THE MIDDLE EAST IN TRANSITION

Studies in Contemporary History

Edited by
WALTER Z. LAQUEUR
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P. M. HOLT: 'Raduene Nationalism and Self-determination'—The Middle East Journal.


GEORGIOS KEYMAN: 'The Egyptian Intelligentsia'—Preuves.

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CHARLES ISSAWI: 'Economic and Social Foundations of Democracy in the Middle East'; and BERNARD LEWIS: 'Communism and Islam'—International Affairs.

MIZRA KHAN: 'The Arab Refugees'—Midstream.

A. F. MILLS: 'Middle Eastern Development—Another Missing Link'—Middle East Forum.

ANDREW J. A. MANGO: 'Turkey and the Middle East'; and ELIE KEDOURIE: 'Pan-Arabism and British Policy'—The Political Quarterly.

WALED KHALIDI: 'Political Trends in the Fertile Crescent'—The World To-day.


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L. N. VATOLINA and V. R. LUTSKII: 'Two Soviet Views on the Middle East'—Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie.

W. Z. LACQUIRE: 'Syria: Nationalism and Communism'—Commentary.

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INTRODUCTION

This collection of essays is a contribution to the analysis of recent political and social trends in the Middle East. Most of the topics it covers have not as yet been adequately discussed, although, as recent developments in the area have shown, they are of the greatest importance. For the same reason of urgency, the essays selected are those that reveal most of the ideology and activities of the local political and social forces, and a relatively large space has been allotted to the analysis of Soviet attitudes towards the Middle East, Islam, and the Arab national movement. Certain aspects, such as those of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the exploitation of the oil resources of the area, have been excluded from anything more than incidental allusion, because they have been amply publicized elsewhere. These limitations may be regretted, but they are really unavoidable, for an encyclopedia would now be needed to cover all the problems of the Middle East.

Some of the essays have been specially written for inclusion in the present volume, others have been previously published in English, French, Russian, and Arabic periodicals, and most of the latter have been revised and brought up to date by their authors. They represent a wide range of political opinion; no reader is expected to agree with all the views they express. But the editor, who emphatically disagrees with some of them, is persuaded that they all represent currents of thought that are significant and have to be taken into account.

The essays in the first section deal with social developments in the Arab world, and some aspects of its recent political history, as well as with the relations between the Arabs and the West. The main theme of the second section is the effect that Russia and Communism have had upon the Middle East, and this includes some essays whose relevance may not be obvious at first sight. What connection is there, it may be asked, between contemporary Middle Eastern politics and the discussions going on in the Soviet Union about the merits of the Imam Shamil, an obscure Caucasian tribal leader of the nineteenth century? Or of what topical interest is it to review the ideas of Sultan Galiev, a Tatar Communist leader of the nineteen-twenties?
Yet closer scrutiny will show that the wavering judgments pronounced upon Shamyl in the Soviet Union reveal, more clearly than any of its foreign political documents, the predicament of that government in its contacts with Islam; and that Sultan Galiev's ideas, long forgotten and never considered to be of much importance, are in more than one respect prophetic of the policies pursued by President Nasser and the Syrian colonels. The two Soviet contributions may not strike a Western reader as particularly illuminating; nevertheless, they are worthy of study as fairly typical of Soviet writing on Middle Eastern questions.

While a knowledge of the history of the Middle East is of great value towards the understanding of current tendencies in that area, it is not the only, nor always the most important, prerequisite. When all is said and done, the problems of the Middle East today are much more similar to those of, for instance, Indonesia, Indo-China, or of some of the Latin-American countries than to those of eighteenth-century Syria or Egypt. A knowledge of the Leninist theory of imperialism, of populism, or of certain German right-wing political philosophers of the early twentieth century, may be as helpful towards the understanding of Arab nationalism as a knowledge of Tahthawi and Kawakibi.

Several contributors to this volume discuss the comparatively recent emergence of radical movements in the Arab world—Nasserism, the Ba'ath, and Communism—some in a sympathetic and others in a highly critical spirit. These show the need for a re-appraisal of new and unfamiliar factors in the situation; they may help to do away with certain misconceptions by which Western thinking about the Middle East, and therefore Western policy towards it, has hitherto misdirected a considerable time past.

Besides these misconceptions of the situation there are also mistaken attitudes towards it. To a certain school of thought, which assumes that there is nothing new under the sun, whatever happens in the Middle East has happened once or often before; so that a correct study of its past history will always explain present developments. But this is to overlook the fact that there is always something new and unique in a new situation; and in the present concatenation of circumstances there is much that is completely unprecedented. Another school of thought tends to view the Middle East through Western spectacles, thereby receiving distorted impressions and drawing fallacious conclusions. For instance, seeing a highly critical situation in the Middle East, it assumes that, as would undoubtedly be the case in the West, this cannot possibly endure for long without revolution, civil war, or some equally drastic action or reaction. This Western feeling for order and stability is natural, but it is quite
misleading if projected upon the Middle East, a part of the world where standards of stability and order are different, where people react differently to crises and disturbances; and where things do not produce the same consequences as they would in the West. In other words, it is by no means certain that any significant new element will emerge out of the present turmoil in the Middle East.

A third school in the West has for some considerable time argued that there is a natural community of interests and ideals between Arab nationalism and the West; that, but for the regrettable nineteenth-century record of certain imperialist powers, the clash between France and Algeria, British involvements in the Arabian Peninsula, and, above all, the existence of the State of Israel, agreement between the West and Arab nationalism would not be too difficult to bring about. This is a serious argument which deserves due consideration. But the idea that there is a natural community of interest between the Western and Asian nations is, at best, a hopeful generalization. The Western nations themselves are not held together by their nationalism, but by common beliefs in supra-national values such as freedom, democracy, and their common European heritage. Even so, it has often been difficult enough in the West to find a common denominator between national interests; and between the Western and some Asian nations in their present stage of development it may be impossible. Or there may prove to be common ground with some countries in Asia and the Middle East but not with others. Some of these, such as India, Burma, Ceylon, and the Lebanon, have directed their energies mainly towards peaceful reconstruction and domestic problems ever since they won their independence. But others have been much more influenced by considerations of military strength and glory, by desire for territorial gains, or even, perhaps, by dreams of new empires. With such countries it is difficult to see how a clash could have been prevented even if the West had moved out of all its remaining possessions and spheres of influence. Generalizations about 'Asian nationalism' are even less trustworthy than those about European nationalism.

Israel is, of course, an important issue: there can be no doubt that the Israeli-Arab conflict has exacerbated or, to be more precise, did much to precipitate the struggle between Arab nationalism and the West. Even here, however, the different effects upon different countries should not be forgotten. For Jordan, and perhaps for Syria, Israel is a major factor: but the course of events within Egypt has seldom been palpably altered by the existence of Israel. To ask whether developments in the Middle East would have been fundamentally different if this new state had not been founded is a hypothetical question to which there is no sure answer. But other
INTRODUCTION

developments in Asia—i.e., Indonesia, in Kerala and in Persia (under Dr. Mossadeq)—where Israel was in no way involved, makes it seem unlikely that Middle Eastern events would have taken a very different course in the absence of Israel. To attribute all that has gone wrong between the Arab world and the West to the Arab-Israeli conflict is to mistake the symptom of a malady for its cause.

Another thing that is often overrated in the West is the importance of the economic factor. Well-meaning observers have from time to time suggested that if only all the countries concerned would get together and co-operate in a scheme for the economic development of the whole area, all the outstanding problems would be solved, or at least become tractable. Advocates of this solution tend to forget that economic development, desirable though it is, is no cure for problems that arise on the political and social planes, where alone they can be successfully dealt with. Of all the Asian countries, Syria has shown the most economic progress during the last ten years, yet Syria’s political development, internal and external, can hardly be said to have taken a direction expected or desired in the West.

There has been much searching of hearts and consciences in the capitals of the West, to discover mistakes that were made in the past and that may yet be made, perhaps, be remedied. It has been suggested that a lack of humility on the side of the West, or of friendliness or willingness to understand, has been the root of all the troubles. All these qualities are invaluable; they will always be as much appreciated in the Middle East as elsewhere, wherever they are displayed. In the conduct of international affairs, however, the manifestation of them will not always bring the response that is desired: humility, for instance, may be misunderstood as weakness, which has never been highly esteemed in Arab capitals—or in many other quarters, for that matter. Often, what is most needed is tact, firmness, and friendliness—towards friends.

The lack of co-operation between the Western Powers, especially between France and Britain on the one hand and America on the other, has also been blamed for most of the Western failures. This negative factor has been, and is, indeed, highly regrettable; but here again one may over-estimate the amount of difference that closer collaboration could have made. For there are some irremovable limitations to the scope of Western action in the Arab countries. The shaping of their future depends almost wholly upon their own political elites. Any Western interference, however well-intentioned, will be greatly resented and probably self-defeating; for there is nothing these countries want more than to work out their destinies by themselves. Towards Syria and Egypt, for example, the only possible policy is one of inactivity: military intervention is excluded.
by the international situation, and minor acts or gestures of hostility are ineffective, for they only irritate the people they are meant to impress, and preclude any improvement in their policy towards the West. Even fraternization, however sincere, is unlikely to open any political harvest for the West, because it is a psychological necessity for the political organizers of these countries to proclaim a state of danger, to point to an enemy Power—and Israel by itself is too small to fulfil this role. What these countries need, even more than economic development, is a gain in self-esteem; and how can they better prove to themselves their independence, and their new-won political power, than by displaying ability to defy the West?

Not that this state of affairs need go on for ever. Passions may calm down in course of time: the radical movements in the Arab lands may grow in positive content until hatred and resentment, their present raison d'être, will be gradually abandoned as unnecessary. But there is nothing that the West can do at present, or presumably for years to come, that is likely to expedite this process—apart from a policy of studied non-interference and demonstrative disinterest. The risks that this involves are admittedly formidable. Some of the countries involved may gradually and almost imperceptibly be drawn into the Soviet sphere of power. This possibility, which in one or two cases is a probability, has to be accepted as outside our preventive powers. Everything now depends upon whether the political elites of the Middle East will prove that their professed ability to maintain their national independence was more than an idle boast. Real independence, that is, not the forensic façade of a virtually satellite status—however voluntarily that may at first be entered into. It seems unlikely that all will succeed in this; but it is not inevitable that all will fail.

WALTER Z. LACQUER

London, January, 1958

Note: There is no universally accepted system of transliteration for Arabic names. The editor has therefore preferred not to take liberties with the transcriptions used by the various contributors—some of whom are 'purists' and others very liberal in this respect. Only in cases of major divergence, or where confusion might be occasioned, have a few minor adjustments been made.

I should like to record my obligation to Nissim Rajman, Philip Mairet, and Mrs. Jane Degras for their translations from Arabic, French, and Russian. Over and above this assistance, the advice of the two latter has been of great value in editing the present volume.
Part One

SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL CHANGE
SOCIAL REFORM: FACTOR X

The Search for an Islamic Democracy

by SIR HAMILTON A. R. GIBB

THE "EASTERN QUESTION" of today differs profoundly from the "Eastern Question" of the nineteenth century. Then, the Concert of Europe, jealous competitors, stood around the death-bed of the irremediably disintegrating Ottoman Empire, disputing its ultimate inheritance. Today the Western Powers seek to promote the stability and cohesion of ten emergent sovereign states, with a fringe of colonial or semi-colonial fragments, and to find a basis for their integration. Yet repeated eruptions and revolutions show that "The Question" remains, and even grows in perplexity.

Since these manifestations are usually linked with foreign policy, political issues might seem to be the dominant factors. Political factors are real enough, especially the issues of foreign controls and the State of Israel; yet there is a growing perception that they alone cannot explain the region's volcanic instability. The other factors, in prevailing Western opinion, are economic, and the most urgent question is seen as helping these "under-developed" countries to build new and efficient economic structures. Certainly the economic factors are crucial—and in Egypt, at least, frighteningly complex. But the internal causes of unrest can no more be cured by economic gadgets—even of such size as the High Dam on the Nile or a Jordan Valley Authority—than by a few clever political adjustments. Economic development may help if integrated with social development; but if it cuts across deep-seated social forces it may even intensify the inner instability.
For the third element is the social factor. It is, not surprisingly, often overlooked. Political factors, if confusing, at least lie close to the surface; economic potentials can be evaluated with fair accuracy. But the social factor has been (the lens studied, not only by outside observers but by those most concerned within the region. Many of the weaknesses of the Middle Eastern states are squarely the result of their failure to recognize and meet adequately the problems of a prolonged social crisis.

A social organism is the resultant of a great variety of continually changing spiritual and material forces, producing strains which require adjustment to maintain a relatively stable equilibrium. If any maladjustment becomes too widespread and prolonged, the situation is felt to be intolerable and a violent demand arises for 'reform'. The effectiveness of this demand depends on: (1) the kinds of organ for expressing social needs, the leadership for canalizing them, and the instruments available for promoting reforms; (2) the ability of the governing elements to diagnose the true causes of the maladjustment and so cure them that the society's vital inner forces and external activities are again brought into harmony.

Every living society includes 'devices' or organs whereby relative tensions can find adjustment; and the speed and ease with which they operate is a measure of its viability. In general, the older a society, the more its social institutions become fixed, and the means of adjustment restricted to minor reforms within a standardized framework. Yet these are usually adequate, precisely because the need for reforms is so experienced and equilibrated a society is correspondingly low. But when the need of a major adjustment shows the traditional instruments to be inadequate, new methods and organs must be created. The real vitality of a society can be measured by its success in providing them without excessively violent reactions or dislocation.

The organ evolved by Islamic society was the religious brotherhood. Considerations of space make it impossible to trace in detail here the origins and history of these brotherhoods. Suffice it to say that in face of the challenge of the Turko-Mongol invasions starting in the eleventh century, two existing currents—the spiritually reformist 'methodism' of the cities, and the militant 'frontier warfare' organizations—gradually coalesced and forced the invaders to respect established religious and economic institutions and co-operate with the settled agricultural and industrial communities. Ultimately the brotherhoods encompassed all social classes and reinforced the functional propinquity by trade-guild and cooperation.

After the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, they took on predominantly the role of mediators in a situation of recurrent
In Islamic thought, the state should be only the public exponent of Islamic ideology, ensuring the security and well-being of the Muslim peoples, and enforcing the Law of Islam but itself subject to that Law, and its authority derives wholly from the degree to which it is considered to do so. The religious leaders, though they created a Muslim community, had failed to control the centres of political power. This was the main socio-political tension within Islam. The political organizations, tainted by usurpation, violence, and corruption, were only passively accepted. The state always exists, but dynasties and governments are transient. Violation of a government's man-made laws carried no moral reprobation or violation of conscience—rather, indeed, the contrary. Civil penalties inflicted by government officers carried no stigma. The citizen owed his loyalty primarily to Islam itself, and after Islam to his own social group or guild and its ethic.

Finally, a reasonable modus vivendi was reached, with the religious brotherhoods mitigating inner tensions or conflicts of loyalties. Yet the limitation of their civic function to the removal of grievances and restoration of the status quo ante, reinforced the tendency, natural to every religious institution, to oppose 'innovations' and resist all change.

The religious leadership was thus wholly unprepared and ill-equipped, and indeed contributed not a little to its own impotence, when in the nineteenth century this precarious balance was entirely destroyed. It was destroyed less by the direct intrusion of the West than by immensely complicated internal developments, which have been so insufficiently studied that it might almost be said that we know more about the internal history of the Muslim world in the ninth than in the nineteenth century. Only three things are reasonably certain: (1) the old corporative functional groups decayed or dissolved; (2) the old brotherhood organizations also decayed—these two results involving the loss of the personal link between the individual and the community and of social and religious integration; (3) the power of the state was disproportionately enlarged, by both the increased efficiency of its own instruments and the decay of the counterbalancing ones.

Whether the dissolution of the old community structure will ultimately prove beneficial depends on the principles and forms of social cohesion that will take its place. Rural co-operatives and
Industrial trade unions are still in their infancy, and fail to satisfy the deeper emotional and spiritual needs. The average individual belongs to his family and to Islam, but Islam no longer has any coherent social organization. This social void is intensely real and creates a spiritual dissatisfaction which craves a uniquely Muslim form of expression. Meanwhile, social maladjustments and dis-equilibrium have grown so severe that the cry for relief and reform has become articulate and insistent.

Simultaneously with this disintegration there were growing up in all the Arab countries (save Arabia) new administrative and professional classes: lawyers, civil servants, doctors, journalists, teachers, entrepreneurs, and professional army officers. It would seem that, ignorant or careless of the old social structure, and fascinated by Western political theories, these elements overlooked the social issues altogether and concentrated on counteracting their countries' inorganic political structures. They aimed at reorganizing political life on Western models, introducing Western legal codes and courts, and co-operated with the orthodox religious leaders to discredit the old Sufi brotherhoods as superstitious, while dreaming of reforming Islam itself in terms of Western thought.

Clearly this Westernized intelligentsia never thought in terms of a 'Muslim State', but unconsciously applied the Western division between church and state to the traditional Muslim separation of political and social functions. They would create organized constitutional governments and leave the religious institution as guarantor of social relationships in the new and enlightened society produced by the spread of education.

But the religious institution was no longer capable of carrying out this function. Only through the brotherhoods had orthodox Islam acquired a social integration. The religious leaders imagined that the 'purification' of religion by the elimination of 'superstition' would lead to an Islamic revival; but (leaving aside the question whether any religion can be truly effective in human society without an outer ring or protective covering of 'superstition') Islam's abstract doctrines and personal duties, not backed by a social organization, lacked the force to guide social development. And the intelligentsia's growing secularization and hostility to the 'medievalism' of the ulama (religious teachers) nullified any purely religious sanctions.

The rift between political and social policy was strangely widened by the resounding campaign of the late-nineteenth-century reformer Jamal el-Din el-Afghani for a pan-Islamic programme of spiritual unification of all Muslims under the Ottoman caliphate to oppose European political, economic, and cultural penetration. Jamal el-Din
did align the Muslim masses behind movements to oppose the West; but they paradoxically emerged, in the Middle East at least, under the leadership, not of the caliphate, but of local nationalists already becoming hostile to the Ottoman government. And it was by this mass support that the nationalist movements finally succeeded in setting up their parliamentary governments.

Though the nationalist leaders were primarily concerned with political emancipation, they had to let it be assumed, to hold the support of the masses, that it would be followed by positive measures to meet social discontents. They were thus committed to internal 'reforms'. The vague identification of political and social ends was rendered easier by the obvious fact that the most extensive maladjustments were connected with the importation of Western systems, processes, and ideas. But underneath this superficial identification lay a real divergence of aims: between independence as an end in itself and independence as the means to the end of reknitting the threads of social cohesion supposedly severed by Western penetration and controls.

Even after political independence, the nationalist leaders failed to recognize this divergence. Maladjustments continued and even became more severe. For the main causes were not (as the masses naively thought) due to the presence of foreign governors and entrepreneurs, but to the pervasive effects of Western intellectual, legal, and economic systems, to new patterns of land tenure, to population growth and pressure on means of subsistence, and to the expansion of urban proletariat. While claiming to 'choose out' the useful elements from Western civilization and reject those conflicting with national traditions, the nationalist leaders have made social discontents more acute by themselves continuing and expanding under nationalist auspices just those imported administrative and legal systems which had been responsible for dissolving the traditional community institutions.

Granted that the intricate nexus of material and psychological factors was difficult of comprehension, yet the nationalist leaders faced their problems like politicians everywhere. Either they remained immobile, putting up a stiff front of opposition to 'disturbances', or they attempted to placate by promises; and only recently, as the idea of the 'welfare state' has percolated to the Middle East, have they started on social-welfare legislation, modelled on the West and not very specifically related to the actual social situations, economic
possibilities, or psychological dispositions. Or they have pinned their hopes on industrialization or other economic panaceas, again with- out much consideration of the social problems involved.

If this were all, the politicians could not be blamed overmuch. In a democratic system political leaders are expected to respond to popular will as expressed in institutions from parish council and town meetings right up to the most comprehensive organizations. But it is precisely the great weakness of Arab countries that, since the breakdown of the old corporations, no social institutions have been evolved through which the public will can be channelled, interpreted, defined, and mobilized. Elective institutions at the lower levels practically do not exist. No functional associations link representa- tives from different areas. There is, in short, no functioning organ of social democracy at all.

The political leaders have demonstrated no awareness of this inorganic state of social institutions, have not aided them to develop, and indeed have shown jealousy of any potential institution which might rival and eventually oppose the political parties. But their still greater discredit to the welfare of their peoples has lain in their party rivalries, open pursuit of private interests, scandal-plagued open acrimony in their wrangling, subservience to the wealthy and powerful, and toleration of bitter inequalities. By this behaviour the parliamentary leaders have discredited themselves and the system, and disillusioned the masses. To these the new kind of state differed little from its predecessors. So-called "democracy" in practice was scarcely distinguishable from the old sultanates: corruption was as rife as ever in the administration, and violence was not less violence because clothed in incomprehensible legal forms. Like the old sultan- nates, the new governments were passively accepted in virtue of their power, but they had no real moral authority: in the people's eyes they were merely associations of self-interested persons using power for their own advantage during their transient ministries.

Inevitably, as the nationalist leaders felt mass support slipping away, they made ever more violent efforts to regain it by persistent harping on the continued presence of European forces or enterprises or controls, or on the hidden hand of Western diplomacy and on Western support of Zionism. When accused of neglecting social issues, they insisted that those were secondary and controversial, and must not disrupt the nation's united determination to achieve its national aims. However genuinely the politicians desired national independence, they did not know what to do with it. Concentrating on its negative aspect as freedom from foreign interference, and without positive programmes, they could only try to fill the void of policy by propaganda.
SOCI

AL REFORM : FACTOR X

It must, of course, be frankly admitted that the policies adopted by Great Britain and France on the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire gave bitter offence to nationalist sentiment. And since the Second World War, the positive actions of these Powers plus the United States have given further offence, especially through their support of Israel, while their open and concealed rivalries have intensified Arab suspicions and hostility towards the West. The grievances are real and deep-seated. But it is a fallacy to suppose that the Western countries could have escaped becoming the butt of nationalist propaganda. The weakness of the political leadership forced it to distract public resentment into anti-Western channels, and the Western Powers, whatever their policies had been, were cast for the role of scapegoats.

The consequences of this emphasis on propaganda have been disastrous in at least two respects. First, propaganda is the most vicious of the habit-forming drugs. It engenders group delusions which so root themselves in the minds of the propagandists themselves that they finally inhibit rational judgment of real issues. Drifting helplessly on waves of mass emotion, they become an easy mark for exploitation even by their enemies, provided these enemies subtly minister to the delusions which the propagandists have implanted. And when the political leaders find it necessary or opportune to change course, their own propaganda recoils on them and they find themselves branded as turncoats and traitors.

Second, because its content was merely political, propaganda has inhibited positive thought on real internal problems. No stable state can arise or endure without a basic social philosophy, accepted by the mass of its citizens, more or less consciously pursued in public life and private associations, and guaranteed by its laws, whether it be the Republica Christiana, or the ideology of the Islamic Community, or Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, or Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Nationalism by itself is not such a philosophy; the 'nation' is merely a political concept. In most Arab countries, indeed, it is not even a universally accepted concept, and has as yet acquired no inherent authority.

Thus the internal instability of the Arab world has been increased by the clash of different definitions of the content of the national concept. The Westernized professional classes define it in terms of Western political and social institutions, plus naive faith in universal education, or at least primary literacy. The professional armies define it in terms of military strength. The small Socialist and Communist Parties define it in terms of their own doctrinaire ideologies. All of
them may and do profess their desire to relieve social pressures, and
many are sincere therein. But their programmes are designed to
serve their special interests, and in power give way to those interests in
the competition for shares of the limited national revenue.
One factor, however, is common to all of them. All regard the
masses as so much plastic material to be moulded, without will or
vision of their own. But the masses do have their vision, in terms of
their Arab heritage through thirteen centuries of Islam. Politically, their
aspirations are not narrowly national, but pan-Arab. Socially, their
coalitions with the failure of national governments to meet
their social needs is slowly beginning to find expression in new forms
corresponding to the old religious associations, such as the Muslim
Brotherhood (el-Ikhwan el-Muslimin), which demand a programme
of social order based on the principles of Islam and which through
local lodges restore the lost sense of ‘belonging’.
How such a programme could be applied in the modern world is
an open question. But these are only the first inchoate gropings
towards a restatement of Muslim values in face of the invasion of
Western values, and as such show an inherent vitality in Muslim
society. Understandably the Westernized politicians and profession-
als view them with suspicion and disfavour, especially when they
break into open political action. Yet, since nationalism has hitherto
manifestly failed to meet the social needs and aspirations of the Arab
peoples, and even the new government in Egypt—though more
positively affirming its good intentions—has not yet proved that it
grasps the material or psychological dimensions of the social prob-
lems, these vital forces, even if repressed, will probably continue to
find stronger and more coherent expressions and create new organs
and institutions of their own.
To sum up, then, The Arab world is in the profound crisis of a
dialectical process ( outwardly concealed by a common hostility to
the Western Powers) which drags it in two different directions. On
the one hand is the movement towards authoritarian regimes, whose
principal aim is to build up the political and military power of the
state and restore Arab unity by political alliances. On the other are
tentative movements to rebuild the social organism on Islamic prin-
ciples, and so re-create a moral reunion of the Arab peoples.
Although complementary in appearance, these movements stand on
conflicting principles. The first gears social and economic devel-
opment to Western-type administration, military organization, and
expansion of technical skills. Because these imported systems are
artificial structures, imposed by the few, and not rooted in the
national psychology, this programme requires sustained propaganda
and the use of state power to remould the life and thought of the
nation to conform with the ideas and objectives of the ruling groups.
The second stresses organic internal development, relating economic
to social needs, not rejecting Western experience where consistent
with these, but subordinating it to the directions derived from the
Islamic traditions of the masses. But because there is no vitality left
in the lingering remains of the old Islamic social organizations, its
leaders must forge the appropriate new organizations and institu-
tions to canalize their ideals—a task calling for a long period of
generation, probably often in conflict with the state, and con-
tinuing adaptation to changing social needs and situations.

Both movements are thus partial and provisional experiments
towards adjusting Arab political, economic, and social life to the
play of world-wide forces. Probably neither can by itself fill the inner
void, but through their opposition and interplay there may in time
erange the solution by which the restless social problems of the
Arab world can be satisfied in a social order which meets their
psychological needs within the framework of expanding international
relationships. Only then will the Middle Eastern countries gain the
stability which is to their own greatest interest and to the interest of
the world at large.