimes that preceded General Kassim's did not wish to pay the political and social price of altering the status quo.

Syria, unlike Iraq, has taken tremendous strides in bringing new areas under cultivation. Between 1943 and 1953, grain production doubled, while cotton grew to eight times the pre-war average. Population during that ten-year period grew only 33 percent. All this was accomplished without foreign capital or advisers, and with little government assistance, even in the field of roads and other utilities. A few merchants, most of them Christians who had made large profits in wartime commerce and had foreseen gains in mechanizing agriculture, used their initiative and reaped a great harvest.⁴⁶ Their enterprise, however, may well speed soil erosion. Moreover, it took place in a lightly popu-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁴⁵ On July 17, 1959, General Kassim redistributed the first 10,000 acres among 1,200 peasants (*Washington Post*, July 18, 1959).

⁴⁶ Warriner, *Land Reform*, pp. 71-89. Also, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Economic Development of Syria*, Baltimore, 1955.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

lated region of Syria, and it changed neither the traditional exploitative agricultural relationships elsewhere in that country, nor its growing political polarization and instability.

An exclusive concentration on raising productivity while retaining traditional social and political relationships cannot prevent the growth of agrarian discontent. Reliance on modernization of production alone may do nothing more than widen the gap between rich and poor. Before Nasser's revolution of 1952, Egypt possessed "highly capitalized estates, with their big machinery and heavy expenditure on fertilizers and seed, their qualified managers and accountants [but also with] their wretched tied villages," with landowners who kept private armies to defend their houses and persons, and with armed men who stood guard over the crops.⁴⁷ In Iraq, at least until the Kassim revolution of 1958, tribal chiefs and merchants invested in modern pumps which increased total output tremendously but invariably turned the original occupant of the land, who lacked the capital to maintain the installation, into a sharecropper.

The Egyptian land reforms of 1952 expropriated less than 2,000 landowners, compensated all but the former royal family, and temporarily jailed only one landlord. The reforms had by the end of 1955 given land to about 69,000 families, or about 415,000 persons.⁴⁸ In July 1961, a new decree further reduced the amount of land anyone could own from about 200 acres to about 100. Nevertheless, there will still not be any land for the majority of the 1,500,000 Egyptians who had no land in 1961, or the nearly 2,000,000 who had too little of it to escape malnutrition. They must now wait for the completion of new dams and wells a decade or two from now. By that time, however, the generation of new bodies will probably again come close to catching up with the generation of new land, and the purchasing power of the mass of the population may be no greater than before.

⁴⁷ Warriner, *Land Reform*, p. 13.

⁴⁸ It had also helped these families with tools, skills, and organization, reduced rents for tenant-farmers, given them greater security of tenure and, though circumscribed in practice, raised the wages of agricultural workers and granted them the right to organize unions. (For a detailed discussion, see Warriner, *Land Reform*, pp. 32-54.)

PEASANTS

A still quiescent countryside is no evidence that there is as yet no agricultural problem: if governments wait until the psychology of the peasants is sufficiently transformed to permit revolutionary action, then there may no longer be sufficient economic resources left for coping with the unrest of an all too rapidly increasing rural population. There is a time limit for effective reform.

For a while the tempting dream of escape to a new life was being realized in the Liberation Province of Egypt. There a brand-new type of Egyptian, psychologically and medically tested, and possessed of only one wife and no dependents but his children, could undergo three months of probation and six months of training for modern living. He wore a new standardized dress, worked to a schedule on a cooperative mechanized farm, reared his children collectively, and ate 3,600 calories a day. Although this program proved too expensive for Egypt, it served briefly to demonstrate to a discouraged country that a better life was possible.⁴⁹

Middle Eastern leaders are beginning to learn much from existing systems of collective farming, ranging from the cooperatives of Israel to the communes of China. Can their plans for collective farming be reconciled with the peasants' dream of private ownership of the land? Agrarian collectivism is really nothing new in the Middle East. In most of that area, bedouin tribal lands were, at least until the nineteenth century, held in common. Not tribesmen but central governments initiated changes in the late nineteenth century which either forced individual division of property (as in Algeria) or made tribal sheikhs the owners of all tribal land (as in Iraq). In some areas of Syria and Jordan, a certain proportion of village land is reserved for private ownership, and parcels of land comprising this proportion are redistributed every few years. Sharecroppers, who constitute the majority of Middle Eastern peasants, are usually told by their landlords what to grow, and they depend on him for seeds, tools, and the purchase of their crops. That is why Warriner concludes that "in Europe it is difficult to overcome the peasants' deeply ingrained traditional individualism;

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52. Since 1955, much of the experiment has been dropped as being too expensive.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

but in the Arab world there is no such tradition; on the contrary, tradition is all communal."⁵⁰

The peasant's eagerness for more land—which is plain enough—is not a manifestation of capitalist individualism. It is, primarily, a striving to escape the threat of starvation and, secondarily, a striving for status. Land hunger, in so far as its motivations are traditional, is a drive not for greater elbow-room for initiative and enterprise, but rather for private holdings that are large enough to make their owners independent and free of the need to work. The peasant's striving for individual ownership of land, therefore, need not be conducive to modernization.

It is doubtful that the peasant's poverty and dependence can be ended until the state has deprived the largest landowners of their property, if only to curb their political power to oppose measures that would benefit the mass of peasants. The peasants will not be able to fulfill their private dreams until they accept a great deal of direction on what to plant and how to plant, and a great deal of sharing in the utilization of credits, machinery, purchasing and marketing—that is, a good deal of public intervention in their private business. A peasant who acquires new land and is free to farm it in traditional fashion may well remain unable to produce more or earn a steadier income than in the past. He may lose it again to the usurer in his own lifetime. Moreover, Islamic law, with its obligatory division of inheritances, will soon make each land parcel too small for subsistence (or if the usufruct rather than possession is subdivided, too inefficient).

How can the Middle Eastern peasant make both his country and himself progress economically while achieving a new freedom for shaping his own life? In the Sudanese Gezira Scheme, covering a million acres, a partnership of government and about 25,000 tenants combines, in extraordinary fashion, government control over administration and research, free enterprise through special rewards for harder work, and cooperation in buying, selling, and sharing profits.⁵¹ Under the Egyptian reform law of 1952, the former tenants became owners, paying install-

⁵⁰ Warriner, *Land and Poverty*, p. 20.

⁵¹ Arthur Gaitskell, *Gezira*, London, 1958.

PEASANTS

ments on the purchase price for thirty years. However, they sell their cotton and buy seeds, fertilizers, and services cooperatively. The old estates continue to be managed as units by state administrators. In the Liberation Province, only the peasant's house, not the land, is his own.

There are obvious limits both to freedom and to coercion. To allow the peasant population unfettered enjoyment of private property would be to prevent economic progress. On the other hand, to try to control every aspect of the life of this most traditionally minded class through the bureaucratic apparatus likely to be available in the Middle East in the next decade or two could result only in mismanagement and even terrorism. Few tasks of leadership in the Middle East will require as much sensitivity, skill, and exertion as that making the peasants knowledgeable and participating partners in the modernization of society. Planning is fruitless without rural collaboration.

If all the land presently being cultivated in the Middle East were redistributed equally among its entire present rural population, each family would own only about half an acre. Only in six of the states of the Middle East, possessing about one-fifth of the area's population—Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Iran, Turkey, and Yemen—is there enough land and water to make a real chance for peasant advance possible through various changes in rights and property, efficiency, and security. In most of the other countries, a majority of the peasants would still be exceedingly poor if their present standard of living were doubled, and not in all countries is there hope of that.⁵² So high is the ratio of population to land that land reform can do no more than bring benefits to a few and hope to the rest. The hope that more progress is on the way, however, may be too tender a plant to endure through the decades that will still pass before sea water can cheaply be used to irrigate the vast areas that now contain only sand, or until advances in food production and birth control alter the present imbalance between people and land. Indeed the visible evidence of progress in some villages is likely to arouse discontent in neighboring villages that must still wait. Uneven progress among

⁵² Warriner, *Land Reform*, p. 4.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

neighboring lands could easily cause not only domestic unrest but also intra-regional jealousies and quarrels. In countries which make no progress or lose ground, the entrance of the peasant into politics is likely to demonstrate just how moderate were those leaders who are now thought of as "extremist."

Fortunately it is no more necessary than it is safe to wait until the masses of ignorant, diseased, and tradition-bound peasants are ready to take the initiative. While the collaboration of the peasantry is essential, the leadership and organization of constructive peasant action can come, at this stage of history, only from the new urban middle class. It is thus possible to begin the task of helping the many by supporting the initiative of the few who, having risen above the general level, care about a nation in which most peasants still suffer.⁵³

⁵³ The price of economic progress is discussed in Chapter 17.

CHAPTER 6

WORKERS: THE GROWING TIDE OF THE UNSKILLED AND UNEMPLOYED



IF THE PEASANTS are beginning to be unable and unwilling to stand still in body or spirit, the workers have even greater cause to be restless. Most of the present generation of Middle Eastern workers are landless peasants working in the countryside or peasants transplanted to the cities. Most of those born in the city have fathers who migrated from the countryside. In the cities, they are in touch with change where it is first perceived and experienced, and they are, of course, readily available for recruitment by the new salaried middle class—the first class eager to accept and manage social change.

It is politically significant that these former peasants or descendants of peasants are, for the most part, those who have lost their land or no longer have enough of it, and consequently are about to lose or have already lost their traditional social and economic status.¹ Those who arrive without status cannot easily establish a secure position in life. Although factory workers usually earn twice or three times as much as landless agricultural workers, wages are low. In Egypt, for example, 18 percent of the workers in industry during 1958 earned less than 100 piastres (\$2.80) a week, and only 19 percent earned more than 400

¹ It is not possible, statistically, to prove for the entire Middle East this assertion concerning the social origins of workers. Wherever surveys have been made, however, they show that the landless or those short of land make up the majority. Thus, for East Pakistan, see A. F. A. Husain, *Human and Social Impact of Technological Change in Pakistan*, Vol. 1, pp. 123-125; also Saad ed Din Fawzi, *The Labour Movement in the Sudan, 1944-1955*, Oxford, 1957, pp. 10-12; Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, *Summary of the Labor Situation in Egypt*, July 1955, p. 2; Robert Montagne, editor, *Naissance du prolétariat morocain*, Paris, 1950, pp. 9-130.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

piastres (\$11.20) a week.² And other aspects of living may worsen, for city life is expensive. If the new worker leaves his family at home, he is likely to be deprived of normal human comforts.³ As meat and vegetables become more expensive his diet is likely to suffer; his consumption of tea and tobacco will probably increase.⁴ Factory work, unlike agricultural work, demands a steady pace and discipline; health conditions may well be inferior;⁵ and the worker probably stints himself to send money to his family.

If the worker brings his family with him, he often finds that industrial society pays scant respect to patriarchal values, that women and children, for example, being readier to accept lower wages, will in some occupations be given preference in employment. That the result is often a moral dissolution of which the outward symptoms are indolence, petty theft, gambling, and the smoking of hashish (alcohol has only recently become more popular in this Islamic area) is to be expected. It is a story made familiar enough by earlier European experience. The distinguishing feature in most of the Middle East is that the destroying of old patterns does not seem to buy rapid industrialization as it did in nineteenth century Europe.

This is not a wholly valid picture. Some companies, including several of the foreign-owned oil companies, have set the pace in wages and working conditions. Some countries have succeeded in actually applying their usually progressive social welfare legislation to some of their larger or state-owned enterprises. But

² Frederick H. Harbison and Ibrahim Abdelkader Ibrahim, *Human Resources for Egyptian Enterprise*, New York, 1958, p. 88.

³ Thus East Pakistan's largest cities, Dacca and Chittagong, have 1,652 and 1,827 males respectively for every 1,000 females. (Husain, *Human and Social Impact*, Vol. I, p. 58.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-165.

⁵ In one of the largest factories of East Pakistan, for example, half the workers' houses "are of bamboo and thatch huddled close to each other. Narrow winding lanes containing heaps of garbage and sewage provide the approach to the houses. The rooms . . . are congested and stuffy and lack adequate lighting and ventilation. Gunnybags are used as screens to secure some privacy in the family quarters which further restrict the entrance of light and air. There is no separate kitchen; a small space of about 3 feet wide adjoining a hut is used as a kitchen which is exposed to rain. There is no drainage system of any sort. . . ." (Husain, *Human and Social Impact*, Vol. I, pp. 150-151.) The smaller factories, often economically marginal, usually provide worse conditions.

WORKERS

these are exceptional instances. Most workers live under far different conditions.

We must distinguish among workers:

(1) Those who comprise the largest single group of workers in most Middle Eastern countries are the landless rural workers. They belong in this chapter no less than in the last. They are usually wage earners on large estates that produce cash crops. They have no special skills, there are too many of them,⁶ and technological progress can only serve to decrease their chances for earning a livelihood.

(2) Among urban workers there is a large group destined for technological extinction—the majority of employees of artisans.⁷ In earlier centuries, some of these men could reasonably hope to advance to respected middle class position, depending, of course, on their skills and the importance of their crafts. Today, they suffer from competition with better, cheaper, mass-produced goods, and from the decadence of their own craft. Even many of their employers can eke out only a day-to-day existence.

(3) There are employed workers, frequently the graduates of trade schools or men with army training, who possess modern skills. They are usually well-paid: an Egyptian mechanic makes about three times as much as a day laborer. The policies of some of the larger Middle Eastern companies—company housing, recreation, clinics, canteens, jobs for the sons of key workers—are intended to attract and hold this group of employees. Barring general economic crises, they have steady employment, for no Middle Eastern country has a sufficient number of them.

Whether they will remain politically content, however, is uncertain.⁸ They are often barred from positions above that of fore-

⁶ Except in certain regions of Iran, Iraq, and the Sudan.

⁷ Thomas B. Stauffer considered artisans to be a majority of the employed industrial workers in Egypt, even ten years ago one of the most industrialized countries of this area. ("The Industrial Worker" in *Social Forces in the Middle East*, pp. 86-88.) His figures, however, included both employers and employees as artisans and since only the latter interest us here (the former are to be found among the middle class in Chapter 4), no estimate of numbers seems possible.

⁸ Husain's survey in East Pakistan (*Human and Social Impact*, Vol. I, pp. 218-19) confirms this view: "A great majority of the workers would probably like to give their sons education up to a sufficiently high level so that they might qualify for white-collar jobs. There is no doubt that most workers would

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

man.⁹ Most trade schools in the Middle East—only belatedly given impetus by recent official concern with economic development—still have only mediocre facilities, and on-the-job training remains a novelty among locally owned firms. At the higher levels, jobs are reserved for college graduates even when they are not, as in many Middle Eastern oil companies, still reserved for foreigners. Despite the spectacular progress that many of these workers have made during the past few years, the overriding question is how their status compares with their aspirations.

(4) A much larger group of urban workers are the unskilled or semi-skilled. Included under these terms are not only the rag-pickers and sweepers, but also those who work at machines but are not really machinists, being skilled only at moving the lever of a particular machine. All of these workers are readily replaceable by others; they have no certain status, only aspirations. Wherever labor unions are still weak and where neither government nor employers are restrained by humane considerations, the supervision by company police and foremen (sometimes assuming the right of physical punishment), and the threat of dismissal for the mere expression of discontent often make life harsh for the worker. In the smaller enterprises, regulations regarding pay, hours, and safety conditions are often circumvented. Wages are usually set by custom or by personal arrangements, not by norms of output, productivity, or on a basis of equal pay for equal jobs. The surplus of workers makes labor available regardless of such arbitrary employment practices.¹⁰ These workers live at the margin: even while working, most of them remain undernourished, ill-housed, illiterate, and diseased. For most of them, losing a job may well mean permanent loss of steady employment.

like to give up factory work if they had sufficient education to enable them to secure office work of some kind. It is only because their standards of education and their resources do not make it possible for them to take up some white-collar job or some business they seem to stick to factory work."

⁹ Frederick H. Harbison and Ibrahim Abdelkader Ibrahim, "Some Labor Problems of Industrialization in Egypt," *Agrarian Societies in Transition, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, May 1956, p. 116.

¹⁰ Harbison and Ibrahim, *Human Resources for Egyptian Enterprise*, pp. 94 and 136.

WORKERS

The new recruits to the working force often discover that their entrance into the industrial age also marks the beginning of their superfluousness. In Egypt, and elsewhere in the Middle East, the smaller enterprises rely heavily on the employment of children between the ages of ten and fifteen. Since children must labor to help support their families, they seldom retain the fruits of their work. Many of them quit their jobs and leave their families whenever they can. They and older recruits are frequently hired as low-paid apprentices, only to be fired when their apprenticeship ends and higher wages are due.¹¹ Labor is cheap, and few firms are therefore inclined to adopt policies for holding workers and improving their productivity.

(5) By far the largest group of urban workers are the unemployed and unskilled.¹² For the majority of Middle Eastern countries, estimates made for Morocco probably apply: one-fifth of all urban workers are chronically out of work, and many who do have jobs are probably underemployed.¹³ As would-be workers, they are even more desperate than the would-be salaried middle class for, unlike the latter, they have neither skills nor jobs.

Such are the workers of the Middle East. Considering their lot, one can hardly expect them to act as a unified political force. Their most direct and immediate competition is with each other. Because there are too many of them for the jobs available, they

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-77.

¹² This system of classifying workers, essential for illuminating their possible political roles, prevents us, however, from utilizing statistics even when these are available. Thus a manpower survey made in November 1957 by the Government of Egypt—a country with a higher proportion of workers than most in the Middle East—indicates that in a population of 23,603,000, there are 6,710,000 employed workers, of whom 3,648,650 are agricultural workers, 725,000 are employed in industry and construction, and 715,000 in commercial establishments. (See *al-Gumhuriya*, a semi-official Cairo daily newspaper, February 28, 1958.) However, these figures probably underestimate the number of agricultural workers (since only 644,000 of the total working force are listed as women, and far more women and children than that are certainly employed in farming alone). They do not allow us to assess which proportion of the less than 6 percent of the population employed in industry, construction, and commerce are skilled workers. If, in contrast to our estimate of the unskilled and unemployed as the largest single component of the urban proletariat, the Egyptian survey lists only 360,000 workers as unemployed, such a number appears to represent only an administrative accident. In common

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

have little with which to bargain. In one of the largest Egyptian textile mills prior to 1952, job applicants waiting at the gate were screened by a personnel officer who passed by "applicants who showed particular alertness or who might appear to be potential troublemakers. . . . Those applicants who had been previously employed in factories were summarily rejected because the company had an unwritten but firm policy of engaging young workers with no previous industrial experience. . . . The objective, obviously, was to recruit and retain docile and submissive labor rather than efficient workmen."¹⁴

The possibility of these workers becoming a unified political force is also inhibited by the survival of traditional hiring practices that reinforce ties of kinship rather than of class solidarity. "In Beirut, to hire an office boy one does not put an ad in the paper but informs the head clerk of the opportunity. When all his relatives have had the refusal of the job, the second clerk's relatives have their turn, and so on until status and blood ties, or even village ties, have been exhausted. . . . A willing worker with good social security behind him has been recruited, and he will have guidance and discipline even apart from the job, because his sponsor's prestige is at stake. . . . [In the case of the Arabian-American Oil Company, this system of depending on different tribes for recruitment for different tasks] gave rise to something very like the caste system in India. . . ."¹⁵"

Workers themselves in turn often perpetuate traditional attitudes in a changing society by migrating to that quarter of the city that contains members of their village or tribe. There they expect kinship solidarity to produce a job or at least sustenance while they are unemployed. Work in the city thus only partially

with similar surveys, that category includes for the most part only that small minority of workers who once held jobs, have a definite skill, and registered themselves at an official labor agency as unemployed.

¹³ "The Atlantic Report: Morocco," *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 1959, p. 18. It is estimated that 50 percent of the rural population is underemployed.

¹⁴ Harbison and Ibrahim, "Some Labor Problems of Industrialization in Egypt," p. 117.

¹⁵ Thomas B. Stauffer, "The Industrial Worker," pp. 88-90. Husain (*Human and Social Impact*, Vol. 1, p. 129) found that about 43 percent of East Pakistani workers had relatives working in the same factory.

WORKERS

creates a new style of life; in part, ancient loyalties are reinforced under the pressure of new obligations.¹⁶

Important traditional attitudes and loyalties among workers are likely to persist for decades to come. There will be few opportunities for change. Frustration will mount. Even in countries that possess the resources and the will for making rapid economic progress, the increase in the number of jobs will not even come near absorbing the entire labor force, and continued unemployment will act to depress wages. To be sure, "not all who are poor are frustrated. Some of the poor stagnating in the slums of the cities are smug in their decay. They shudder at the thought of life outside their familiar cesspool. Even the respectable poor, when their poverty is of long standing, remain inert. . . . It is usually those whose poverty is relatively recent, the 'new poor' [who] open their eyes to the transitoriness of the 'eternal order,' . . . the disinherited and dispossessed who respond to every rising mass movement."¹⁷

For those workers who have newly discovered their poverty, extremist movements, in one form or another, are likely to seem an admirable panacea. Religio-political organizations like the Moslem Brotherhood and ultra-nationalist bodies like the Socialist National Workers Party of Iran readily cater to the aspirations of the disaffected. There are still other alternatives: communist movements that clamor for land and bread, or urban mobs seeking revenge against the powerful and rich.

The dying elites of the Middle East cannot be resuscitated. The social classes emerging or being transformed are being driven by the sheer force of numbers, especially of the would-be workers, would-be peasants, and would-be middle class, toward the more radical or else more extreme political alternatives. Though this seems to be the bent of the area's changing social structure, there

¹⁶ Janet Abu-Lughod's "Migrant Adjustment to City Life: The Egyptian Villager in Cairo," is a brief but thoroughly and vividly detailed investigation illustrating this point. (This paper was presented to a conference on The New Metropolis in the Arab World, sponsored by the Congress for Industrial Freedom and the Egyptian Society of Engineers, Cairo, December 17-22, 1960.) See also the forthcoming studies by Gene and Karen Petersen (American University of Beirut).

¹⁷ Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*, New York, 1958, p. 31.

THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

is nothing inevitable about its final shape. The range of alternatives and instruments available for dealing with the modernization of the Middle East, and their consequences, is the substance of the ensuing discussion.