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The Post-Cold War Political Topography of the Middle East: prospects for democracy

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ABSTRACT *The debate on democracy in the Middle East has generated many important questions but has, so far, answered few of them satisfactorily. This paper endeavours to understand the prospects and problems for democracy in the region by making visible the connections between this issue and one of the least explored and understood aspects of the contemporary Middle East: how the suppression of communist, socialist, and other leftist and reformist political movements in the region after World War II affected and continues to affect the region's economic and political development. It details the campaign in the 1950s and 1960s to eradicate not only communists and socialists but any element in the region calling for democratic government or land reform. The result was to suppress liberal, reformist and progressive elements in the region that, in Europe and elsewhere, supported and encouraged the democratisation of national politics.*

Much has been written about the birth of the contemporary Middle East state system in the aftermath of World War I, the mandate system, the conflict between Jews and Palestinian Arabs, and the role and interests of Western powers in that conflict and in the region. But what has been less explored, and less well understood, is the nature of the social forces that came to power during that time, and how and in what ways that time (the beginning of the Cold War[1]) and those forces shaped the region's subsequent socio-economic and political development.

One of the most significant features of the post-World War I Middle East was the rise of communist, socialist, and other leftist political organizations, and the intense social conflicts that both generated and ensued from them. Similar struggles occurred in Europe and many other parts of the world after World War I. These struggles played out differently in different regions, and the ways and reasons that they did had an important impact on their post-World War II development. In the Middle East, parties and movements of the Left emerged after World War I in Iran, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and elsewhere in the region, and were suppressed by local security forces with the help of Britain and France. However, with the resurgence of these groups following World War II, regional elites seeking to monopolise access to new sources and means of producing wealth, and foreign powers determined to make the world safe for capitalist producers and investors, closed ranks in a

[1] The Cold War continued the crusade against socialism that commenced with the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, but was interrupted between 1939 and 1945 when the non-fascist capitalist countries were forced to enter into a temporary alliance with the Soviet Union.

campaign to eradicate, not only Communists and Socialists, but *any* element calling for democracy and land reform, including liberal, left-of-center, and other reformist groups and movements.

This campaign, which purported to have as its aim the containment of Soviet expansionism, was frequently prosecuted by means of violent clashes, bloody police action, expulsion and incarceration. However, two of the less overtly violent means it employed have had what are arguably the most far-reaching consequences for the region's socio-economic and political development. The first of these are policies and institutions that, together, produced and maintained dualistic, enclave-like economies in Arab countries. Maintaining this overall pattern of development enabled elites to expand production and increase their wealth while, at the same time, limiting access to resources and blocking the growth of new classes. Consequently, while elites in the Middle East have amassed considerable wealth,[2] and enjoy a standard and style of living characteristic of elites in Western Europe and the United States, the standard of life of the mass of the population has remained near subsistence levels. A second means employed in the anti-left and -reformist campaign, was to actively aid and abet the growth of a religious far right as a bulwark against the left. As a result, today there is no left, center or, even moderate right sufficiently organized to successfully compete in an open election with the religious far right.

The Cold War crusade encouraged the emergence of a nationalist politics in the region that, by blocking reform and a wider distribution of valued goods, consolidated and reproduced dualistic, rather than broad-based, economic development. Nationalist politics rejected, on "anti-imperialist" grounds, "Western" political and economic institutions, and Western standards and styles of life for all but a tiny wealthy elite. It promoted "national socialist" institutions to tie all labor organisation and activity to government-controlled parties and corporatist schemes, and encouraged an ethnic or religious-based nationalism that denied the rights and territorial claims of minorities. In the dualistic economies that this produced, the mass of the population continued to live in "authentic" poverty, while elites and their business partners accumulated wealth undisturbed by the needs and demands of the wider societies in which they operated.

Historically, the emergence of democracy is associated with a breakdown of traditional class structures, an increase in the power of working classes relative to that of other classes, a relatively more nationally embedded capitalism, development of purchasing power among a mass domestic citizen workforce, and the extension and integration of domestic markets. But, in the Middle East, the post World War II "Cold War" crusade defended traditional class structures, restricted the power of working classes, encouraged the rise of ultra right-wing, anti-democratic groups; and, thus, prevented the development of the very conditions that, in Europe and elsewhere, are associated with democracy. **Part I** of this paper describes the traditional structure of social power in the Middle East and how it survived the demise of the Ottoman Empire. **Part II** focuses on the role both of regional elites and extra-regional powers in suppressing reformist groups and movements in the region. **Part III** sums up the post-cold war political topography of the Middle East and what it implies for the prospects for democracy.

[2] $1,568 billion is held by 200, 000 people (Cordesman 1999).

I. The Structure of Social Power in the Middle East

The construction of the contemporary Middle East state system changed only the political structure of the region: the *social* structure of the Ottoman Empire survived the transition from empire to modern state system intact.

At the top of this structure, was the traditional landowning class. As in Europe and other regions of the world during the nineteenth century, in the Middle East the power of traditional landowners was strengthened as additional land was brought under cultivation for export crops. During the century, the total cultivated area of Egypt expanded by 70%, and most of it was acquired by landlords (Warriner 1948: 49-50). A similar process took place in Iraq where increased demand for exports of grain at the end of the nineteenth century gave tribal chiefs a motive for acquiring land as their personal property. In much the same way that the English landlords of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enclosed lands that were traditionally common property, landowners in the Middle East ousted smallholders whose title was based only on custom; and, as in nineteenth century England, the process was hastened by mechanization, which gave the big landowners an advantage against the small cultivator. In 1950, over 68% of the total agricultural landholdings in Iraq was owned by persons constituting only 2% of the total number of landholders. Small proprietors (holding less than 100 donums) constituted 86% of the total number of holders, but the area held by them was only 10.5% of the total lands in holdings (UN ESCWA 1985: 20-21). The biggest 2% of landowners in Lebanon owned or held about two thirds of the total cultivated land. In Syria 2.5% of the total number of landowners held about 45% of irrigated and 30% of rain-fed land while about 70% of the rural population owned no land at all (Warriner (1948: 85). In Egypt, about two-thirds of the land belonged to 5.7% of the population (Berque 1972: 618).

As in other regions of the world, in the Middle East landowners sought to profit from the extension of cultivated land while, at the same time, preserving the traditional social and political structures that supported their privileges. This was the concern of the Arab nationalist movements that emerged within the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turks that came to power in 1908 accelerated Ottoman policies designed to centralise power and curtail the autonomy of elites in the Arab areas of the Empire. They also pursued a Turkification campaign to shift power to a specifically Turkish political class.[3] These policies triggered the rise of Arab nationalist parties and societies. However, most Arab nationalists sought, not to establish separate states, but only to restore Arab autonomy within the Empire or to establish a bi-national partnership with the Turks; and though the expected defeat and break-up of the Ottoman Empire during World War I transformed autonomist aspirations into national independence movements, it remained the case that the Arab notabilities that led them sought, not to overturn the traditional order, but to regain the local power and autonomy they had previously enjoyed within Ottoman society (Hourani 1968).

After independence, the first project of the traditional elite was the elimination of foreigners and members of minority groups that, up until then, had performed the functions of an entrepreneurial bourgeois class in trade, finance, industry and, to a large extent, the

[3] Turkish-speaking Moslems comprised roughly 40% of the population; 40% of the population were Arabic-speaking; the remaining 20% was Greek, Armenian, Kurdish, and Jewish.

professions. The elimination of the foreign and minority bourgeoisie was followed by the subordination of the indigenous industrial and entrepreneurial middle class that, in Egypt and elsewhere in the region, had grown with the expansion of production during World War II. The growth of this class was checked in the 1950s in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan when the state and its bureaucracy made it almost impossible for groups of producers to enjoy sufficient autonomy to set up institutions that could expand their economic base (Issawi 1982: 170, Herschlag 1975: 35-6). Instead, commercial and industrial elements were subordinated to traditional pre- and non-industrial elites and absorbed into over-bloated and inefficient state bureaucracies.

Thus, despite all that has been written about the rise of the "new middle classes" in the Middle East, no economic class emerged with strength enough to rival the power of the traditional class of landowners and urban notabilities.[4] In Egypt, economic development was led by the older propertied class turned industrialist (Davis 1983: 30, Deeb 1976, Vatikiotis 1980: 333-34). As in Egypt, in Syria economic power remained, as in the days of the Ottoman Empire, with the traditional urban notabilities, and the old landowning aristocracy in the cities of Homs and Hama and their surrounding villages (Petran 1972). Jordan had a mass of bureaucratic and governmental functionaries ("salariat") having no independent political and economic power apart from that bestowed upon it by the Crown. In the countries of the Arabian peninsula--the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Oman --there developed a small managerial elite closely tied to and dependent upon the ruling Sultan, Emir, or King. Though North Yemen's "revolution" of 1962 brought about a change in its formal political structure, it left the economic life of the country under the control of tribal and other traditional leaders. Lebanon had a genuine middle class before the civil wars; however, during the 1970s and 1980s, large portion of it fled the country. South Yemen was the only Arab state in the region with a strong middle class.[5]

On the whole, a strong traditional elite of landowners and urban notabilities survived the transition from Empire to states system and were successful in accommodating, absorbing, and containing the various commercial and industrial elements that arose in the early twentieth century. In a number of Arab countries, a governing elite of party, bureaucratic, and military personnel took control of the state in the 1950s; but this elite did not differ substantially from the Ottoman petite bourgeois and military governing elite. Under the Ottoman Empire traditional elites exercised local, not central, power. They continued to do so, in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt under petite bourgeois regimes. Thus, while they did not directly control the political and military apparatus of the state, their continued control of traditional local power bases enabled them to block far-reaching reforms in

[4] Manfred Halpern focused the attention of Middle East scholars on the rise of a "new middle class" as a subject of study in the early 1960s. See the debate between Halpern (1962, 1969, 1970) and Amos Perlmutter (1967, 1970).

[5] When the country became independent in 1967 under a Marxist government, the British and their sultan clients, pro-British business interests, as well as many British- and Saudi-backed tribesmen, fled into exile. Consequently, in contrast to the situation in North Yemen, the South Yemeni regime did not remain dependent on sheiks at the local level and royalist holdovers at the national level (McClintock 1986).

economic and social structures.[6] Consequently, and despite independence movements, coups d'etat, insurrections, and rebellions, the social structure of the region remained essentially the same.

II. The Cold War Campaign

A campaign against socialism commenced with the Bolshevik revolution in 1917. It was interrupted during World War II[7] but, then, forcefully resumed when, in the years immediately following the war, social democratic reforms were adopted throughout Western Europe, and the Communist pattern of organization spread to much of Eastern Europe, as well as China. To prevent its further spread, a global campaign was launched by a U.S.-led coalition of anti-communist ruling groups in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. In the Middle East, regional elites and extra-regional powers, united by an interest in preserving mutually beneficial commercial and financial relations, raised the banner of anti-communism to justify policies that prevented a broadening of access to sources and means of producing wealth.

Western interests in the Middle East had developed in association with the capitulations treaties that, beginning in the sixteenth century, granted Europeans extensive concessions to build, own, and operate businesses in the Ottoman and Persian Empires. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Europeans built railroads (from Constantinople to Baghdad, and throughout Egypt, North Africa, and the Levant), shipping companies, ports, electric power companies, tramways, telegraphs, and urban water supply companies. They built the Suez Canal, helped to develop Egypt's cotton fields, and built oil wells and refineries in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain. These activities created modern sectors, owned and run by Europeans, producing sometimes as much as half of the income of the local economy, and affecting only small segments of the indigenous population.

The emergence of independent states in the region after World War I involved no threat to these interests, only a reformulation of the terms under which they operated. Protected by foreign powers, local elites survived the upheavals and local power struggles that accompanied the demise of the Ottoman Empire.[8] Once in control of state power, they continued to build up export industries within restricted foreign-oriented enclaves and to enjoy Western standards and styles of living. They purchased masses of weapons from

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[6] Where agrarian reform and nationalization programs *were* implemented, compensation was paid to the expropriated owners and, in most cases, reinvested in industry and construction with government help so that the returns were higher than they would have been from previous forms of wealth. Thus, rather than reducing the wealth of the traditional elite, reform and nationalization only changed its composition (Tuma 1980: 431).

[7] When Germany's invasion of France and attack on Britain forced the non-fascist capitalist countries to enter into a temporary alliance with the Soviet Union.

[8] The United Nations "mandate system" provided Britain and France with the authority to establish (pro-British) monarchies in Iraq and Jordan, and (pro-French) regimes in Lebanon and Syria. Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar, which had developed as the private domains of British clients, remained under British protection, as did Oman, until the 1970s. Britain and the U.S. protected the Al-Sauds against threats to their rule.

Britain and the U.S. to protect these enclaves from the masses of people living in misery around them and, in this way, were able to accumulate wealth without transforming their largely traditional and non-industrial economies and societies.

By far the greatest threat to these arrangements came from the growth of socialist and communist movements in the region following World War I. Industrial expansion in the region during the war had led, not only to the growth of the middle class, but to a sharp rise in the labor force and in labor militancy. In many places where this occurred, elites called on their foreign allies to intervene militarily. The C.I.A.-backed coup in Iran in 1953 is, perhaps, the most widely cited instance of this; but Britain and the U.S. also intervened in civil wars in Jordan (1957), Lebanon (1958, 1982), and Yemen (1962-1969); the Dhufar Rebellion in Oman in the 1960s and 1970s, the overthrow of the Qasim regime in Iraq (1963), border conflicts between North and South Yemen, and Kurd rebellions in Iraq in the 1970s.

In Egypt, communist organisation and activities emerged first among non-Egyptians, and particularly among Greeks, Armenians, and Italians, whose participation in labor unions and political activities was facilitated by protections accorded foreigners in the capitulation treaties.[9] After World War I, most foreign workers were forced to leave the country and were replaced by very poorly paid and poorly organised Egyptian workers. And though, "any efforts at organizing labor for improvement of its conditions" were "harshly put down by the government" (Tariq and Al-Sa'id 1990: 15), dissatisfaction with abysmal working conditions fuelled the continued growth of the labor movement. Between 1919 and 1921, 81 strike actions took place in Egypt (Deeb 1976: 74). By 1922, there were 38 workers' associations in Cairo, 33 in Alexandria, and 28 in the Canal Zone. In 1924, following a massive wave of strikes (characterized by Egyptian officials as a prelude to a communist take-over), the government outlawed the party and arrested all its members. East European immigrant Marxist Jews established a group that became the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) in 1921. A Lebanese Communist Party and a Syrian Communist Party emerged in the 1920s and formed a single association until 1958. The Iraq Communist Party (ICP) was founded in 1934.

Despite harsh suppression of communist and socialist groups and movements, there was a resurgence of these groups after World War II. A Communist movement re-emerged in Egypt in 1945. It helped to produce strikes in 1945, and a general strike in February 1946 accompanied by vast demonstrations in every large Egyptian city. In 1947, two main factions of Egyptian communism merged in the Mouvement Démocratique de Libération Nationale (Haditu, in Arabic). By 1952, Haditu had gained 2000-3000 followers, established branches in one hundred villages and a hold on student organizations, founded "Democratic Councils" in the Egyptian army and air force and, within both these branches, established contacts with members of the "free officers' movement" that, in 1953, would seize power in Egypt (Laqueur 1956: 46).

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) also began to recover in the 1940s. Its support increased particularly among urban Shi'a communities, especially rural migrants into the

[9] A Russian Jew named Joseph Rosenthal "has been credited with single-handedly founding communism in Egypt" (Tariq and Al-Sa'id 1990: 13).

cities, and among Kurds. By the mid-1940s, it had begun to penetrate villages; and by the end of the decade, it had come to dominate trade unions and mass organisations. It played a leading role in the revolt against the Portsmouth Treaty with Britain that brought down the Salih Jabr government in January 1948. Over the next two years, the new government of Muhammad as-Sadr arrested and brought to trial most of the leaders of the communist movement and a majority of its activist members. However, communism continued to play a prominent role in Iraqi political life. The death of an imprisoned Communist leader provoked mass demonstrations in Baghdad in June 1951; the ICP played a significant role in organising anti-imperialist demonstrations in Baghdad in November 1952; in 1953, the attempt to transfer a number of the Communists arrested in 1949 led to rioting, the killing of seven of the prisoners and, in response, protest strikes and demonstrations. The ICP helped organise a tobacco workers' strike in Baghdad in September 1953, which was renewed in December; an oil-company workers' strike in Basra, also in December, which led to clashes with the police; and widespread protests against the Baghdad Pact in 1956.

In 1955, the Baghdad Pact was created by Britain and local powers to strengthen regional defence against the infiltration of the Soviet Union.[10] Two years later the U.S. declared the Eisenhower Doctrine, which pledged U.S. financial and military aid to Middle Eastern countries resisting Communist expansion. These provided a rationale for U.S. and British military intervention to protect regional autocrats from their domestic opponents; most notably, Jordan’s King Husayn in April 1957, and Lebanon’s President Camille Chamoun in 1958.

Communist influence began to spread in Jordan after it annexed the West Bank in 1949. Between 1949 and 1951, the communist National Liberation League (NLL) set up cells throughout the Jordanian controlled West Bank, and built up a strong base in Nablus, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and in refugee camps. In 1951, the NLL changed its name to Jordanian Communist Party (JCP). In 1953, the Jordanian Parliament passed legislation prescribing imprisonment and hard labour for JCP members. However, a Communist-led national front (*Al Jabha al Wataniyya*) emerged in 1954. Several of its members appeared as candidates in the election that year, but withdrew on election day declaring that a free election campaign had been impossible. This precipitated a demonstration by students and others in Amman who took over the center of Amman for several hours, and burned down the U.S. Information Center. The army intervened and suppressed the revolt, killing twelve people and wounding many dozens. Martial law was imposed, but the riots spread to Irbid, Salt, Nablus, Ramalla, and other towns. In December 1955, four days of rioting against the Baghdad Pact forced the resignation of the Hazza Majali cabinet. In April 1957, after a JCP organised demonstration against the Eisenhower doctrine, King Husayn banned the JCP and all other political parties, and dismissed Prime Minister Nabulsi. This precipitated a civil struggle. As the crisis became more acute, King Husayn claimed that the independence and integrity of Jordan were threatened by "international communism," and requested military assistance from the UK. The UK responded by landing troops on July 7. In 1958, civil war in Lebanon erupted when President Camille Chamoun attempted to seek a second term in

[10] After Iraq withdrew in 1959 the pact was known as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The U.S. and NATO envisioned CENTO as contributing to the formation of a worldwide chain of anti-Soviet alliances.

violation of Lebanon's National Pact. In response to an urgent appeal from President Chamoun, U.S. President Eisenhower landed marines in Lebanon in order, it was claimed, to protect American lives and help the Lebanese government defend Lebanon's sovereignty and integrity.

The Arabian Peninsula was the focus of conflict between leftist and conservative groups and governments during the 1960s and 1970s. In September 1962, the royal government of Imam al-Badr in Yemen was overthrown in a coup. A republic was declared and five years of war followed between republicans, supported by Egypt and the Soviet Union, and royalist forces supported by Britain and Saudi Arabia. In 1964, a separatist revolt began in the Dhofar Province of Oman. The Dhofari rebels were aided by the former South Yemen, a Marxist state closely aligned with the Soviet Union; and the Dhofar Liberation Front eventually merged with the Marxist-dominated Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf (PFLOAG).[11] With the help of military support from the U.K., Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, the Sultan of Oman defeated the guerrillas in 1975. In 1981 and 1982, there was extensive fighting between the North Yemen government and a guerrilla group called the National Democratic Front (NDF) that had formed in opposition to the government in 1979. South Yemen provided money, arms, training, and sanctuary to the group; North Yemen received Saudi backing, as well as weapons from the U.S.

Despite these movements, the states of the Arabian Peninsula were generally able to avoid problems of labor militancy by importing a foreign labor force. Foreigners make up 82% of Kuwait's labor force, nearly 90% of the UAE's (87% of them from Asia), and 60% of Bahrain's. Saudi Arabia has between six and seven million foreign workers out of a population of 24 million. In Oman, foreigners account for 68% of the workforce in non-oil-producing companies (Cordesman 1999; http://www.middle-east-online.com, retrieved on 1 February 2005). Workers are not permitted to strike or engage in collective bargaining; neither trade unions nor any other form of workers' organisation are allowed to exist.

Nationalist Politics

The demise of communist parties and working-class movements in the region marked the victory both of a nationalist and a traditionalist authoritarian politics. Bureaucratic and military elites that came to power in nationalist "revolutions" and coups proved either unwilling or unable to transform the bases of traditional social and political power. By suppressing movements and groups calling for a left, liberal, or progressive politics, they consolidated and reproduced the enclave-like, dualistic economic expansion that had developed in the nineteenth century. They institutionalised a corporatist, ethnic- and religious-based, and selectively anti-imperialist, nationalist politics that brought labor organisation under state control, targeted the minorities and foreign elements that had been instrumental in developing communist parties and labor movements in the region, and ensured that the wealth generated from the exploitation of national resources by Western business interests would be limited in its distribution, locally, to only a narrow elite.

Communist and other leftist organisations in the Middle East called for land reform

[11] The PFLOAG shortened its name to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman in 1974. Its declared intention was to overthrow traditional Arab Gulf regimes.

and for political and economic democracy; for programs of industrialisation that promoted agricultural reform and development; for progressive taxes on income and capital, and for social and unemployment insurance, old-age benefits, a forty-hour week, a minimum wage, union rights, universal education, and universal health care.[12] Communist parties also strongly supported national minority rights. [13] And they supported the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, which envisioned the establishment of two independent states in Palestine.[14] In sum, the suppression of communist and other leftist views marked the defeat of a vision of broad based, pluralist, and democratic development in the region and foreclosed, among other things, an avenue of redress for grievances that fuelled violent autonomist and secessionist conflicts in Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Oman, and Lebanon.

The Free Officers that overthrew the Egyptian monarchy in 1952 did not represent class interests fundamentally divergent from those of Egypt's traditional ruling class.[15] They made connections with both the Moslem Brotherhood and the United States,[16] and like the

[12] See, e.g. the programmes of the Egyptian Marxist organisation, Iskra, and the Egyptian Communist Party, discussed in Ismael and El-Sa'id 1990: 46-50, 85-86.

[13] The membership of the Iraqi Communist Party was the first national grouping to support Kurdish independence.

[14] Both the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) and the National Liberation League (NLL, formed when the Arabs split from the PCP in 1943), supported the Partition Plan, and opposed the Arab war against Israel launched in 1948, and the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank in 1949. In 1951, the NLL was renamed the Jordanian Communist Party (JCP). The JCP eventually split into a JCP-West Bank and JCP-Amman. Though, at the insistence of Yasir Arafat, the JCP-West Bank backed the Palestine Liberation Organisation's call for "total liberation," it continued privately to accept Israel's existence and to advocate a settlement based on U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 (it did not sign the "unity document" of 6 May 1970 which rejected 242). The Egyptian Communist Party (Haditu) also endorsed the Partition Plan and recognised the Jewish people's right to self-determination in Israel. The Iraq Communist Party organised demonstrations against Zionism in 1946, but in 1947 it did not oppose Soviet support for the Partition Plan.

[15] Hussein 1973: 95. High-ranking officers within the free officers' movement were tied to royal and property interests (Ismael and Al-Sa'id 1990: 73). Though the regime enacted an Agrarian Reform Act two months after the 1952 coup, its impetus, as in many East European countries after World War I, was to deprive foreign minorities of land. Much emphasis was placed on the non-Egyptian origin of the reigning Muhammad 'Ali family, and the claim that their lands had been forcibly taken from the Egyptian people. In 1953, all the family's lands were confiscated. The series of reforms finally "involved at most about 16% of Egypt's cultivated land, leading to the actual redistribution of 13% of that land to about 10% of Egypt's rural families" (Waterbury 1983: 266-67). Consequently, the landowning class continued to monopolize power; and there was little in the way of significant change that the regime could undertake without its consent.

[16] This is something Haditu did not realise when it gave support to the movement. According to a member of the free officers' movement, Khalid Muyihi al-Din, several days before the movement seized power, an American Colonel at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo assured an intermediary that the U.S. would not intervene against the movement as long as it was not communist (Interview with Khalid Muyihi al-Din by Rifa'at Al-Sa'id, Cairo, March 23, 1980; in Ismail and Al-Sa'id 1990: 72). The movement was denounced by the Soviet Union and the international communist movement (except for the Sudanese Communist Party; Ismael and Al-Said 1990: 73).

King and the political leaders they replaced, were steadfastly anti-Communist.[17] Thus, despite a rhetoric of social revolution, they moved immediately to suppress communism and other leftist elements in Egypt. The new regime offered both the Egyptian propertied classes and foreign economic interests in the country a better guarantee of social stability;[18] consequently, the British occupation army did not intervene on behalf of the king; and the British, as well as the French and American governments, negotiated with the new regime, and made concessions that helped to consolidate its power.

Labor militancy had been supported by the nationalist movement as a contribution to the struggle against foreign economic influence. However, the new regime fiercely repressed all political and trade union organizations, as well as strikes and other manifestations of working class collective action.[19] Despite these measures, the high level of industrial conflict that had persisted since the end of World War II continued unabated (see Audsley 1958: 99-102). The average number of labor disputes in the years 1952-1958 was three times that of the preceding seven years (Beinin 1989). By 1959, Nasser had jailed most of Egypt's active communists. In 1965, the leaders of Egypt's two communist parties dissolved their organisations and urged their members to join Nasser's Arab Socialist Union. In 1975, Anwar al-Sadat permitted the re-establishment of the Communist Party and communists became part of the legal left opposition, the National Progressive Unionist Party of Nasserists, Marxists, and others. However, periodic repression and restrictive electoral laws combined to keep this grouping at the margins of Egypt's political life.

Like Egypt's Free Officers, Iraq's Ba'th party was, from its inception, strongly anti-communist.[20]

In 1958, a coup led by Brigadier General 'Abd al-Karim Qasim and Colonel Abdul-Salem Aref against King Faisal II, brought down the monarchy and proclaimed a republic. The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) grew rapidly after 1958, building up support in Baghdad, southern Iraq and Kurdistan; and gaining control over students', women's, youth, and professional unions, as well as broadcasting facilities and newspapers. Iraqi communists also managed to get a considerable number of their supporters into strategic jobs in the government, including almost complete control of the Ministries of Education and

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[17] In the 1960s, Nasser viewed Iraqi communism as a threat to the whole Arab world; "Nasserism" became the banner under which anti-Communist forces fought to eradicate communism in Iraq (Mansfield 1969: 62, 107-108).

[18] King Farouk had been obsessed with communism (and believed in the imminence of war with communism, Berque 1972: 660-61), but was unable to suppress working-class violence.

[19] The increasingly militant worker's movement was an important component of the social and political upheaval that brought down the Egyptian monarchy in 1952. The riots that began in Cairo on January 25 and ended with the overthrow of the monarchy, were both national and social: aimed at both the Egyptian bourgeoisie and the British. On the afternoon of January 26, a vast demonstration massed in front of the Soviet embassy in an expression of solidarity (Hussein 1973: 81-4). Conventional historical accounts of this and other nationalist struggles in the region tend to downplay the role of communist, socialist and other reformist and progressive elements.

[20] The Ba'th founders' views on communism are in Michel Aflaq and Salahaddin al-Bitar, *al-Qawminyah al-'Arabiyah wa mawqifuha min al-shuyu'iyah* [Arab Nationalism and its Stance Toward Communism] (Damascus, n.d.); and Michel Aflaq, *Fi Sabil al-Ba'th* [For the Sake of the Ba'th] (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1963).

Information. In February 1963, a coalition of anti-communist civilian members of the Ba'ath Party, Ba'athist army officers, and the Muslim Brotherhood carried out a coup against the Qasim regime, installed Colonel Aref as President, executed Qasim, and purged the army and government of all communists and their sympathizers. Some 10,000 people were killed in the course of the coup and the anti-communist hunt that followed.[21] It is generally thought that the U.S. was heavily involved in these events, as well as in strengthening the rule of Saddam Hussein, a leader of the Ba'th Party faction that seized power in a coup in July 1968.[22] In 1972, the Ba'th invited the ICP to participate in a National Progressive Front (NPF) government. The Ba'th used the NPF to extend its control over mass organisations that had previously been dominated by the ICP, by creating "common lists" of candidates for organisational posts in which the Ba'thists held priority. However, after the ICP criticised its policies towards the Kurds in 1975, the Ba'th began repression of the Party.[23] In March 1979 the ICP left the Front and the NPF was formally dissolved.

The governments of Nasser and of the Iraqi Ba'thists called themselves "Arab Socialist." The Ba'thist movement coined the term "Arab Socialism" in order to make clear that its socialism was not Marxist socialism but, rather, a different and, in most respects, opposing ideology (Ismael 1976: 44). In fact, in its doctrines and actual practice, "Arab Socialism" resembled what, in Europe, had been called "National Socialism."[24] "Arab Socialism," like National Socialism, is a corporatist ideology; and, like corporatist ideologies in Europe in the early twentieth century it is, above all, concerned with containing and co-opting independent bourgeoisies and labor movements.[25]

Nasser's authoritarian corporatism, which was initially embodied in the National Union (1953-1958) and the Liberation Rally (1958-1961), succeeded in partially co-opting the labor movement; then, in 1961, Nasser introduced a corporatist formula that tied both labor and the professional class more completely to the state. The Iraqi Ba'th Party imitated Egyptian measures and, like Egypt, it succeeded, by co-opting labor, in putting an end to its radical working-class movement. In both countries, all political parties were dissolved and, in their place, monopoly fronts were established to represent "all the people." Both countries allowed coalitions of the dominant party with small marginal groupings, but these were never allowed to play anything but a subordinate role. In Egypt, there are a number of

[21] British Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Iraq: *Report from Iraq 1964*; *Record of the Arab World* 1/70; Haddad 1971.

[22] For U.S. involvement in the coup against Qasim, see, e.g. *Middle East Watch* 1990, and Hussein and Alexander 1991. On U.S. support for Saddam, see Davis 1993.

[23] A Kurdish revolt was crushed in 1975.

[24] Michel Aflaq, founder of the Ba'th, considered socialism in the Arab world to be "a branch subservient to the root which is nationalism." In his view, socio-economic problems were "related to a much more important and deeper problem, namely that of nationalism" (quoted in Hanna and Gardner 1969: 297-304).

[25] Data on corporatist structures in the region are limited. See Baer 1964, Bianchi 1989, Waterbury 1983, Richards and Waterbury 1990: 340-47, and Moore 1975.

parties besides the governing party;[26] but the governing party typically wins the vast majority of seats in the legislature.[27] In Iraq, the Ba'th joined all political parties into the Iraqi Arab Socialist Union in 1964. It created the progressive National Front in 1971 to include a number of other parties; however, the Front had no real participation in the political process but served only to integrate other political parties into the Ba'th party structure.

A similar corporatist formula was adopted in Syria. Syria's President, Hafez al-Asad established a ceremonial "National Front" after 1970, in which the Ba'th Party was joined with the Syrian Communist Party and several other socialist and Arab nationalist groups. Members of Syria's 250-seat People's Council are elected by popular vote, but the constitution guarantees the Ba'th Party one-half of the seats. In popular elections held following Asad's death in June 2000, his son, Bashar, was elected president by 97.29% of the vote. Like his father, President Bashar al-Asad serves as the secretary general of the Ba'th Party. Other parties have little effective political influence.[28]

Politics in nationalist, Arab Socialist, radical, or revolutionary regimes do not differ substantially from politics in Arab countries where traditional politics remained in place.

In Lebanon, traditional patronage and clientelist networks survived and remained a distinctive feature of the political and economic system after World War II. Before Lebanon's civil war, its political system was run by the feudal *zu'ama*, most of whom were descended from the notable families of the early twentieth century Ottoman period. Almost all the feudal *zu'ama* were continuously elected to the legislature, and their members served in cabinet positions the largest number of times (Khalaf 1987: 113). Jordan's constitutional monarchy has a carefully policed multi-party system, and a parliament with fairly restricted rights. Ultimate authority over the legislative, executive, and judicial branches is retained by the monarch.

In the Arabian Peninsula politics is, in general, tribally or family-based and autocratic. In Saudi Arabia, all power is vested in the King. Legislation is by royal decree and there are no political parties and no elections. Only two formal governing institutions have existed: a consultative council (*shura*) and a cabinet, the Council of Ministers, appointed by the monarch.[29] In Kuwait's constitutional monarchy, the monarch, prime minister, and deputy prime ministers are all drawn from the ruling al-Sabah family. 10% of Kuwait's citizens are eligible to vote for members of the 50-seat unicameral National

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[26] The National Democratic Party (NDP), led by President Mubarak. There is also a Liberal Party; Nasserist Arab Democratic Party, National Progressive Unionist Grouping, New Wafd Party; and Socialist Liberal Party.

[27] The legislature consists of a People's Assembly with 454 seats (444 of them elected by popular vote, 10 appointed by the president); and the purely consultative Advisory Council, which has 264 seats (176 elected by popular vote, 88 appointed by the president). In the last election, the NDP won 99% of the vote for the Advisory Council; and 88% of the vote in the People's Assembly. The next largest number of votes, 8%, went to independents.

[28] In the last election, held in March 2003, the NPF won 67% of the vote and 167 seats; independents won 33% of the vote and 83 seats.

[29] In October 2003, the Council announced its intent to introduce elections for half of the members of local and provincial assemblies and 40 of the 120 members of the national Consultative Council, incrementally over a period of four to five years.

Assembly (*Majlis al-Umma*)[30]. Political parties are illegal. Bahrain's constitutional monarchy is ruled by emirs chosen from the al-Khalifa family. Political parties are illegal. A thirteen-member cabinet is managed by the ruler, Sheik Khalifa, and many of the ministerial positions are held by other members of the al-Khalifa family, including the prime minister. Within the individual sheikdoms of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the ruler is usually the eldest son of the immediately preceding sheik. Popular participation in local government is limited. There are no trade unions, political parties, or popularly elected bodies. In Oman, all authority emanates from the Sultan. A Council of Ministers carries out administrative and legislative operations of the government, and is headed by a prime minister appointed by the Sultan. A military revolt dissolved Yemen's imamate in 1962 and established the Yemen Arab Republic; but, though a national council was created in 1969 to function as a legislature, it exercised only token legislative authority.

Development in the Middle East

Both a strategy and an outcome of the post-World War II campaign against leftist and liberal reformers in the region, has been the development of a pattern of economic expansion resembling what has been termed "dependent development:" dual economic structures, which exclude the mass of the population from the economic life of the nation; a narrow range of export goods and a few trading partners; highly unequal land tenure structures and distributions of income; and elite consumption patterns that exacerbate these inequalities.

All Arab economies, whether oil producing or non-oil producing, display classic features of dualism. In Saudi Arabia, a dynamic oil sector operates within a largely traditional, non-industrial country, structurally divided by different rules, processes, and institutions. Few linkages exist between the modern oil sector and the rest of the economy, which is based largely on subsistence farming and nomadic animal husbandry. The oil sector employs only a small fraction of the country's active labor force, while the majority are engaged in agricultural activities and services.[31] Non-oil exporting countries, like Lebanon, also exhibit dualism. Before the civil war, agriculture employed the majority of Lebanon's workforce but contributed only about a tenth of national income; services, which employed one-third of the workforce, contributed two-thirds of Lebanon's national income.[32] Lebanon had little industry, and imported most of the manufactured products it consumed. Its economy was closely interwoven with external economies, and sold a high proportion of the output of the service sector--including banking, insurance, transit trade,

[30] The 10% are adult males who are native born or who have been naturalized citizens for 30 years or more, and their male descendants at age 21.

[31] In the 1970s, the largest Saudi employer, ARAMCO, employed only 13,000 people despite an annual turnover of $30 billion. The wages and salaries of these were high even by the affluent standards of the industry. Those working in services (civil servants, city retailers and merchants) also benefited from the oil sector. Few people outside these occupations have benefited (Wilson 1979: 40-41)

[32] Government of Lebanon, Ministère du Plan, Direction Centrale de la Statistique, Recueil de *Statistiques Libanaises Année* 1969, p. 319.

shipping, petroleum, and tourism--to foreigners.[33] In Jordan, phosphate production, the country's leading industry in terms of value of output and its largest single source of export earnings, employs only a small number of people.

Most Arab countries in the region have made little progress in diversifying their exports of primary products. No Arab economy is industrial in the sense of having the major contribution to their gross national product come from manufacturing as opposed to extractive industries. In none of the Arab countries has industrialization acquired a sustained momentum. Manufacturing's share of production in 1989 was only 13%, precisely what it was in the mid-1950s (Bianchi 1989: 39). Agriculture constitutes the single largest sector of employment, except in Kuwait, Lebanon, and the former South Yemen; however, the ratio of output to labor in agriculture is far lower than in industry, where relatively few workers contribute a disproportionately large share of GNP. Except for Syria, all of them have a growing food deficit (Amin 1974: 110-11).

Income distribution in all Arab countries is highly unequal. In the 1970s, the 5% of the population that earned the highest income in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan absorbed 25-35% of national income. Even within relatively privileged groups, such as public employees in Egypt, the range between highest and lowest salaries was 40:1 if special allowances and bonuses are included (Amin 1974).

These inequalities are facilitated by regressive systems of taxation, and further exacerbated by elite consumption patterns. In all of the Arab countries a considerable part of the accumulated foreign exchange is wasted. Despite differing levels of average incomes, the level of income of lower-income groups and the way of life of the minorities at the top are generally similar: elites enjoy both a standard and style of living that is identifiably Western; at the same time, the standard of living of the rural workforce remains near subsistence levels. Despite big difference among the Arab countries with regard to the rate of saving (ranging from 4% in Jordan to 45% in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia) their investment rates are generally similar. The majority of the region's inhabitants are illiterate. High infant mortality rates, relatively low life expectancy, and poor nutritional levels characterize most of the area regardless of the size of GNP and average per capita income (Waterbury and El Mallakh 1978: chapter 1). Despite the very significant difference in income and economic growth, oil exporters have been only marginally better than the non-oil exporting countries in alleviating poverty and social deprivation and providing basic needs. Saudi Arabia, for example, had a per capita GDP of US$13, 226 in 1981 and one of the highest GDP growth rates in the region throughout the 1970s (14.9% from 1970 to 1982). Yet, infant mortality rates (108 per 1000) considerably exceeded those of many middle-income countries (El-Ghonemy 1984).

As was the case before the establishment of independent Arab states, land ownership is highly concentrated. In the 1950s, belts of poverty began to form around urban areas in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq as massive rural to urban migrations accelerated due to the extreme concentration of private property[34] and the deteriorating conditions in rural areas. In

[33] Badre 1972: 191. Services such as banking, trade, and tourism, which produced the bulk of the national income, were related to the oil industry in the Arabian Peninsula.

[34] The highest rates of migration to the cities correlate with the areas of the largest landholdings. See Batatu 1979: Tables 5-1 and 5-3, and Warriner 1962).

Lebanon, a crisis of land reform and the growing impoverishment of the Shia community in the rural south and in the slums of Beirut, kept the country in a more or less continual state of war from the late1950s to the 1990s.[35] Attempts by governments in Syria (1958, 1963, and 1968) and Iraq (between 1958-1969) to introduce land reforms also triggered a series of violent conflicts. In both countries, landowners, religious elites, and members of the salaried middle class, led popular movements against land reform. In Iraq, the regime that came to power in the 1958 revolution instituted an agrarian reform that transferred large tracts of land to landless peasant farmers. However, despite improved tenure patterns, in the 1970s the top 1% of landholders still owned over 22% of the total while the lowest 60% of peasant families still owned only 14% percent of the land (Issa 1977: 3). Agriculture, which in 1980 accounted for 40% of the of the active labor force, produced only 7.6% of the country's domestic product (Amin 1984: 137), and the relative deterioration of the countryside continued to produce large-scale migration to the cities throughout the decade.

After taking power in 1970, Hafez al-Asad opened Syria's domestic market to foreign investment and imported goods, and encouraged large- and middle-scale landowners in the countryside to expand cash crop production for overseas markets. While these policies helped to enrich the rural petit bourgeoisie, land reform and the efforts of the regime to substitute state and cooperative credit and marketing infrastructures for the old landlord-merchant networks deprived landlords and merchants (who also usually own some land) of influence and wealth in the villages. This was particularly the case with the old landowner families of the Hama region, living on the labor of sharecroppers whose conditions of life were among the worst in the country (Warriner 1962: 96). This area became the seat of opposition to the regime and the site of the worst violence in Syria's modern history; and landowners have been successful in blocking wide-reaching reform.

Egypt also attempted a land reform (in 1952 and 1969). Its statistics of agrarian reform and rural conditions show that the inequalities that existed in 1950 were not fundamentally changed by the various agrarian reform measures subsequently introduced. Landless peasants, in particular, were not affected, since land distribution was mostly limited to previous tenants and small farmers. 27% of the rural families of Egypt, comprising over 3 million people, were living below the poverty line in the mid-1960s; by the mid-1970s, 44% of Egypt’s rural families, some 5.8 million people, were living below the poverty line (Radwan 1977: 45-47). Land tenure issues continue to be a major impediment to agricultural productivity growth and rural development. The failure to create economically viable and efficient farms, and competitive and farmer-friendly processing and marketing infrastructures continue to generate deteriorating agriculture performance and lack of growth in rural incomes.

The region’s Arab economies are characterised by “acute over-dependence” on mineral and fuel, exports, over-reliance on non-productive service sectors, inadequate

[35] The internal conflicts in Lebanon have been largely a struggle between socio-economic groups, though sectarian, ideological, and regional issues blur the lines of division. The prevalence and generally perceived widening, of significant social and economic differentials between the warring factions are most frequently cited as the cause of the conflict. See, for instance, Hudson 1968, Chamie 1976/77, Suhrke and Noble 1977, Kazziha 1979, and American Friends Service Committee 1982.

infrastructure, growing dependence on imports of manufactures and food from outside the region, and excessive military spending and arms imports. Between 1960 and 1990, the Middle East was the only region in the world to exhibit a net drop in productivity. It has a steadily declining share of the global economy, and GNP growth "lags badly" relative to other developing regions.[36] Debt, poverty, and unemployment are fundamental problems. Many jobs are disguised unemployment or underemployment, and do not contribute to real economic development. The Gulf States are grossly over-dependent on foreign labor. Women have very low productivity gain as part of the work force.

The Religious Right

Like most other religions, Islam has socially progressive traditions, as well as deeply conservative ones. In the Middle East, governments and wealthy elites have actively aided the growth of conservative and ultra-right wing Islamic (sometimes called "Islamist") groups as a bulwark against communism and revolution. Throughout the post-World War II decades, they donated hundreds of millions of dollars to Islamist organizations; and all Arab constitutions (except for that of Lebanon) declare Islam to be the state religion.

In the Middle East, as in Europe at an earlier time, the religious establishment is linked to the dominant traditional landowning and urban notable elite, and shares with it a common interest in preserving the structures of traditional life. Both are unalterably opposed to land reform and other liberal and democratic reforms; legal and educational reform, the extension of labor and women's rights, and national minority rights and religious toleration. Islamists call for the expulsion of Christians and other infidels from the Middle East, and have attacked Arab countries that have taken part in peace talks with Israel (including Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians). Wherever states have tried to introduce reform measures they have been attacked by the religious right. In Syria and Lebanon, Islamic radicalism emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in opposition to land reform and other socialist policies that threatened the traditional patronage system. In the 1980s, policies of economic liberalisation in Egypt and Jordan triggered a resurgence of religious opposition to the state. Wherever states have introduced reform measures, they have been generally unable to withstand the anti-reform pressure either of the right-wing religious and traditionalist establishment or of newer "Islamist" groups. Consequently, nowhere in the region have governments been able to effect meaningful economic and political reform.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the first religio-political organization to enter the political arena in force, was founded in 1928 by an Egyptian teacher, Hasan al-Banna. It began political activity in 1936 by taking up the cause of the Palestinian Arabs against Zionism. Concerned that Jewish capital, technical know-how and contacts with the West would deprive it of its hoped-for Middle Eastern markets, Egyptian industrialists and landowners joined with the Moslem Brotherhood and Palestinian notables to oppose further Jewish immigration and to make the preservation of Palestine as an Arab country the pre-

[36]The situation has improved since 1991, but the region "still lags sharply in global terms" (Cordesman 1999).

eminent Islamic and Arab cause. The Brotherhood took the lead in mobilizing mass support for the Palestinian Arabs. It also organised attacks on Catholic, Armenian, and Greek Orthodox churches (Kazziha 1979: 43-4; Davis 1983: pp. 171-2, 182, 191). By December 1948, its political activities inside Egypt had soured its relations with the government, and it was banned. It subsequently developed close links with members of the "Free Officers" who seized power in Egypt in 1952. When the new government dissolved all political parties, it excepted the Brotherhood; but when Nasser's attempt to stem the rise of labor conflicts by abolishing the *shari'a* courts and nationalising religious endowments (*awqaf*), the Brotherhood attacked the regime. Nasser dissolved the organization, but anti-reform pressure from the religious and traditionalist establishment continued to thwart attempts at reform (al-Nowaihi 1979). Nasser's successor, Anwar al-Sadat, also attempted to use the Moslem Brothers as a counterweight to the Left; but ultimately, like Nasser, came into conflict with the organisation. In October 1981, a month after Sadat had responded to violent attacks on Copts by arresting religious activists and declaring the Muslim Brotherhood "illegitimate," he was assassinated by members of a group calling itself the New Jihad. Ever since then, Egyptian security forces have engaged in sporadic clashes with guerrilla cells of the Jihad. The trial of Jihad members accused of plotting an Islamic Revolution sparked a three-day riot in Asyut that left eighty-two people dead. In 1989, the organization killed the Speaker of Parliament. President Hosni Mubarak, who succeeded President Sadat in 1980, allowed the Moslem Brotherhood to field candidates in the 1987 parliamentary elections. The political liberalization of the 1990s revealed Muslim fundamentalists to be the single largest power in the country after President Mubarak's ruling party.

The Muslim Brotherhood developed important branches in both Syria and Jordan. In Jordan the government suppressed all political parties in the 1950s except the Moslem Brotherhood Jordan (before 1967), and Israel (after 1967), also allowed Islamic groups to operate in the West Bank as a counterweight to Leftist, secular nationalist forces. Eventually, as in Egypt, these groups came into direct conflict with these states and began to organise against them. In Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood has been at the vanguard of opposition to the Ba'th government. In the 1970s, it launched a campaign against the government with a series of bombings and assassinations, violent demonstrations, and strikes. In 1980 and 1981, thousands of people were killed in bomb blasts, and violent clashes with, and reprisals by, government troops. In February 1982, the Islamic Front (which included the Moslem Brotherhood) started an all-out offensive against security forces and Ba'th Party activists in Hama. The government responded with convoys of tanks and heavy artillery and commando units. Over the next two weeks, at least 25,000 people were slaughtered (Patrick Seale, *The Observer*, 5/9/82).

In the 1990s, and with the acquiescence of the Saudi government, hundreds of millions of dollars flowed from wealthy Saudis to Islamist movements. Within Saudi Arabia, the Saudi government gives massive support to the maintenance and protection of Muslim holy places and enforces strict compliance with Islamic social norms. However, the religious establishment fiercely opposed government attempts to introduce modest reforms in the 1990s, including the creation of a consultative council, a written body of laws, expanded autonomy for provincial authorities, and (strictly segregated) participation of women in higher

education. Through religious societies and mosques, it launched a co-ordinated attack, in public speeches in mosques, lectures at religious universities, and through recording and distributing hundreds of thousands of audio cassettes. The monarchy, fearful of further antagonising the highly organized, politically powerful and potentially dangerous religious establishment, has been forced to back down.

With Islamist groups threatening right-wing regimes, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia found a way to keep them busy fighting an anti-communist jihad in Afghanistan. However, with the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the U.S. no longer required their services and stopped funding them. This triggered an Islamist war against the U.S. and its allies, beginning in 1991. An Islamist network of organizations, *al-Qa'ida* (which is co-ordinated by Ossama Bin Laden), opposes U.S. support for right-wing governments like Saudi Arabia because, in their view, these governments are insufficiently right wing. (Islamists supported the CIA-directed coup in Iran against the Mussadiq government in 1953). The Islamist economic agenda is a capitalist one that is anti-labor and which confers market privileges on the basis of religion, gender, and birth. Though it is often assumed that Islamists speak for the poor, peasants and the urban poor, and blue-collar workers with regular jobs have generally not been active in Islamist movements (though eventually some did join Iran's Islamist revolution); al-Qa'ida's leaders recruit their most active elements from among middle-class graduates in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Thanks to the Cold War crusade against the left, Islamists represent the best organized, wealthiest, and most powerful political movement in the Middle East today.

III. Conclusions: Comparative Reflections on the Post Cold War Topography of the Middle East

After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Middle Eastern elites allied themselves with Western governments in order to ensure the continuity of various forms of property and privilege, and to monopolise new sources of wealth and means of producing it. States proceeded with conservative modernization in order to preserve as much as possible the structure of traditional society. Even in countries where so-called "revolutions" and coups overthrew traditional governments, traditional societies continued to function with only minor adaptations to new military and bureaucratic governing elites. As a result, the overall structure of traditional society and social power remained intact throughout the decades of the Cold War.

By blocking the rise of new middle classes and labor organisation, regional elites and their Western allies suppressed liberal, reformist, and progressive elements and currents that, in the West, had supported and encouraged broad-based development and the democratisation of national politics.

Much current thinking about democracy and how it can be promoted is based on myths about how democracy was achieved in the West. Historically, the emergence of democracy is associated with a breakdown of traditional class structures, an increase in the power of working classes relative to that of other classes, a relatively more nationally "embedded" capitalism, development of purchasing power among a mass domestic citizen workforce, and the extension and integration of domestic markets. Historically, states with

entrenched landowning elites experienced these changes only as a result of devastating wars. Today's advanced industrial democracies are countries that (1) never had an entrenched landed elite (e.g. Canada, New Zealand, and Australia), (2) saw a significant decline in the power of landowners as a result of civil war (i.e., the United States in the 1860s), (3) experienced a breakdown of their traditional social structures and massive land reforms as a result of devastating wars (e.g., most of Europe in the course of the world wars), or (4) experienced the breakdown of their traditional class structures as a result of a massive land reform imposed by external forces (Japan).

Democracy is intrinsically linked to re-distributive reforms that promote the development of the home market and broad-based economic expansion; it is unlikely to emerge in dualistic economies. Before the world wars, dual economies (and all the structures we associate with "dependent" development) were as common to Europe (including Britain) as they are to contemporary "developing" societies. European industrialization before 1945 was sectorally and geographically limited, largely carried out by atomized, low-wage and low-skilled labor forces; based on production, not for local mass consumption, but for export to governments, elites, and ruling groups in other states and territories; and characterized by restricted and weakly integrated domestic markets, extra-legal patronage systems and corruption, political instability, and authoritarianism. The achievement of broad based development and democracy in Western Europe came about as a result of the increase in working class power relative to other classes. This occurred as a result of the mobilization of labor, not for industrial production, but for the world wars.[37] After World War II, state policies insured that wages rose with profits, so that labor shared in productivity gains, making higher mass consumption possible for new mass consumer goods industries. New trade unions were organized and established unions, which before the war had been hindered by police repression, were reorganized. For the first time parties representing labor became legitimate participants in the political process in Europe.

Though there was no democracy in Eastern Europe following World War II, the social structural changes that had been imposed from above after the war eventually enabled it to achieve democracy in the 1980s by means of a "velvet revolution." This contrasts sharply with the experience of many 'third world' countries, where the transition from authoritarianism to some sort of political pluralism has been only partial, and accompanied by much violence. In these countries, the absence of the social structural changes which occurred throughout Europe after World War II, and the Cold War crusade against communism, worked effectively to block the growth of reformist and progressive elements and currents that had supported struggles for democracy in Europe. Thus, while the prospects for democracy look fairly good in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, they look fairly dim in regions, like the Middle East, where authoritarian regimes and ruling groups, with the support of Western powers, eliminated the social forces and conditions needed to produce and maintain democracy.[38] The campaign also ensured the reproduction of dualistic economies in the Middle East. Thus, while the "first" (and "second") world achieved a relatively more broad-based

[37] For arguments and evidence in support of these statements, see Halperin 1997, 2004.

[38] As Rueschemeyer *et al* have argued, "Where labour is most suppressed, there we find the least progress towards democracy" (1992: 47).

growth, in the Middle East, where corporative arrangements and other measures were introduced to bring labor movements entirely under state control, development continued as before to be, in general, limited to areas tied to the main export sectors. A clearer understanding of these legacies of the Cold War will help us to better understand the post-Cold War world and what prospects and means there are for changing it.

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