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THREE REFORMERS

A Study in Modern Arab Political Thought

by

Khaldun S. El-Husry

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PREFACE

In the following pages we shall attempt to study modern Arab political thought, through an investigation of the political ideas of three Moslem Arab thinkers of the nineteenth century: Rifaa al-Tahtawi, Khaireddin Pasha al-Tunisi, and Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi. The choice of these thinkers for the purpose of surveying modern Arab political thought is neither an arbitrary nor an artificial intellectual act. Their ideas admirably represent - as we shall see - modern Arab political thought. We also hope to show that these thinkers reacted in similar manner to similar stimuli, and came out with similar patterns of thought and solutions.

Further: in the realm of space, by including the Syrian al-Kawakebi of Aleppo, the Egyptian Rifaa of Tahta, and Khaireddin Pasha of Tunis, this study of modern Arab political thought covers the Mashriq and the Maghrib of the Arab world, as well as Egypt, that most important link between the Asian and the African parts of this world.

In the realm of time: we have concentrated mainly on the nineteenth century, because this century is the great seedbed of almost all the political ideas that dominate the Arab mind of today, from Arab nationalism to socialism. Indeed, most of these ideas whose operation in the Arab world today often make the headlines of international news, are to

be found fully grown and developed in the nineteenth century. The subsequent growth of literacy and the increasing use of all modern media of mass communication have merely percolated these ideas to ever growing numbers of Arabs, giving them the mass appeal and the potency they have today. The lives of the three thinkers chosen span the whole of the nineteenth century: al-Jabarti (with whom this study inescapably has to start) dying in 1822, and al-Kawakebi dying in 1902. These thinkers were also contemporaries: thus Tahtawi was 21 when al-Jabarti (the oldest among them died), and al-Kawakebi (the youngest) was 19 when Tahtawi died.

Finally this study has some self-imposed limits, which we trust, will not be regarded as serious limitations. All the Arab thinkers selected for it are Moslems. This selection is deliberate, as any investigation of modern Arab political thought has to deal primarily with the problems of adaptation and reconciliation of Islamic thought and institutions with the thought of the Christian West. Christian Arab thinkers did not have to face these problems. So, they can, and indeed should, be left out of a study of this nature. The thinkers chosen, we believe, are the most seminal and representative of the Moslem Arab thinkers of the nineteenth century. Mohamed Abdu is the exception and he has deliberately been left out. His ideas have been thoroughly investigated in Charles C. Adams' Islam and Modernism in Egypt. Al-Kawakebi can also be easily substituted for Abdu, as we shall see.

This study also attempts no textual examination of the original manuscripts of the thinkers it deals with. We are fully aware that such an examination would be very useful in the case of such a thinker as al-Kawakebi, who seems to have edited and re-edited his writings. But this study contents itself with the survey of the published ideas of these thinkers, as known to their reading public.

"The great object in trying to understand history, political, religious, literary, or scientific, is to get behind men and to grasp ideas. Ideas have a radiation and development, an ancestry and posterity of their own, in which men play the part of godfathers and godmothers more than that of legitimate parents."

Lord Acton

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THE BACKGROUND

I

Arab Political thought of the Nineteenth Century was born out of the impact of Western culture upon the Arab world of that century. (1) But before we look into the nature of this impact, and the political thought it produced, we must examine very briefly the Arab world and what we might call la condition Arabe in the 18th century.

The Ottoman Turks conquered almost the whole of the Arab world, by which we mean the lands inhabited by Arabic speaking people, between 1516 and 1556. The Ottoman Turks, brave soldiers, administrators, law-givers, were the Romans of Islamic civilization, but never, at any time, its Greeks. When Brockelmann sets himself to describe "The Civilization of the Osmanlis at the Zenith of the Empire", he tells us: "The scholastic life of the Osmanlis was almost entirely devoid of originality and moved in the fixed channels of tradition ... Not boldness or depth of thought but a retentive memory and patient industriousness are the virtues of the Osmanli scholars". (2) Ottoman scholars, as we know, and as Brockelmann tells us in the same paragraph from which we

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- (1) The word "culture" in this sentence, and throughout this study, denotes material culture (such as tools and buildings), as well as non-material culture (such as religion and manners). W.F. Ogburn and M.F. Nimkoff, A Handbook of Sociology, (London, 1953) pp. 4, 24-25.
- (2) Carl Brockelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, (New York, 1960), p. 312

have just quoted, "used Arabic as a general rule". (3) Moslem thinkers whose mother-tongue was Arabic were, as any short survey of their works shows, no exception to this general Islamic intellectual decline and stagnation. It can, of course, be easily argued with Hitti that "the Islamic creative spark had faded away centuries before the advent of the Turks" with "the complete victory of scholastic theology beginning with the thirteenth century". (4) Others have signaled Vasco da Gama's discovery in 1498 of the sea-route to the Far East around the Cape of Good Hope, and the deadly economic blow this delivered to the prosperity of the Arab lands, as the cause of Arab decline. (5) Most Arab nationalists pick the year 1258, in which Hulago captured Baghdad and abolished the Abbasid caliphate, as the commencement of Arab decline. (6)

Whatever the date, or origin, of Arab decadence, there is no doubt that the Arabs had reached under the Ottoman Turks, a very low political and cultural level. In the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire "the keystone of Ottoman administration was conservatism, and all the institutions of

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- (3) Thus the Turk Hajii Khalifa, known to the Turks as Khatib Chelebi, wrote the famous Kashf al-Zunun'an al-Asami wa al-Funun, as the title itself indicates, in Arabic, and not in his native Turkish.
- (4) Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, (London, 1960), p. 742.
- (5) G.W.F. Stirling, The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs, (Illinois, 1942).
- (6) See Iraqi history textbooks, or Mohammed Hassan el-Zayat in Islam in the Modern World, ed. D.S. Franck, (Washington, 1951).

government were directed to the maintenance of the status quo". (7) And this administration "lacking any real consideration for the welfare of the subjects, losing little by little any moral ideas which might have inspired them in the early stages, the officers of the administration were, by their very virtues, led insensibly to adopt a cynical view of their functions and responsibilities". (8) This corrupt system "quite apart from the personal suffering and economic loss resulting from its repeated violation by members of the governing and military class ... perpetuated the gulf which separated the people from their government, producing at best an apathetic acquiescence in it on their part as a necessary evil". (9) And "If we may judge by the analogous situation in intellectual life, originality was not wholly non-existent, but it was suppressed in the supposed interests of the group, or if it could not be suppressed was ignored, and its achievements suffered to disappear. We shall never know, in any probability, whether some Arab Jacquard devised an improved loom or some Turkish Watt discovered the power of steam, but we can confidently assert that, if any such invention had occurred, it would have been entirely without result. The whole social organism, in

(7) H.A.R. Gibb, and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, (London, 1951), Vol. I, Part I, p. 200.

(8) ibid., p. 207

(9) ibid., p. 215

fact, was one characteristic of, and only possible in, a stationary or retrograde civilization, and herein lay its essential weakness. It is no exaggeration to say that after so many centuries of immobility the process of agriculture, industry, exchange, and learning had become little more than automatic, and had resulted in a species of atrophy that rendered those engaged in them all but incapable of changing their methods or outlook in the slightest degree". (10)

Europe, on the other hand, was to reach the zenith of its political, material, and intellectual power, in the 18th and 19th centuries. But until the latter part of the eighteenth century "even the leaders of the governing class (in the Ottoman Empire) were conscious of no inferiority in comparison with Europe". (11)

This consciousness of inferiority vis-à-vis the West, and the desire to catch up with it, and thereby free one's self from it, ignited the whole process of Arab political thinking in the 19th century. We cannot stress enough the pain of this consciousness, and therefore the strength and the urgency of the desire to be free from it. All feelings of inferiority and inadequacy, in groups as well as in individuals, are very painful. They were particularly so in the case of the Moslems who confronted the West, at the zenith of its power in the 19th century.

(10) ibid., pp. 215-216.

(11) ibid., p. 19.

All orthodox adherents of religion seem to believe their particular religion to be the right one (why else join it, or have your greatgrandfathers join it?). From this, easily and indeed inevitably, follows their belief that they are God's Chosen People, or at least, the wisest of His children (or why feel compelled to send missionaries to convert the other children to your religion?).

Now, an Ogden Nash can make clever fun of this belief:

The Chosen People

How odd,
Of God,
To choose,
The Jews.

But this belief, in some form or another, seems to be very real and essential to all religious minds.

It is particularly real to the orthodox Moslem mind. The Moslem's Prophet is the Last of the Apostles, khatim al-ānbiā. Islam concludes, completes, and perfects, all previous religions. The Koran tells the Moslems very explicitly: "You are the best nation raised up for men; you enjoin good and forbid evil and you believe in Allah. And if the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them." (Al Imran, 110). Further, the Moslem lives in the superior Dār al-Islam, Abode of Islam, and it is his duty to war on, and convert the inferior Dār al-Harb, Abode of War, in which non-Moslems live.

Furthermore, as Wilfred Cantwell Smith rightly observes, there is the social, practical, and dynamic character of the faith of Islam, and its association with power and success. The first year of Islamic history "1 A.H. (622 A.D.) - is not the year of Muhammed's birth (as would parallel the Christian case), or even that in which the revelations began to come to him, but the year when the nascent Muslim community came to political power. Muhammed and his small body of followers, having shifted from Makkah to Madinah, established themselves as an autonomous community" (12) Eventually this community's "armies won battles, its decrees were obeyed, its letters of credit were honoured, its architecture was magnificent, its poetry charming, its scholarship imposing, its mathematics bold, its technology effective." (13)

The realization that this once-glorious world was dead, and the awareness of their present decadence and weakness, came to the Arabs by contact with the West. This contact we date from the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798.

II

The choice of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798, as the signpost marking the beginning of the period

(12) W.C. Smith, Islam in Modern History, (London, 1957), pp. 15-16.

(13) ibid., p. 28.

of Western contact with the modern Arab world, is made with some diffidence. Dating whole historical epochs and phenomena from a single year or a single event, is, at best, somewhat superficial, and, at worst, entirely false. There is, moreover, a tendency among some writers on the subject, to claim for the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt a host of almost magical, directly beneficial, effects, on modern Egyptian and Arab revival, that cannot be supported by the historical evidences. (14) But, above all, the arrival of Napoleon's squadrons at Abu Kir Bay in July 1798 can in no way be likened to the arrival of Commodore Perry's squadron at Yedo Bay in July 1853. Unlike Japan, Egypt had always maintained its contact with the West. It was part of the Ottoman Empire, and the Ottoman Empire was never wholly cut off from contact with Europe. And even in the eighteenth century, when Egypt retained only a loose contact with the Ottoman Empire, we find the British and the French concluding with the Mamluk beys commercial agreements that ensured them trade routes through Egypt. (15) European merchants lived in Cairo and Alexandria. Al-Jabarti calls these resident foreigners "the native franji," (Franks), and he clearly

(14) For a critique of this tendency, see Sati al-Husri, 'Ara wa Ahadith fi al-Tarikh wa al-Ijtima, (Beirut, 1960), pp. 68-128.

(15) H. Dodwell, The Founder of Modern Egypt, A Study of Muhammed Ali, (London, 1931), pp. 4-6.

distinguishes them from "the native Christians, the Copts, the Syrians, and the Greeks (sic)" (16) And Napoleon was to cite, in his celebrated first proclamation to the Egyptians, the oppressive and vexatious conduct of the Mamluk beys towards French citizens and French traders, as a cause of the Egyptian invasion that he was undertaking. (17)

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, the Napoleonic invasion can, and indeed should, be regarded as the beginning of modern Arab contact with Western culture. There is no doubt that this invasion initiated the process of direct and sustained Western intervention in the Arab world. But more important, this contact was to be in the nature of a pure Toynbeeian "encounter between civilizations" and a "war of the worlds." Since the Crusades, Arab contact with the West had been mainly in the nature of economic and commercial relations. After 1798, this contact was to acquire the form of Western armed inroads into the Arab world. In this new form of encounter, the Arab mind was to be deeply and painfully impressed by the cultural superiority of the West.

III

For a delineation of the earliest impressions and

(16) Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, 'Ajaib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar, (Cairo, 1904), Vol. III, pp. 7, 15, 80, 142.

(17) ibid., p. 4.

effects made by this Western impact on the Arab mind, we must turn to the Egyptian historian Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti (d. 1822). Al-Jabarti's classic Ajaib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar contains a most detailed and faithful account of the Napoleonic invasion and occupation of Egypt. Although an old-fashioned, and a pre-Spenglerian-Toynbeeian historian, al-Jabarti, like most historians before and after him, could not dispense with expressing his views and opinions on the events he was recording. His views are, assuredly, those of an educated Moslem Arab of his day. Therefore he is to be regarded as the earliest member of the Arab intellegentsia that was later to evolve the political thought of the nineteenth century, and accordingly, his views merit examination.

When this is done we are struck, above all, by al-Jabarti's great hostility to the French. The French, as we know, had tried very hard to win over the Egyptians, and to make common cause with them against the Mamluks who had not been popular in Egypt. Al-Jabarti incorporates in his chronicle the full texts of their proclamations to the Egyptians. In his first proclamation, Napoleon attacks the rapacity and the oppression of the Mamluks, and tells the Egyptians that he "had come only to rescue your rights from the hands of the oppressors". He declares to them that: "All men are equal before God. Only wisdom, talents, and

virtues create differences between them". (18) But all this does not impress al-Jabarti. He is not won over. He keeps on regarding the French occupation as an act of aggression and the French as infidel foreigners. The Moroccans and the Maltese who cooperate with them are spies. (19) An Egyptian who is executed by the French is a shahid, a martyr. (20)

Al-Jabarti is bewildered by the scientific and technical achievements of the French, and somewhat sarcastic about them. He describes with amazement some scientific experiments that he watched at the Institut d'Egypte, and ends his account by telling us that their results "minds like ours cannot comprehend". (21)

The French had wanted to impress and strike the imagination of the Egyptians, so they had built a Montgolfière, a fire balloon, and tried to launch it before the inhabitants of Cairo. (22) They attempted this twice, and in both instances they failed in accomplishing a successful ascent of their balloons. Al-Jabarti watched both attempts. He records their failure with sarcasm and some relish, reminiscent of the latter day glee of some Arab intellectuals over

(18) al-Jabarti, Vol. III, p. 4.

(19) ibid.

(20) ibid., p. 64.

(21) ibid., p. 37.

(22) F. Charles-Roux, Bonaparte: Governor of Egypt, (London, 1937), p. 171.

the failure of American space missiles. The failure of the first attempt shows al-Jabarti that the French balloon is more like the local kites, and he tells us that this attempt could not prove the truth of what the French claimed their balloon to be: something like a ship that flies in the air, and on which human beings can travel to far away countries, to uncover the news and to deliver messages. (23) Al-Jabarti remarks that had the second balloon been helped by the wind and caused to disappear from the sight of the spectators, the French would have accomplished their trick, and would have declared that it had journeyed to far away lands. (24)

Al-Jabarti, however, is definitely impressed by two achievements of the French: their military might and their justice. He tells us that the Mamluk beys were not disturbed by the news of the arrival of the franji, relying on Mamluk might and claiming that all the franji could not stand up to them, and that they could tread on them with their horses. (25) But the French had an abundance of war materials, superiority of arms, and a special method of fighting. (26) The French won the war, and in the two insurrections of Cairo the supremacy of French arms and the French art of war were demonstrated again. (27)

(23) al-Jabarti, vol. III, p. 33.
(24) ibid., p. 42.
(25) ibid., p. 2.
(26) ibid., pp. 3, 8, 27.
(27) ibid., pp. 27, 106.

Al-Jabarti is even more impressed by French justice. When General Kléber, the successor of Napoleon in command of the French army in Egypt, is assassinated by Suleiman al-Halabi, he notes that Suleiman al-Halabi and his associates are not immediately put to death, although the killer had confessed his crime, but are all given a trial. He incorporates in his chronicle the complete minutes of this trial, as published by the French authorities, after an initial hesitation due to the length of these minutes and the defectiveness of the Arabic used by the French authorities. He states that he is incorporating these minutes to satisfy the curiosity of people as to the incident and the process of trial, and because he finds that these minutes contain an example of how judgment is carried out and regulated "by those people who are governed by reason, and have no religion (sic)". This exemplary conduct he contrasts with the murders and evil actions of "ruffian soldiers, who profess Islam and pretend to be mujahids (fighters in holy Islamic wars)" (28)

Thus, at the very first instance of contact with the West, the Arab mind was to recognize some material and moral Western superiority. This fact, first demonstrated to it in the Battle of the Pyramids, the uprisings of Cairo against a foreign army of occupation, and the trial of a young political terrorist from Aleppo, was to set the modern Arab mind on its course of political thinking.

(28) ibid., p. 122.

Rifaa al-Tahtawi

The Man (1)

Rifaa Rafi al-Tahtawi was born in 1801 - the year in which the French evacuated Egypt. His parents were of noble descent, sayyids, (descendants of the Prophet), but they were poor. Tahtawi's education was traditional and orthodox: as a child he learned his Koran, entered the Azhar in 1817, when he was only 16, left it 7 years later, and was appointed an imam (a preacher, a leader of prayer) in the Egyptian Army. In 1825 he was appointed an imam to the first educational mission that Mohammed Ali was sending to France. Hitherto, Tahtawi had never met a foreigner, never spoken a word of a foreign language, and never been even as far as Alexandria. As the imam of the mission he was not required to study or to learn French. His duties were restricted to the leading of the forty members of the mission in prayer and administering to their religious needs and duties. Mohammed Ali did not want his students to lose their religion in Europe. Tahtawi and the mission left Alexandria for France in 1826. They arrived at Marseilles in 33 days. Tahtawi had taught himself the French alphabet aboard the

(1) The data in this biographical sketch are almost exclusively drawn from Huliat al-Zaman bi Menakib Khadim al-Watan, (Cairo, 1958), a short biography of Tahtawi by Sadik Majdi, a pupil, associate, and admirer of Tahtawi.

ship, and shortly after his arrival to Paris begged the authorities back in Cairo to be allowed to study with the other members of the mission. His request was granted, and thus started the education (or shall we say: the re-education?) of Riffa Rafi al-Tahtawi in his 25th year. His book Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Paris, "The Extraction of Gold from a Review of Paris", is the account of that Education. It can be easily given the title of: "The Education of Riffa Rafi al-Tahtawi". But, as we shall see, the consequences of this education, were more, much more, radical and revolutionary, than anything a Mr. Henry Adams could dream of. Tahtawi stayed almost 5 years in Paris - two years less than his stay at the Azhar. But these five years were very rich in intellectual adventure. He read in Paris Racine, Rousseau, Voltaire, Chesterfield's letters, Montesquieu, and French newspapers.

These years were also rich in social adventures. He was the first Arab innocent abroad to leave us a record of his observations. And innocent he was indeed! In the Talkhis he describes to us how he learned table manners - he had never eaten at a table before. He also noticed that Frenchmen got up when their women entered a room; he described western mixed dancing - on that subject he was indeed more advanced than some of his successors. He was to attend the opera, the theatre, go into parks and public gardens. He also described the revolution of 1830, which he was to witness,

and which was to leave a very deep imprint on his mind. The trial of Polignac and some of his ministers after this revolution, impressed him profoundly with the justice of the French.

Upon his return to Egypt in 1831, he was appointed the headmaster of the Medical School at Abou Zabaal, then became a translator at the Artillery School at Tura. And then in 1835 he was appointed Director of The School for Foreign Languages that Mohammed Ali established in Cairo. It was Tahtawi himself who suggested the idea to Mohammed Ali. This school played a big part in the history of Arab intellectual renaissance. Tahtawi and the students of this school were to translate 2000 books from foreign languages. (2) These books dealt with different subjects.

In 1849 Abbas I closed this school and sent Tahtawi to the Sudan as the headmaster of a high school of 250 boys in Khartum. It was an exile, and lasted four years. On the death of Abbas I, Tahtawi returned to Cairo. He was appointed Director of the Military School in 1856. When this school was closed in turn, Tahtawi found himself unemployed for some time. Ismail Pasha, however, recalled him to service. And as a member of the Educational Commission

(2) Muhammed Kadri Pasha, Malumat Jughrafia,
cited by Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi,
Asr Mohammed Ali, (Cairo, 1947),
p. 414.

that Ismail founded, he took part in directing the educational policy of Egypt. He also supervised the translation being carried out in Egypt, and was also the editor in chief of the Journal Officiel. In 1873, he died at the age of 75.

Like his ideas, his life is the perfect example, indeed a prototype, of the lives of many subsequent Arab intellectuals - study in Europe at government expense, government service, intrigues and bureaucratic fights, fall from favour, return to favour, government service, and death.

In spite of the very active life that he led, Tahtawi was able to do a great deal of translation and writing. He translated from French works on geography, history, military manuals, Le Code Civil, Le Code de Commerce, Fénelon's novel Les Aventures de Télémaque, and some poetry. He wrote a biography of the Prophet, the first volume of a history of Egypt, a book on education, patriotic poetry, and many articles in the official journal. For our purposes the most important works are his first book Takhlis al-Ibriz and Manaahij al-Albab al-Masria which he wrote towards the end of his life.

Let us now turn from the man to the mind.

Attitude Towards the West

In all his works, from al-Takhlis down to al-Manaahij, Tahtawi expresses his great admiration of Western civilization

and culture. He admits readily that this civilization is superior to his native one, to the culture he had hitherto known and was brought up in. He exhorts his people to follow and to adopt this superior Western civilization, so as to get rid of their weaknesses and of their backwardness. Thus at the very beginning of al-Takhlis he states that his purpose is to exhort Islamic lands to look for arts, sciences, and crafts in the West, "since their perfection in the European countries is a known and an established fact, and it is right that the right be followed". (3) Then he goes on to tell us that throughout his stay in Europe he grieved over the fact that Europe enjoyed the arts, sciences, crafts, and that Moslem countries were devoid of them. (4)

But Tahtawi does not observe and admit Western superiority in the material sphere alone. He extends this Western superiority to the abstract moral and spiritual spheres also. In the Manaahij he tells us that civilization has two origins: a material one, and an abstract, non-material one. (5) In the Takhlis he had admitted to the superiority of the French and the Christians in both spheres. Throughout this book he praises them for their energy, truthfulness, justice, equity, and strength of character. He

(3) al-Takhlis, (Cairo, 1834), p. 4.

(4) ibid.,

(5) p. 9.

tells us that America is a land of kuf̄r (unbelieving, infidelity), to which Islam did not extend. But why has this happened? Because the fran̄j (Franks, Westerners) moved to it, and sent missionaries who converted its inhabitants to Christianity. This they were able to do because of their mastery of the science of navigation, knowledge of astronomy and geography, and their inclination to business and commerce and love of travel. (6) "Look at al-Andalus (Spain)" he tells us in another place, "it has been in the hands of Spanish Christians, for nearly 350 years." Why? Because the fran̄j have become strong "by their ingenuity and management, nay their justice, and their knowledge of warfare and their inventions in it. And if Islam was not supported by the power of God Almighty, it would have been as nothing, in comparison with their (the fran̄j) strength, population, wealth, proficiency, and other matters". (7)

The traditional orthodox Moslem believer might be able to rationalize for himself, with comparative ease, Western Christian superiority in the material sphere. But the moral sphere is another matter. Here, as we have known, his Prophet is the Last of Prophets, and his religion completes and concludes all earlier religions. The Koran

(6) al-Takhlis, p. 16.

(7) ibid., p. 8.

tells him: "You are the best nation raised up for men". Yet, now he finds himself a member of a backward, if not inferior, people. Spain is lost because of the lack of justice. There are no Moslems in America because of the absence of the spirit of adventure and desire for travel in a people to whom jihad (holy war) for the spread of Islam is a religious duty.

How is the orthodox Moslem to reconcile his traditional inherited beliefs about himself and his religion with his present undeniable and admitted weakness vis-à-vis the Christian West? This is the greatest and most painful dilemma that the orthodox Moslem has to face in his mind. Also, how is he to reconcile some aspects of Western civilization, Western institutions, and Western ways of conduct (which he admits to be superior to his own, and therefore wants to adopt) with his traditional institutions and the teachings of his religion?

To resolve these two dilemmas the modern Arab thinker either takes to a rationalism which ends in secularism; or more often, stays within the traditional inherited fold, and attempts to reconcile, one way or the other, Western institutions and ways of conduct that he wants to adopt, with his traditional institutions and with the principles of Islam. Both these attitudes are present in Tahtawi's thought.

Rationalism and Secularism

Tahtawi is a good Moslem - that is, he is good in the sense of being an orthodox Moslem. He observes, for example, all Islamic regulations while living in Paris. For him France is "the land of al-kufr wa al-inaad": "the land of infidelity, unbelief, and pigheadedness, stubbornness". (8) And it is here, in this infidel France and the West, that he faces the above mentioned dilemma. He tells us, for example, of the cleanliness of the French, how they kept the ship he was travelling on scrubbed, how they cleaned and aired his bed etc. And then he hastens to add: "although cleanliness is of the Faith, iman, and they (the French) have not so much as a particle of it". (9) Here he is manifestly referring to the saying of the Prophet: "Cleanliness is of the faith".

Tahtawi, however, does not ascribe this particular Western superiority, or any other superiority for that matter, to Christianity. Thus, it is the franj Christians who are clean, while the Copts of Egypt are filthy. (10) It is the rationalism of the French, and not their religion, that draws his admiration. And here again he contrasts their intelligence and rationalism with the stupidity and weak-mindedness of the Egyptian Copts. (11) The French according

(8) ibid., p. 5.
(9) ibid., p. 26.
(10) ibid., pp. 25, 82.
(11) ibid., p. 49.

to Tahtawi, "have nothing of the Christian religion but the name" (12) And he tells us that it is said that the majority of the franj countries are like the French on the subject of religion. (13) He tells us that these French people approve and disapprove by their reason. (14) And he praises the Parisians for not being the slaves of tradition and authority, and for always wanting to know the origin of things. (15)

In describing the events he observed in France, and particularly the revolution of 1830, Tahtawi exhibits a strong anti-clerical feeling. He, moreover, tells us of the occupation of Algeria by the French while he was in Paris, and how the grand bishop congratulated Charles X on this, and thanked God Almighty for a great victory of the Christians over the Moslems, "whereas," he tells us, "the war between the French and the people of Algeria is but a mere political affair, commercial and business quarrels, and altercations and disputes, resulting from pride and arrogance." (16)

At the very beginning of the Takhlis, Tahtawi states that he will be telling us of the things he had

(12) ibid., p. 119.

(13) ibid.

(14) ibid., p. 53.

(15) ibid., p. 49.

(16) ibid., p. 173

appreciated and admired in France, and then he adds: "and it is known that I only appreciate that which is not different or contrary to the text of The Mohammedan sharia". (17) However, further on in the book, Tahtawi translates the Charter, the constitution of Louis XVIII, that he admires. This is the manner in which he introduces his translation: "It (the charter) contains points that no reasonable being would deny as pertaining to justice ... we will bring it to your attention, although most of it is not in the Koran of Allah and the Tradition of His Messenger, so that you will know their (the French) reason had come to the conclusion that justice and equity are among the causes of civilization and the well-being of people, and how the rulers and the citizens have submitted (to these principles), with the result that their country developed, their knowledge increased, their riches accumulated and their hearts dwelt in peace. So you never hear anyone complaining of injustice, and justice is the foundation of civilization." (18)

Tahtawi is, of course, painting a very rosy and idealistic picture of the state of affairs in France. Let us not forget that in less than forty years the Paris in which no one complained of any injustice was going to have the Paris Commune, which was to inspire Marx to write "The

(17) ibid., p. 4.

(18) ibid., p. 66. Italics mine.

Civil War in France". But leaving aside the accuracy of Tahtawi's picture, let us note that this perfect state of affairs, which has ensured the satisfaction and happiness of mankind, is obtained outside of, if not in contradiction to, the Islamic sharīa; by the use of mere reason. Here, plainly, is the beginning of modern secularism and rationalism in Arab thought. To the traditional Moslem mind happiness for mankind in this world and in the next is obtained only through Islam and obedience to the sharīa. The concept of "The Happiness of the Two Abodes" is very clear and explicit. According to it, happiness in this life, al-hayat al-ula, al-duniya ("the nearer" abode or dwelling place), and in the after-life, al-hayat al-ukhra, the al-dar-al-akhira ("the last dwelling or abode"), happiness in both dwellings of mankind is obtained through Islam and obedience to its teachings. But Tahtawi finds happiness in this world outside the bounds of Islam. Tahtawi, in effect, finds happiness obtainable in this world outside the bound of all religions. He discovers that the French and the Parisians, whom he believes so blissfully satisfied, not observing the commands of their own religion and having "nothing of the Christian religion but the name." The laws of the French are their sharīa. (19) And these laws of the French "are not derived from holy books, but are taken from

(19) ibid., p. 158.

other laws, most of which are political, and these are totally different from the sharias (religious laws)". (20)

Thus the dichotomy of the religious and the political spheres is clear in Tahtawi's mind. Even more radical in an orthodox Moslem, this mind establishes for itself the possibility of obtaining good government, justice, and general welfare and happiness through recourse to the purely political sphere.

Reconciliation

Tahtawi also takes the second attitude we have referred to. He tries to stay within the inherited traditional bounds, and attempts to reconcile Western institutions and modes of life and thought with the teachings of Islam. Here he anticipates the modern reformer who tries to carry out his modernization inside, and not outside, the framework of Islam. So Tahtawi, like the modern reformer, interprets this framework very freely, pragmatically, bending it, shaping it, and some might say even twisting it out of recognition, to allow the introduction of the innovations he wants to borrow from the West.

With Tahtawi this process of pragmatic adaptation and reconciliation is not an unconscious one. In both

(20) ibid., p. 77.

Takhlis and Manaahij he is explicit in expressing his desire to adopt the things he admires in the West, the things which make the West strong and content. At the very beginning of Takhlis he informs us that he will be telling us about all the wonders he saw on his trip and during his stay in a Paris, prosperous with sciences, arts, wonderful justice, and remarkable equity "that should have rather been in the lands of Islam and countries of the sharia of the Prophet." (21)

So, to adopt those aspects of Western civilization that he finds useful and attractive, he has to prove that they are in no way contradictory with Islam; nay, that they are in reality Islamic institutions and practices. Thus, in advocating a more modern active business and commercial life, he writes that books of Islamic fikh organize this life, and that regulations of European business, such as the Bill of Exchange, have been derived from them. (22) He advocates the teaching of modern sciences in the Azhar, and tells us that these sciences which might seem to be foreign at present are actually Islamic sciences that foreigners have transferred to their language from Arabic books. (23)

In all this Tahtawi seems to be quite aware of what

(21) ibid., p. 20.

(22) Manaahij, (Cairo, 1912), p. 162.

(23) ibid., p. 373

he is doing. Thus he tells us that the sharia^c system prevailing in a country might be different from the political good "except by interpretation of this political good that will make it tally with the sharia^c." (24)

The differences in the readings of the sharia^c, and those that exist between its different schools or rites, al-madhahib, supply Tahtawi with the interpretations he needs. After telling us that present conditions necessitate that cases (kadaya) and judgments be dealt with in accordance with the practices of the age and the exchanges between the nations of the world, he finds the sharia^c no hinderance to that, "as the disagreement of schools of the imams is a blessing, and the permissibility of taklid of any one of them, and to have recourse to the ijtihad of the others, for necessity, is a boon." (25) Tahtawi then goes on to support his attitude on this subject by the inclusion of the full text of a fatwa by a Shafee^c alim. This fatwa allows a person to transfer a case to the judgment of a school of law he does not belong to, and to follow its interpretation; and also permits taklid (adoption of the utterances or actions of the authority of predecessors capable of ijtihad) of authorities other than the 4 Imams, the founders of the 4 orthodox schools of law (i.e. of Awzai,

(24) ibid., p. 24.

(25) ibid., p. 388.

for example). (26)

Tahtawi had, in fact, practiced what he advocates here very early, at his first contact with the West. One of the things he admired in France was the taxation system. Commenting on the article of the Louis XVIII Constitution that deals with it, he informs us that this article is "purely political" (as opposed to religious), and then tells us that if taxes were organized in Islamic countries in the same manner, people would have been happy. And then he hastens to add: "and this (system of taxation) might have an origin in the sharia, according to some sayings of Imam Abu Hanifa". (27) Thus, Tahtawi, who is a Shafii, recommends a justification of the adoption of a non-religious Western system of taxation, on the basis of the Hanafi doctrine.

Political Ideas

Let us now examine the political ideas of Tahtawi. In Takhlis he describes and comments on the political life and institutions he observed in France. In Manaahij he gives us, in a more or less systematic manner, his political ideas and ideals.

Let us start with the earlier book. Here one is struck by the scope and acuteness of his observation and description of all facets of Western political life. Almost

(26) ibid., pp. 388-389.

(27) al-Takhlis, p. 73.

nothing escapes his attention: from the freedom of the French press (28), to the doctrine of the balance of power in Europe. (29)

But what impresses him most in French political life is the existence of justice and equity. (30) He declares that what the French call "liberty" is the very same thing "that we call justice and equity, because rule by liberty (liberal rule) is the establishment of equality before law, whereby no ruler oppresses any man, and it is laws which govern and are considered." (31)

We can see all through his book that liberty, justice and equity, are closely related to the rule of law. He stresses, again and again, that it is laws that govern France. Now, what are his observations on French law? First, that this law is secular and man-made. He tells us: "Laws are the sharia of the French." (32) Second, that laws are not made except by the agreement of three opinions: the king and the two Chambers of Parliament, Chambre des Pairs and Chambre des Députés. (33) The king of France has full powers, on condition of obtaining the consent of these two chambers. (34) He is not absolute, "and French politics are a form of a restricting law, so that the ruler is the king, on condition

(28) ibid., p. 135.
(29) ibid., p. 176.
(30) ibid., p. 66.
(31) ibid., p. 73.
(32) ibid., p. 158.
(33) ibid., p. 159.
(34) ibid., p. 64.

that he acts in accordance with what is contained in the laws, to which the members of the (two) chambers consent." (35)

He comments on the first article of La Charte, (the Constitution of Louis XVIII). He tells us that this article which states that all Frenchmen are equal before the law, means that there are no differences among Frenchmen, high or low, in the execution of the regulations contained in the law. "Even legal action is brought against the king, and the sentence is carried out on him, as it is on others; so consider this first article which has great power in establishing justice, coming to the aid of the oppressed, and conciliating the poor in that they are as the mighty, in view of the execution of the laws." (36)

Tahtawi exhibits an extraordinary grasp of the functions and nature of the two chambers of parliament. Members of the Chambre des Députés, he informs us, are "the delegates of the subjects (of the state), and their protectors to take the place of, and speak for the subjects, it is as if the subjects were governing themselves, and preventing by themselves an oppression of themselves." (37) This chamber's duty is to examine the laws, policies, ordinances, to discuss the budget of the state, to argue it, and to defend the

(35) ibid., p. 66.

(36) ibid., pp. 72-73.

(37) ibid., p. 75.

subjects in matters of taxes and custom duties, thereby eliminating injustice and oppression. (38) Membership in the Chambre des Pairs, on the other hand, is hereditary, and this chamber sides with the king and protects the prerogatives of the Crown. (39)

And finally, we must note that Tahtawi in describing French parliamentary life and process, has recourse in Takhlis to the classical Arabic word "mashura" (40), from al-shura (consultation), and Islamic concept, to be made later on the basis for the justification of the adoption of the parliamentary form of government.

Manaahij

In Manaahij al-Albab al-Masria fi Mabahij al-Ādab al-Asria, written thirty five years after Takhlis, Tahtawi works out the political observations of his first book into a political theory. This book, written after a whole life-time of practical experience, is intended, as its very title indicates, to be a programme for the modernization of Egypt. He has written it "because it is the duty of every member to assist his community, and do whatever he is capable

(38) ibid., p. 65.

(39) ibid., pp. 65-66.

(40) e.g., pp. 64, 76, 77, 157, 166.

of for the furtherance of his country's interests", and he has therefore, as he says, "attempted my best and given what I have to give." (41)

There is hardly an aspect of Egyptian life that he does not touch upon. But what concerns us here is his political ideas. Tahtawi's interest in politics has deepened since his first book. "Politics," he tells us, "is all that relates to the state, its authority and regulations, and its relations and connections." (42) The regulations by which a kingdom is administered "are called the art of civil politics, or the art of administration, or the science of administering a kingdom." (43) And he recommends that the principles of politics and administration be taught to boys in Egypt "after (they have) completed the learning of the Koran, the (religious) beliefs, and the principles of the Arabic language." (44) Teaching boys the principles of politics will make them better men and better citizens. (45) In the past, politics were not taught because the heads of states claimed that politics were a secret of the state, and because the word "politics" had another meaning, that of tricks, falsehood, and cunning that are not suitable except

(41) Manaahij, p. 4.

(42) ibid., p. 350.

(43) ibid.

(44) ibid.

(45) ibid., pp. 350-351.

in tyrannical states. (46) This great interest of Tahtawi in politics is something novel. Only one book on politics is mentioned by al-Jabarti as having been written in the eighteenth century. (47)

Central to Tahtawi's political theory is his doctrine of the General or Public Good. Boys are taught politics to understand the secrets of the Public Good that benefit the community. (48) What is the Public Good? He tells us at the very beginning of his book that there are two means by which progress and the perfection of civilization are attained: Religion and the Public Good. (49) These he equates with the two origins of civilization: the non-material, ethical, behavioral, "meaning civilization in religion and the sharia"(50); and the material origin of civilization, which means progress in the Public Good, such as agriculture, commerce, and industry." (51) Throughout his book he discusses agriculture, commerce, industry, the economic life, under the heading of Public Good. However, he does not always maintain the dichotomy he had established between the material Public Good, and the non-material realms. Thus, he speaks of worldly and religious Public Good. (52) The Public Good can be sharia

(46) ibid., pp. 351-352.

(47) J. Heyworth-Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt, (London, 1938), p. 83.

(48) Manaahij, p. 350.

(49) ibid., pp. 7.-8.

(50) ibid., p. 9.

(51) ibid.

(52) ibid., p. 434.

Good, when it entails the giving of alms and wakfs for the good of a town or the comfort of the inhabitants of a country. (53) It can also be political when it entails ~~the~~ the acquiring and spending of money for good purposes, and the removing of adversity from human beings. (54) Tahtawi supports the legality of cooperation for the achievement of the Public Good by Koranic verses and sayings of the Prophet. (55)

An orderly, civilized society is in need of two great forces: the force of the rulers or of the government, which procures al-māsālih (the public interest or welfare) and wards off evils; and the force of the ruled or of the governed, which possesses liberty and enjoys the Public Good. From the governing or ruling force, which is also called "the government" and "the monarchy", there emanate three rays, which are called the corner-stones of government and its three powers: the legislative, the judiciary, and the executive. These three powers revert and belong to one single power: "the monarchical power bound by laws." (56) Thus the judicial power belongs to the King, because the judges are his delegates and appointees. (57) However, for Tahtawi the king is not an absolute ruler. He employs all

(53) ibid., pp. 23-24.

(54) ibid., p. 24.

(55) ibid., pp. 24-31.

(56) ibid., p. 349.

(57) ibid.

the traditional Islamic terms when he writes about him: he is a wali al-amr, he is the Caliph of God on earth, he is chosen by God to shepherd his raaya (the flock, i.e. the subjects). But he is chosen by God to be the malik (king) of his subjects, and not their maalik (possessor). (58) The King rules his subjects "in accordance with laws" (59), which are public and known. (60) Kings "have rights which are called privileges, and they have duties towards their subjects." (61) Khedive Ismail is highly praised by Tahtawi for convening a Chamber of Deputies. It is by this Chamber that the Khedive will carry out his duties towards his subjects. (62)

The subjects, on the other hand, have their duties towards society and the state, as well as their rights. They have to be hard-working active citizens, (63) and have to put the good of community and society above their personal interest. (64) They have also to serve their country by doing military service and paying taxes. (65) They have to learn that their private, personal interests are not achieved "except

(58) ibid., p. 356.

(59) ibid., p. 353.

(60) ibid., p. 352.

(61) ibid., p. 354.

(62) ibid., p. 323.

(63) ibid., chapter 4.

(64) ibid., p. 130.

(65) ibid., p. 350.

by realizing al-Maslaha al-Umamia (the common or public interest), which is the interest of the government (or state), which in turn is the interest of al-watan (la patrie)." (66) But the strength and the prosperity of a society result from common justice and equity. (67)

Economic Ideas

The economic ideas of Tahtawi are closely linked with his political ideas and his doctrine of the Public Good, and therefore merit consideration. According to Tahtawi, the material Public Good, whose attainment is essential for the modernization of Egypt, consists of agricultural, commercial, and industrial activities. (68) These correspond to the three sources of wealth: agriculture, commerce, and industry. (69) However, the primary source of all wealth is labour. When Tahtawi writes about agricultural land, he tells us that there exists a difference of opinion as to whether the source of wealth and riches and the basis of livelihood is the land, with labour being nothing but a mere tool and a means; or whether labour is the basis of wealth, riches, and happiness. Tahtawi emphatically supports the second point of view. "Merit belongs to labour" he writes, "the merit of land is secondary and consequential". (70) "Labour gives value to all things". (71)

(66) ibid., p. 351.

(67) ibid., p. 130.

(68) ibid., pp. 9, 129.

(69) ibid., p. 80.

(70) ibid., p. 84.

(71) ibid.

Thus, even air and water, which are free, neither sold nor bought, will have a value when labour is exerted to bring them to whoever is in need of them. When thirsty, the French troops that occupied Egypt, had to pay for the water brought to them from the river. Man will also pay for the labour of a servant who opens the windows of his home to let in the needed air. Real-estate which gets the benefit of air and water is thereby made more valuable. Fire and herbage (pastures) are like air and water, writes Tahtawi, and supports this view by a tradition of the Prophet: "All men share in three things: water, herbage (pastures), and fire." "It is therefore" he comments, "not permissible for anyone to interdict them, nor for the imam to grant them." (72)

This Marxist analysis of the nature of wealth and labour leads Tahtawi to evolve something akin to the Marxist theory of Surplus Value and Labour, and then to criticize Egyptian landowners. He tells us that the landowning group (al-mulāk, taifat al-mūlak) reaps the fruits of agriculture and monopolizes its products. This group, to the exclusion of everybody else engaged in agriculture, enjoys the greatest privileges, benefits from its general produce, leaving almost nothing to others. Whilst this group enjoys the products of labour, it pays labourers only what it allows to be an appropriate wage - which is very low. But landowners have

(72) ibid., p. 85.

justified their conduct by the right of ownership and appropriation of land. They believe that "they are more deserving of the riches and the happiness produced by labour in agriculture, while all other citizens of the state deserve nothing of what the land produces, except as a return of their services and usefulness to (the owners' lands." The underpaying of hired labour, writes Tahtawi, cannot be justified - as landowners do - by the reasoning that it is the landowners who spend their capital, ras-al-māl, on land, and that it is this capital, and not the labour of the fallah, which produces profits. (73)

Tahtawi applies this concept of capital and labour to the industrial sector of economic activity as well. He tells us that the value of manufactured industrial goods is increased by the worker who is greatly responsible for the owners' profits. The wages of hired labour, he writes, cost the factory owner nothing, "as they are mostly taken from surplus profits that have resulted from the labour of the worker". Then he goes on to explain how profit and capital are accumulated by the labour of industrial workers. (74)

It is very probable that Tahtawi, like Marx, derived his concept of labour, from Adam Smith and Ricardo's doctrine of labour value. However, his evolution of a crude Marxist concept of surplus value and labour is more difficult to explain, and therefore more noteworthy. Marx's Capital was

(73) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp.93-96.

(74) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp.104-105.

first published in German, a language he did know, in the year 1867, and Tahtawi's Manaahij in 1869. (75)

Tahtawi is naturally more concerned with agriculture, and the political consequences of underpaying agricultural labour. Agricultural labourers, he writes, are forced to work for whatever they are paid by landowners, even when the wages they receive are very small and unequal to the value of their labour. This is particularly true in districts that are overpopulated by labourers who, as a result, compete with each other and lower wages in the interests of landowners. (76) This underpayment of labour, based on the ownership of land and the landowner's expenditure from his capital on agriculture, does not induce any love of the hired labourer to the landowner. "He who plants thorns does not reap grapes". All this leads to the rise of envy, abuse, fraud, and hatred, and the destruction of Islamic brotherhood among the citizens of the country (al-watan), who are duty-bound to cooperate with each other for the welfare of their country, because of the "brotherhood of country" as well as the "brotherhood of religion". (77) To support this view, Tahtawi quotes and interprets several Koranic verses and hadiths.

Patriotism

Patriotism is a dominant motif in all of Tahtawi's writings, whether prose or poetry. The words watan and

(75) A French translation *Das Kapital* was published in 1875.

(76) Manaahij, p. 94.

(77) ibid., pp. 96-99.

ḥubb al-watan (country and love of country) reoccur in them. According to him, the very desire for progress and modernization, which is the motive-force behind his thinking, arises out of nothing but the love of one's country. (78) His call for the emergence and strenghtening of patriotism in the hearts of his contemporaries is almost always supported by a hadith of the Prophet: "Love of one's country is part of the Faith" ("Ḥubb al-watan min al-iman"). However, both the term watan and the concept it denotes in Tahtawi's thought are novel. In classical Arabic the word watan means the place of birth and/or residence; and Arabic dictionaries, published as late as 1867, and even later, retain this definition, quoting the hadith "ḥubb al-watan min al-iman" in this context. The word wataniyya does not exist in them. (79) And in Tahtawi's writings the word watan sometimes occurs in its classical sense. Thus he speaks of Corsica as the watan of Napoleon, (80) and of Tahta as his own watan. (81) But the watan Tahtawi urges his contemporaries to love and to work for, is more than their birthplace. It is the Western patrie. And according to the Egyptian historian Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi, Tahtawi is the first person to use the word watan and its derivations in this particular sense. (82) Watan has come to mean for Tahtawi a territorial nation - state inhabited by a socio-

(78) ibid., p. 10.

(79) Butrus al-Bustani's Muhit al-Muhit (1867).
See also Louis Malouf's Al-Munjid (1908).

(80) Takhlis, p. 30.

(81) A passage quoted in Abd al-Latif Hamza,
Adab al-Maqala al-Sahafiyya fi Misr,
(Cairo, 1950), Vol. I, pp. 140-141.

(82) Asr Mohammed Ali, p. 410.

ethnic group. The sons of a fatherland, abna al-watan, are united in speaking one language, having the same customs and characteristics, and obeying one state and one law. (83) He does not deny the bond of Islam and the existence of an Islamic community; he even goes as far as saying that any Islamic kingdom is the watan of all Moslems who reside in it. (84) But within this Islamic community, Egyptians have a corporate identity of their own, and their watan is Egypt. (85) The citizens of Egypt have duties towards it, as well as their rights in it. (86) For Tahtawi "Egypt is a noble country, if not the noblest." (87) "Every land in the world has a planet which shines in its horizon. Our Egypt is the planet of Africa, its highest minaret, and the shining sun of its horizon". (88) Tahtawi writes what might be the first patriotic poetry in the Arabic language. In poems that he calls gasayid wataniyya (patriotic poems) he sings the glories of Egypt and Egyptians, the victories of Egyptian armies in the days of Mohammed Ali and his sons, and their destruction of their enemies with cannon "manufactured by our factories". (89)

(83) al-Murshid al-Amin, (Cairo, 1875), pp. 93, 95.

(84) ibid., p. 125.

(85) e.g., Takhlis, p. 2; Manaahij, pp. 243, 244, Preface and Introduction; al-Murshid, pp. 91-94.

(86) e.g., Manaahij, Epilogue; al-Murshid, pp. 93-95.

(87) al-Murshid, p. 91.

(88) Manaahij, p. 342.

(89) For long quotations from his patriotic poetry, see Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi, Asr Mohamed Ali, pp. 405-409, and Ahmed Ahmed Badawi, Rifa al-Tahtawi Beg, (Cairo, 1950), pp. 226-234.

In his poetry, as well as in his prose, Tahtawi's patriotic pride extends to the ancient, pre-Islamic, Egypt and Egyptians.

Tahtawi has derived his concept of "country" and "patriotism" from the West. He is naturally affected, from the very beginning, by a primitive patriotism reminiscent of that of al-Jabarti. Thus he tells us that Suleiman al-Halabi, whose remains are kept by the French in Paris, was "martyred" because he had "assassinated the French general Klébér, and was killed by the French during their subjugation of Egypt". (90) But his patriotism, as we have just seen, has become far more complex and sophisticated, than the simple, basically religious, patriotism of al-Jabarti. And Western ideas and concepts are clearly responsible for this transformation. He writes, for example, that the love of Moslems for their religion is equivalent to "love of country" in the West, "although" he adds, "love of country for us Moslems is one of the branches of the Faith". (91) Tahtawi translates the Marseillaise into Arabic. (92) He states that the French risk all dangers for the sake of their country. (93) For Tahtawi, patriotism is a major element in the strength of Western people and states. Thus even the fall of the Roman

(90) Takhlis, p. 127.

(91) al-Murshid, p. 125.

(92) Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi, Asr Mohamed Ali, p. 409.

(93) al-Takhlis, p. 50.

Empire and its splitting into an Eastern and a Western empire, is explained by the passing away of patriotism from among the Romans. (94)

(94) al-Murshid, p. 95.

Khairreddin al-Tunisi

Career

"Bien que je sache pertinemment que je suis Circassien, je n'ai conservé aucun souvenir de mon pays et de mes parents. J'ai dû à la suite de quelque guerre ou de quelque émigration, être enlevé en très bas âge à ma famille dont j'ai perdu à jamais la trace." Thus Khairreddin starts his autobiography. (1) From the humble status of a slave, Khairreddin's remarkable abilities and energies were to raise him, before his death in 1889, at the age of nearly seventy, to the highest offices of the Tunisian Baylic and the Ottoman Empire itself. (2) Khairreddin was first sold in Constantinople to Tahsin Bey, Nakib al Ashraf, who in turn sold him to the Bay of Tunis. In 1255 (1839/1840) Khairreddin arrived at Tunis which was to give him his surname. In the

(1) "A mes Enfants: Memoires De Ma Vie Privée et Politique," Revue Tunisienne, (1934), pp. 177-225; 347-396. According to the information gathered from Khairreddin's family by S.M. Mzali and J. Pingnon, who edited his autobiography, Khairreddin was from the Abaze family that originally inhabited the western part of Caucasian mountains, and his investigations seem to have convinced him that a very high Egyptian official was his brother. ibid., p. 183. The Abazes are an old and a well-known Egyptian family of Circassian origin.

(2) Slavery, however, in many periods of Islamic history "carried with it scarcely any social inferiority" and "to the Ottomans there seemed nothing outrageous in the system they created wherein half the highest positions in the state were held by slaves." Gibb and Bowen, op. cit., Vol. I, Part I, p. 43. Khairreddin's rise, if not entirely unique, is none the less quite remarkable.

Bay's palace and in the Brado Military School, just opened in 1840, Khaireddin was to study Arabic, and Islamic ulum (sciences, or knowledge in its broadest sense), and the modern military sciences of his day. He had learned French in Turkey. For a time he was to be trained by the French military mission in Tunis, under Commandant Campenon, who was later to become Gambetta's minister of war. Khaireddin rose quickly to the highest rank in the Tunisian army, becoming a farik (general de division) in 1844. He was then to give up his military career and take up a civil service career. In 1853, the Bay was to send him to Paris to obtain the extradition of a protégé of the corrupt Tunisian prime minister Mustapha al-Khazandar, a certain Mahmoud ben Ayad, who had absconded to France with a fortune. And upon his return to Tunis, in 1856, Khaireddin was made the minister of marine.

The sequence of liberal measures that distinguished the reigns of the reformer Bay Ahmad (1837-1855), a Tunisian Mohammed Ali, Bay Mohammed (1855-1859), and Bay Mohammed al-Sadik (1859-1882), are credited by some to Khaireddin's influence. In 1857, Ahd al-Aman, a kind of a "fundamental agreement", was proclaimed in Tunis. This document declared that all inhabitants of Tunis were equal before the law "because this is man's natural right, whatever his condition. Justice on earth is a balance which serves to guarantee right against wrong, and protect the weak from the attacks of the

strong." (3) And in 1860, the Bay promulgated a Constitution. This constitution kept executive power in the hands of the hereditary but responsible Bay, assisted by ministers chosen by him. The Bay was to have only a civil list, and the practice of the forming out of taxes was to be discontinued. The legislative power was divided between the Bay and a Grand Council of 60 nominated members. The judicial power was independent, and the courts were to follow a civil and penal Tunisian code. (4) This was the first constitution to be promulgated in any Moslem country - the famous Ottoman Constitution of 1876 was only to come sixteen years later. Khaireddin was to become the President of the Grand Council that came into being as a result of the Tunisian Constitution. In 1863, however, he resigned from the presidency and withdrew from public life when his efforts to reform Tunis through the Council failed, due to the opposition of the autocratic Bay and his corrupt prime minister. In 1864, both the Constitution and the Council were suspended.

Khairiddin's retirement from public office lasted for nine years. During these years he travelled all over Europe: France, Germany, England, Italy, Austria, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, and Belgium. "My prolonged stay in France and these long trips" he tells us, "enabled me to study the bases and

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- (3) See Narcisse Faucon, La Tunisie: Avant et Depuis L'Occupation Française: Histoire et Colonisation, (Paris, 1893), Tome I, p. 201.
- (4) See "Tunisia" in Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st ed.

conditions of European civilization, and also the institutions of the great states of Europe; and taking advantage of my leisure that my retirement gave me, I wrote my politico-administrative book, entitled: Akwam al-Masalik fi Marifat Ahwal al-Mamalik". (5)

In the meantime, conditions in Tunis were getting worse, largely because of the disastrous financial policy of Mustapha al-Khazandar, who was finally to be dismissed by the Bay, in 1873. Khaireddin was appointed in his place, and he carried out, in the four years that his ministry lasted, a number of important reforms. He lightened the burden of taxation and encouraged agriculture, distributing state lands to the peasants. The area of cultivated land jumped from 60,000 hectares to over a million by the time he left office. He raised the taxes on imports and lowered them on exports. He attempted to reform the Tunisian judiciary and bureaucracy. He founded al-Madrassa al-Sadikia, the first modern educational institution in Tunis, in which European languages and modern subjects were taught, side by side with Arabic and the traditional Islamic subjects. He also reformed the educational programme of Djami al-Zaituna, the Azhar of Tunis. He founded the first public library in Tunis and donated 1100 books to it. He finally obtained for the reigning family a firman that secured for it the right of succession to the Baylic. But

(5) Revue Tunisienne, (1934), p. 187.

even this last achievement could not win him the cooperation of the autocratic Bay, and in 1877 he resigned and left for France. He was summoned the same year by Sultan Abdul Hamid to Istanbul, and upon arrival given a seat on the financial reform commission then sitting at Tophane. Early in 1879 the Sultan appointed him the Sadriazam, prime minister, of the Empire. However, after only eight months of office, he was dismissed by the reactionary and autocratic Sultan. (6) He died in Istanbul, in 1899, "practically a prisoner in his own home". (7)

Works

All the political ideas of Khaireddin al-Tunisi are expressed in his one published book: Akwam al-Masalik fi Marifat Ahwal al-Mamalik, "The Soundest Means for Knowing the Conditions of States", first published in Tunis, in 1867. To be more exact, Khaireddin's political thought is contained in this book's short Prolegomena, of some 100 pages. The book itself is purely descriptive; and can be easily catalogued by a modern librarian under the heading of "Works on Comparative Government", in spite of the fact that it contains

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- (6) Sami's Kamus al-Alam, (Istanbul, 1890), and Thuraiya's Sidjilli Othmani, (Istanbul, 1890), state that Khaireddin resigned. But Othman Nuri's Abdul Hamid thani Devri Saltanati, (Istanbul, 1909), which probably is the most accurate Turkish work on this period, states that Khaireddin was dismissed, vol. II, p.598.
- (7) "Khaireddin" in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed.

some historical, geographical, and economic information, that are not usually given in books of this nature. (8) The book gives quite an accurate description of the constitutions, forms of government, and the workings of the political institutions of the Ottoman Empire and 19 European states of Khaireddin's day.

The short introduction can be, and was in fact, separated from the main body of the book, and read by itself. As a separate work, reprinted in different Moslem countries, (9) it was to impress profoundly intellectuals of the nineteenth century. Thus Tahtawi was to quote it and praise Khaireddin very highly, (10) while Kawakibi was to include the name of Khaireddin among the few Arab contemporary writers in politics, whom he deemed worthy of mention. (11) We shall therefore deal almost exclusively with this work.

In the forties, the private papers of Khaireddin were published in the Revue Tunisienne, which is put out by the Institut de Carthage in Tunis. Although of considerable historical importance, these papers add nothing new to Khaireddin's political ideas. The most interesting of the papers, for our purpose, are an autobiography "A Mes Enfants: Memoires De Ma

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- (8) It can be justifiably argued, however, that the inclusion of similar information can only benefit many modern works on comparative government.
- (9) See, for instance, an Arabic edition, printed in Istanbul, in 1876; another, printed in Cairo, in 1881; and a third - this time a Turkish translation - printed again in Istanbul, in 1878.
- (10) al-Murshid al-Amin, p. 98 ff; al-Manaahij, pp. 392, 443.
- (11) Tabai al-Istibdad, (Aleppo, 1957), p. 13.

Vie Privée et Politique", (12) which Khaireddin wrote in French, between 1885 and 1886; and "Mon Programme", (13) which is the French version of a memorandum that Khaireddin presented to Sultan Abdul Hamid on November 30, 1882. The editors of this work call it "some kind of a political testament of this (Khaireddin) statesman", but admit that the majority of the ideas it contains are to be found in Akwam al-Masalik. (14)

Arguments for the Adoption of Western Culture

For the sophisticated and widely travelled General Khaireddin, the superiority of the West to the Moslem world is not a puzzling phenomenon, in need of being demonstrated and explained, as it was to the simpler Shaikh Tahtawi. It is an established fact that needs no proving. But this does not make it less painful; and, as in the case of Tahtawi, he believes that this fact, must, and can, be changed. His book, in fact, is consecrated solely to this purpose.

Moslems must regain their lost might and prosperity. And according to Khaireddin, this can be done only by adopting Western institutions and practices, by which European states have risen to their present eminence. But such an adoption is opposed by many Moslems. Among these are some of the

(12) Revue Tunisienne, (1934), pp. 177-225;
347-396.

(13) Revue Tunisienne, (1935), pp. 51-80.

(14) ibid., p. 51.

ulama and the statesmen. The ulama must be enlightened, and those asleep among the statesmen, the elite, and the common people, must be awakened. So Khaireddin, starts his work by setting forth his arguments for the adoption of Western culture. He tells us that his remarks on the subject will be both nakli (transcendent, religious), and akli (rational, non-religious). (15)

Khaireddin states that the inadvertent among Moslems have shunned European institutions and practices, even when these were not contrary to sharia, because of an idée fixe they have developed - all practices and institutions engaged in by non-Moslems must be avoided. This, according to him, is an absolutely wrong attitude to take, particularly when the institutions and practices to be adopted are not incompatible with sharia, but were originally practiced by the Moslems themselves. Westerners have followed the example of other people, whenever they found them right and beneficial. What is right must be followed, and "what is right is not known by the men who practice it, but men are known by the right they practice". In the Battle of al-Ahzab, the Prophet followed the council of Salman al-Farisi, who advised him to dig a trench around Medina, as was the practice of Persians whenever surrounded by their enemies. If our good predecessors, salaaf, were allowed to take logic from the Greeks, because they found it useful, what can prevent us today from

(15) Muqaddimat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik fi Marifat Ahwal al-Mamalik, (Istanbul, 1876), pp. 3-5, 64, 105.

acquiring some of the knowledge of which we are in need. (16)

Khairuddin sees a contradiction in the attitude of his coreligionists towards the material and non-material aspects of Western culture. He tells us that people who refuse to adopt Western institutions and practices, that are useful to them, are not averse to acquiring from the West that which is harmful to them. Thus, we see them compete among themselves in buying dresses and household furniture. These are all Western products, and by buying them the community is disgraced and weakened, economically and politically. A community is proven backward and disgraced when it requires others to supply it with the majority of its needs. Society is enfeebled and impoverished when it does not produce what it needs, because production is one of the sources of wealth. The shepherd, for example, the silk-producer, and the cotton-grower, toil for a whole year, and sell what they produce to the franji, westerner, for a low price, then in a short while they buy it back from him in the form of finished goods, paying more than double the price they received. A state with an unfavourable balance of payments can only expect certain ruin. Politically a country's need of others, especially in matters of armaments, is a cause of its weakness and a drawback to its independence. (17)

(16) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp.6-7.
(17) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp.8-9.

Khairuddin then goes on to say that some European writers on military matters have declared that states must match their neighbours weapons, so as not to fall victims to them. But this, according to Khairuddin, is true of non-military matters as well. And furthermore, military strength and preparedness cannot be realized without prosperity and progress in knowledge, and this progress, in turn, cannot be achieved without the appropriate political organizations. (18)

But, above all, Khairuddin justifies the adoption of Western political institutions and practices, on the grounds that this would be, in fact, a return to ancient Islamic theory and practice. He states that in past ages the Moslem community was powerful, prosperous, and advanced, while Europe suffered in darkness and backwardness. The Crusades - as attested to by fair-minded European historians - changed this state of affairs. Europeans copied Moslems; and European civilization, in fact, commenced with Europe's contact with the more advanced Moslem community. And it is because of this that Khairuddin exhorts his coreligionists "to retrieve what has been taken from our hands". (19)

The Sources of European Supremacy

Khairuddin holds that the present power and prosperity of Europe are not due to any natural advantages that it

(18) ibid., pp. 9-10.

(19) ibid., pp. 5, 6, 12, 28, 66-67.

possesses, for other regions of the world might be as, or even more, temperate and fertile. Neither are they caused by Christianity, for Christianity does not concern itself with temporal and political matters. (20) The sources of Western power, prosperity, and progress, lie in the political systems, al-Tanzimat al-Siyasiya, of European states. (21) These systems are based on justice and liberty. (22) Out of this justice and liberty, good government was born in Europe; and out of good government security was born, and out of security hope, and out of hope personal endeavour. Without justice and liberty, there can be no progress in the arts and the sciences, no exploitation of the earth's treasures, no economic activity, no banks and investment companies. (23)

What, according to Khaireddine, are the distinguishing features of European political systems, besides justice and liberty? Khaireddin discerns in these systems an absence of despotic and arbitrary rule, responsible government, and the sovereignty of law. And he justifies the adoption of these particular features by arguing that they can be paralleled in the Islamic past.

(20) ibid., p. 10.

(21) ibid., pp. 10, 11, 105. We must note here that for "system", Khaireddin employs the term tanzimat, which was commonly used by people in those days, as well as by Khaireddin as we can see elsewhere in his work, to denote the reforming legislation, with which the Ottoman Empire was reorganizing itself.

(22) ibid., pp. 9, 10.

(23) ibid., pp. 6, 11, 98-99.

Liberty

For Khaireddin, the main secret of Europe's power and prosperity seems to lie in liberty. "Liberty" he writes, "is the source of knowledge and civilization in European states" (24), and tells us that "states which have risen to the highest degrees of civilization, are those in which liberty has taken roots." (25)

Liberty and justice, for Khaireddin, are two of the principles, usul, of Islamic sharia. (26) However, "liberty" for Khaireddin, as any examination of his book will show, means "political and civic liberty". Therefore, it can hardly be identified with the traditional concept of liberty in Islam. Let us now look briefly into this concept. The Arabic word hurriyah, which Khaireddin uses for "liberty", is an abstract noun, formed from hurr, free. In classical Arabic the word hurriyah, is primarily a legal term, denoting the opposite of "slavery". (27) And prior to the nineteenth century "historians and political theorists had no use for the word hurriyah which, it seems, practically never occurs in their works". (28) And because of this, it was only

(24) ibid., p. 95.

(25) ibid., p. 98.

(26) ibid., p. 10.

(27) See, for instance, Ibn Durayd, Ibn Manzur, Lane, and Freytag.

(28) Franz Rosenthal, The Muslim Concept of Freedom, Prior to the Nineteenth Century, (Leiden, 1960), p. 55. This work discusses, at some length, the problem of liberty in Islam, and comes to the conclusion that "freedom" as a political force in Islam lacked "a central position within the political organism and system of thought", p. 122.

natural that Tahtawi would write that what the French call "liberty" is the very same thing "that we call justice and equity". (29) Obviously, a concept of individual liberty vis-à-vis the state could not develop in traditional Islamic political theory; for the power of the state, according to this theory, is absolute and cannot be limited. All rights belong to the state, and the limits within which the individual is protected in society are God's: "These are the limits, hudud, of God, so exceed them not." (The Koran, 2:229)

But, in the course of the nineteenth century, hurriyah was to shed its legal meaning and to acquire a political connotation. And here again, the first instance of this transformation, from the traditional meaning to the new usage, can be traced to Western contact with the Arab world. Thus, the first Napoleonic proclamation in Egypt is addressed to Egyptians from the "French (republic) built on hurriyah and equality". (30) And "in Ruphey's Arabic word list, prepared for the French expedition in Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, hurriyah is given as equivalent to liberté, but with the restriction 'opposé à l'esclavage'". (31)

In Khaireddin's book, the term hurriyah has come to stand explicitly for civil and political liberty, and the

(29) See p. , above.
(30) al-Jabarti, Ajaib al-Athar, Vol. III, p. 4
(31) Cited by Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, (London, 1961), n. 2, p. 126.

Western origins of its untraditional usage are clear and distinct. Thus, it is while discussing European civilization that Khaireddin embarks on an explanation of the concept of liberty. Here he states that he finds it "necessary to elucidate the customary meaning of hurriyah, so as to repel any confusion that might arise concerning it". (32) Then he goes on to say that "the term hurriyah in their (European states) custom is used in two senses: the first is called personal liberty ... the second political liberty". (33) Personal liberty entails the setting of man at liberty to act and to earn, and the security of his life, property, and honor. It also entails his equality with others before the law. (34) Political liberty, on the other hand, requires the sharing of citizens in the conduct of politics and their discussion of the state's welfare. (35) Liberty in France commenced with the French Revolution (36), and liberty in Europe was born out of it. (37) And finally, it is liberty which guarantees the rights of the individual, the citizens, and the community. (38)

There is hardly any need to remark in this connection

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- (32) Muqadimat Kitab Akwan al-Masalik, p. 95.
(33) ibid.
(34) ibid.
(35) ibid.
(36) ibid., p. 91.
(37) Kitab Akwan al-Masalik, p. 122.
(38) Muqadimat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, pp. 95, 105, 111.

that the hurriyah Khaireddin is writing about is the European liberty of the nineteenth century, and as such, it cannot be easily made to harmonize with traditional Islamic political theory, nor to be considered one of the principles of sharia.

Law

For Khaireddin, justice and liberty, are established and safeguarded in the state, by the sovereignty of law. The state, furthermore, must be organized by laws. He tells us that nations which have reached the heights of righteousness, are those that respect the laws they possess, whereas disrespect of these laws has been the cause of their retrogression. (39) He informs us that in Europe the respect and continued application of laws protects the rights and the liberty of subjects, and secures the weak against the attacks and the injustices of the strong. (40)

Laws bind the rulers as well as the subjects, declares Khaireddin. (41) The success and failure of states that are not administered by laws, depend entirely on the person of the king, his abilities, and his uprightness. (42)

But to Khaireddin, laws - by themselves - are incapable of ensuring liberty in a state. They must be complimented by

(39) ibid., p. 111.
(40) ibid.
(41) ibid., p. 95.
(42) ibid., p. 18.

other institutions and practices. Thus, he states, that the Russian and Papal States are despotic and devoid of liberty, in spite of the fact that they possess recognized laws; for these laws are not sufficient to safeguard the rights of the people, as they are dependent for their execution on the will of the monarch. (43) Both these states have no parliaments. (44) And when he later sets to describe their political systems in more detail, we are informed that the Kingdom of the Pope is "despotic" (45); whereas Russia possesses laws and parliaments like other European states, but the Russian emperor is absolute, for he appoints the members of these assemblies, and their decisions do not bind him. And after telling us that this emperor does not allow his subjects to interfere in political matters, he refers to his earlier explanation of liberty in his Prologomena. (46) Constitution, for Khaireddin, is synonymous with the political organization that he admires. (47)

Finally we must note that Khaireddin makes a clear distinction between religions, sharia, law, and secular, akli (rational) law. (48) The first deals with the affairs of this world and the next, and is a religious restraint. (49)

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- (43) ibid., p. 95.
(44) ibid., p. 96.
(45) Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, p. 440.
(46) ibid., pp. 282-283.
(47) Muqadimat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, p. 98.
(48) ibid., pp. 12, 40-41.
(49) ibid.

The second is a worldly restraint. (50) The Moslem community, however, is bound, in both its religious and worldly conduct, by the divine sharia. (51)

The Counter-Restraint

Khairuddin believes that because of human nature, the giving of a free hand to kings produces injustices of all kinds. This, he informs us, is taking place in some Moslem states of his day, and has occurred in European states in the past. And injustices, as proven by Ibn Khaldun, destroy civilization. (52)

Then Khairuddin goes on to adopt from Ibn Khaldun the concept of a restraining force, wazi, and to construct upon it what we might call a doctrine of counter-restraint. Ibn Khaldun had elaborated the theory that men would injure and destroy each other, because "aggressiveness and oppression are in the animal nature of man", if there were not a commonly recognized and obeyed restraining force in society. This force he called simply wazi, restraint, or hukum wazi (a restraining rule or government). "This wazi" he wrote, "must therefore be the person ... who dominates them (men) and has power and authority over them, so that no one of them will be

(50) ibid., p. 41.

(51) ibid., p. 51.

(52) For the paragraph above, see ibid., p. 12.

able to attack another. This is the meaning of royal authority, mulk". (53)

Now Khaireddin adopts this theory. He quotes Ibn Khaldun and states that "restraint is essential for the survival of the human race". But, from there, he goes on to argue that this restraint would lose its raison d'être "if it were left to do what it pleased and to rule as it willed" for the needs of the community would still be neglected. "It is essential therefore that this restraint have a counter-restraint that checks it". (54)

This counter-restraint of Khaireddin, like the restraint of Ibn Khaldun, is either a divine sharia or a rational law (or policy) (55), a worldly or a religious wazi. (56)

Thus, by basing his counter-restraint on sharia, Khaireddin is able to maintain his political ideas within the framework of traditional Islamic political theory. The ruler's authority in this theory is absolute. He cannot be restrained. But this ruler rules under the divine sharia, and the individual's obedience to him is, therefore, conditioned by his obedience to the rules of sharia. The classic tradition on this point states that: "Hearing and obeying is binding on a Moslem, whether he likes or dislikes the order - so long as

(53) Mugadimat Ibn Khaldun, (Beirut - Cairo edition), pp. 43, 139, 187.

(54) For the paragraph above, see ibid., p. 14.

(55) ibid., p. 14.

(56) ibid., pp. 41, 112.

he is not ordered to commit a sin; but if he is ordered to commit a sin, there is no hearing and no obeying."

Let us now examine the particular institutions and practices that go to make up Khaireddin's counter-restraint.

Ihtisab and Ahl al-Hall wal-Akd

The state, the rulers, the ministers, and government officials, must all be, according to Khaireddin, subject to ihtisab, to accountability (to account for their conduct, tasaruf). (57) This ihtisab is derived from the formula of "ordering the good and forbidding the evil" (58); and is one of the principles of sharia. (59) It is the object of counter-restraint, and its purpose is to ensure the righteous conduct of the state. (60)

Now, ihtisab, better known as hisba, is, in fact, one of the doctrines of Islam. It is based on the Koranic injunction to "order the good and forbid the evil", al-amr bil-maruf wal nahy an al-munkar. This injunction was later to be institutionalized into the office of the muhtasib. The muhtasib was appointed by the caliph or his minister, and his functions were similar to those of the agoranomos of the Greek cities: he had to censor and enforce public morals and order.

(57) ibid., pp. 14, 41, 107, 109.
(58) ibid., pp. 14, 15.
(59) ibid., pp. 13, 40.
(60) ibid., p. 14.

Today the muhtasib would have been something of a municipal inspector, a policeman, and a minor magistrate, all in one. (61) In Khaireddin's day the office had generally fallen into disuse, so it is not mentioned by him in the section on Ottoman governmental institutions. However, the muhtasib appears in the section on France. Here the term stands for the public prosecutor. (62)

The power of ihtisab, holding the account, based on "ordering the good and forbidding the bad", Khaireddin assigns to "the people who loosen and bind". These people must share in the king's powers, they must be consulted, ministers of the state must be responsible to them, and laws must be kept in their charge. (63) The people who loosen and bind, ahl al-hall wal-akd, to whom Khaireddin assigns all these powers, are in Islamic political theory, the people who elect and depose the caliph.

All these Islamic concepts Khaireddin identifies with European political institutions and practices. To forbid evil, Europeans have established parliaments and freedom of the press, both of which create public opinion. Their object is to hold the state to ihtisab. (64) Ahl al-hall wal-akd are

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- (61) For the theory of hisba and the functions of muhtasib, see Mawardi's al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya.
(62) Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, pp. 159, 161-162.
(63) Muqadimat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, pp. 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22.
(64) ibid., p. 14.

the delegates in the lower chambers. (65)

This identification enables Khaireddin to give, in purely Islamic terms, an account on the evolution of the parliamentary system of government. He states that political liberty for Europeans calls for the people's participation in, and discussion of, state affairs. This reminds him of Caliph Omar telling the people at a prayer: "If I go astray, o believers, redress me", and being answered by one of the Moslems: "By God Omar we will redress you with the edges of our swords." But, as giving liberty to the people in this form will result in disorder and dispersal of opinions, it was abandoned to make the people elect from among themselves a group of enlightened and virtuous men. "These people are called by Europeans (the delegates to) the chamber of deputies, and by us ahl al-hall wal-akd, although they (ahl al-hall wal-akd) are not elected by the people, because the forbidding of evil in our sharia is a fard kifaya (an obligation that only a sufficient number of Moslems should fulfil)" (66)

It is clear that to identify traditional Islamic concepts with the European form of parliamentary government, Khaireddin has reinterpreted Islamic political theory and practice. This reinterpretation is free to the extreme: he has not only rearranged traditional concepts and institutions

(65) ibid., pp. 41, 46.

(66) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp. 95-96.

to make such an identification possible, but has also read new functions and purposes into them. In theory the sole function of ahl al-hall wal-^lakd is to elect and to depose the ruler of the Islamic community. In practice, as we shall see, they neither elected nor deposed this ruler. The ruler, once "elected" was, in theory and practice, absolute; he could not share his power with any man or group of men. In theory, hisba can be hardly said to be applicable to the ruler. (67) In practice, the doctrine of hisba came to be institutionalized in the minor office of muhtasib. The injunction or ordering the good and forbidding the evil is generally held to be a fard ^lain, a personal obligation, and not a fard kifaya, as Khaireddin states it to be. (68) And finally the separation of powers that Khaireddin describes can in no way be compatible with Islamic political theory and practice. This will become clearer as we look in more detail into the political system that Khaireddin is advocating.

Shura

Khaireddin draws his chief justification for the

(67) al-Ghazzali, who called hisba, al-qutb al-^lazam fi al-din, "the supreme pivot of religion", applies only the mildest degrees, darajat, of hisba to rulers: Ihya ^lulum al-din, (Cairo, 1884), Vol. II, p. 265. Only the Mutazila seem to extend hisba to the fighting of rulers, qital al-aimma, Ibn Taimiyya, al-Hisba fi al-Islam, (Cairo, 1900), p. 55.

(68) See, for instance, Mawardi and Ghazzali.

limitation of the monarch's powers from the Islamic concept of shura, which is based on the Koranic injunction to the prophet to take counsel with his followers. (69) Khaireddin considers that mashura, the taking of counsel, is one of the most important principles of religion. (70) And he supports his belief in the necessity of counsel for monarchs by religious and rational arguments. God, he argues, has ordered His infallible Prophet to take counsel, in spite of the fact that the Prophet could dispense with it, because of Divine Inspiration and the perfections that God had deposited in his person. God had ordered mashura, consultation, to make it a sunna, a Prophetic custom, binding the rulers who followed the Prophet. (71) Khaireddin then goes on to support this view by sayings of the mystic Ibn al-Arabi, Ali, the cousin of the Prophet and the fourth of the orthodox caliphs; the theologian al-Ghazzali; Omar, the second of the orthodox caliphs, and Muawiyah, the first of the Umayyad caliphs. (72)

In the system that Khaireddin advocates, the monarch consults with ahl al-hall wal-^ʿakd, and ahl al-hall wal-^ʿakd share with him the conduct of general policies. Ministers are responsible for the administration of the monarchy, according to precise laws. (73)

(69) Koran 3:158; 42:38.

(70) Muqadimat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, p. 13.

(71) ibid., p. 13.

(72) ibid., pp. 13, 14.

(73) ibid., p. 15.

Khairuddin states that it is possible to find some monarchs who would rule well by the aid of a wise and understanding minister, without consulting ahl al-hall wal-^cakd. But this, he asserts, is rare. Monarchs, because of human nature, are of three types. They are either possessed of perfect understanding and love of the country's welfare, or have this understanding but hold at the same time selfish designs and passions, or are deficient in understanding and weak in administrating. These three types are also true of ministers. Now, in the first case, the obligation to consult and the responsibility of ministers, will not hinder the person possessed of perfect understanding from doing that which is in the general interest, but would rather aid him, as all would be cooperating to attain the public good. The monarch would also be enabled to maintain the rule in his family, even when his descendants are of the two other types. In the second case, consultation and responsibility are necessary for opposition, and in the third for aiding the monarch. By such aid, a monarchy is put aright, even if the monarch is a slave of passions or a weak-willed person. This he supports by referring to a translator of a John Stuart Mill book who stated that the English nation had reached the zenith of glory in the reign of George III who was mad, because ahl a-hall wal-^cakd shared his power and ministers were responsible to them (sic). (74)

(74) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp.15-16.

Khairuddin asserts that the sharing of ahl al-hall wal-akd in the conduct of general policies, in no way narrows the authority of the imam, the ruler. To support this view he quotes Mawardi on the wazir al-tafwid, the minister with unrestricted powers. Mawardi had quoted the Koranic verses that told of Moses designating Aaron as his wazir, helper or minister: "And give to me an aider from my family: Aaron, my brother. Add to my strength by him, and make him share in my task." Mawardi had concluded that if this was permissible in prophecy, it would be more so in the imamate. On this Khairuddin remarks that if the imam could thus share (his understanding) with wazir al tafwid, without thereby diminishing his authority, it will be even more appropriate to share it with ahl al-hall wal-akd, "because a plurality of opinions is closer to the seat of verity". (75)

It is clear, from all the foregoing, that Khairuddin's main preoccupation has been with finding in traditional Islamic political theory and practice, precedents for Western political institutions and practices, that he admires and would like his coreligionists to adopt. He himself admits, unwittingly but clearly, the final failure of his attempt, when at the very end of his book he apologizes to his readers for using foreign terms to which he can find no equivalent in

(75) For the paragraph above, see ibid., p. 19.

Arabic. (76) Among these are the terms: "constitution", (77) "dictator", (78) "jury", (79) and "camera (in a parliament)". (80)

Patriotism and Limits of Liberty

Behind Khaireddin's gallant, but foredoomed, attempt to justify the adoption of nineteenth century European political institutions and practices, in terms of traditional Islamic political theory and practice, lies his admitted desire to rid the Islamic community of its humiliating weakness and backwardness. This desire is expressed in a strong feeling of patriotism. His book, as those of Tahtawi's, abounds with the expressions of watan, country, maslahat al-watan, the country's interest, and mahabat al-watan, love of country. (81) In this Khaireddin is, of course, a very true son of his time.

The contemporaneousness of Khaireddin's ideas are also evident in his great enthusiasm for the Ottoman Tanzimat. Like other intellectuals, who have been exposed to Western culture, Khaireddin firmly believes that the regeneration of Islamic community will come through the Tanzimat. About one fifth of his book devoted, almost exclusively, to a defence of these Tanzimat, against Moslem and foreign criticisms. (82)

(76) ibid., p. 116.

(77) ibid., pp. 107, 109.

(78) ibid., p. 112.

(79) Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, p. 159.

(80) ibid., p. 137.

(81) Muqadimat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, pp. 18, 46, 55, 64.

(82) ibid., pp. 42-64.

Sultan Mahmoud, Sultan Abd al-Majid, and Sultan Abd al-Aziz, are highly praised for the introduction and application of these Tanzimat. Throughout the book the word Tanzimat is synonymous with political system or organization. And the security of life, honor, and property that he advocates are clearly those that Khatti Sherif of Gülkhana had proclaimed in 1839.

It is while discussing the practical problem of Tanzimat, that Khaireddin sets some limits to what otherwise would have been his demand for almost limitless political liberty in a parliamentary form. A group of Moslem and non-Moslem subjects of the Ottoman Empire, he informs us, have not been content with the Tanzimat, and have been lately demanding from the state absolute liberty, in accordance with laws that are enacted and protected by an elected parliament. After granting this group that full liberty and an elected parliament are among the greatest means of making states strong, prosperous, and civilized, Khaireddin goes on to ask the Moslems in this group if they are certain that the object of the non-Moslems among them is really the reform of the Ottoman state and its subjects. He believes that this is not the case. He thinks that the majority of the non-Moslems in this group, stirred up by the foreigners, aim at secession from the Empire. European states, he declares, withhold liberty from their subjects, when they find that the opposition aims at changing the form of government: from a monarchy to a republic, or from

one royal family to another. If the withholding of liberty is permissible in European states, where transfers of power would be taking place within the same race, it would be only more so in the Ottoman state. The subjects of this state are divided by race, religion, customs, and language. The majority of these groups do not speak Turkish, the official language of the state, and are even ignorant of each other's languages. They could hardly communicate with each other in a parliament composed of them. And to grant liberty to some of these groups, while withholding it from others, would only cause dissatisfaction and disturbances. But Khairuddin hopes that the state will attempt to overcome all these difficulties that stand in the way of full liberty. (83)

(83) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp. 44-46, 97.

Life (1)

Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi was born in 1854 in Aleppo, to a well-known Arab family. He was educated in Aleppo in the traditional manner prevalent in his day. He never learned any European languages, but mastered, beside his native tongue, the Turkish language. He seems to have been very well read in both languages and to have followed carefully the banned anti-Hamidian liberal press of his day, published in Egypt and Europe.

He first took up, in 1875, a career in journalism, translating from Turkish and writing for the official paper in Aleppo. Soon he started two newspapers of his own, but both were quickly suppressed by the Turkish wali, governor, of Aleppo. He then tried to nominate himself for the first Ottoman Parliament of 1877. After this attempt, he entered public service in Aleppo, rising eventually to become the head of its municipality in 1892. His government career, seems to have been a checkered and a stormy one. He seems to have opposed bitterly corrupt Turkish governors and

(1) This brief biographical sketch is based on articles written by his son, Asad al-Kawakebi, "Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi", al-Hadith, (1952), pp. 542-584; and his friend, Rashid Rida, "Musab Azim bi-Wafat Alim Hakim", al-Manar, (1902), pp. 237-240, 276-280. See also Mohammed Ragheb al-Tabakh, "Alam al-Nubala bi-Tarikh Halab al-Shaba", (Aleppo, 1926), Vol.VII, pp. 507-524.

dishonest native officials. In 1886 he was accused of taking part in a conspiracy to assassinate the wali, thrown into prison, and then released after being tried in Aleppo and Beirut. He resigned from his government post and went into some sort of law practice. His championing of the cause of the poor of Aleppo and his constant struggle against injustice, cost him his personal fortune, but earned him the affection of the poor and the nickname of Abul Duafa, the Father of the Weak. In 1899, like so many other Arab and Turkish liberals of the day, Kawakebi emigrated to Egypt. There he became an outstanding figure in intellectual circles, and took part in the lively intellectual discussions that took place daily in the Yildiz and Splendid Bar cafés. In 1901 he seems to have been sent by Khedive Abbas on what appears to be a somewhat mysterious trip to Yemen and Arabia. In 1902, shortly after his return, he died suddenly in Cairo.

Works

Kawakebi published only two books: Tabai al-Istibdad, "The Nature of Despotism", and Umm al-Qura, "The Mother of Cities: Mecca". Both were published anonymously in Cairo, in 1900. Umm al-Qura, however, seems to have been written in Aleppo. (2)

(2) Shaikh Kamel al-Ghazzi, "Tarikh ma Ahmalah al-Tarikh min Sirat 'Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi," al-Hadith, (1929), p. 448.

At his death, Sultan Abdul Hamid's agents seem to have appropriated Kawakebi's private papers. Among them were the manuscripts of two unpublished works. One was called Sahaif Quraysh, "The Pages of Quraysh", a work that he had earlier promised the readers of Umm al-Qura to publish. The other was called al-'Azama lil-Allah, "Greatness is God's. Mohammed Kurd Ali, who had been one of Kawakebi's friends, informs us in his memoirs that this work was a political book and that Kawakebi had read him its Introduction.⁽³⁾ After the fall of Abdul Hamid, one of Kawakebi's sons searched in Istanbul for his father's papers and manuscripts, but unfortunately, found no trace of them.⁽⁴⁾ This might be a very grave loss for modern Arab political thought, for we shall probably never know, how much, and in what direction, was Kawakebi developing his political ideas.

However, an annotated copy of Tabai al-Istibdad with some additions to it on separate papers, were saved. This new material, which expands the original book by about one third, was included in the 1957 edition of Tabai al-Istibdad. It shows an intensification of the earlier edition's anti-Sufism and some additional elaboration of its socialist ideas. This supplementary material was, of course, unknown to the readers of Kawakebi's day, but as it is of interest, I have

(3) Mohammed Kurd Ali, al-Muthakarāt, (Damascus, 1948), Vol. II, p. 611.

(4) Asad al-Kawakebi, "Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi," al-Hadith, (1952), p. 549.

included it in the present study, taking care to distinguish it from the contents of the earlier edition, whenever I quoted, or referred to, it.

Kawakebi's two books can be regarded as one single work. Both of them contain the same ideas and arguments, and even the very same sentences and expressions. There are, however, some notable differences in the subject matter of the two books. Tabai al-Istibdad is primarily a bitter attack on despotism and autocratic rule, while Umm al-Qura is essentially an inquiry into the causes of Moslem decadence and the means of regeneration. We can also say that Tabai al-Istibdad is anti-Hamidian, while Umm al-Qura is anti-Turk.

Before looking into Kawakebi's ideas, we must note here the great originality of the form in which they were presented in Umm Al-Qura. Amm al-Qura purports to be the verbatim record of the proceedings of a congress of Moslem leaders in 1989. Twenty two fictitious characters, belonging to different nationalities (there is a Kurd, a Persian, a Tunisian, an Englishman who has been converted to Islam ... etc.) gather in Mecca to discuss the conditions of the Moslems of their day and the causes of their decline. They agree, as a result of discussions extending over 12 formal meetings, to found a society for the revitalization of Islam. The statutes of the new society is agreed upon, and the congress breaks up, having decided to hold its second general meeting three years later.

Kawakebi's symposium has great charm. His method, however, is not the Socratic dialectic. Kawakebi is more of a Dr. Johnson, expressing his views through the mouths of twenty two fictitious characters. But this in no way makes his book a dull one, for Kawakebi writes with great wit and cleverness. An Eric Amblerish atmosphere of political cloak and dagger hangs over the proceedings of the congress. Meetings are held in secret, in an inconspicuous quarter of Mecca, in a house rented, for extra security, in the name of a Russian Daghistani gateman. Secret codes are used. Thus a member of the congress states that Islamic youth must try to win over its elders to its views. This, however, must not be done by violence. A trick might be more effective than the might of a whole tribe in accomplishing this. Then 5 lines of code numbers follow to explain the proposed trick. A proclamation of the congress concerning the future is also given in code. And finally, to avoid the celebrated Hamidian censorship of the mail, the members of the society are given a complicated code table, with full instructions for its use. This table with the instructions come on a large separate sheet, folded, and attached to the end of the book. The twelve meetings are held with great dignity and courtesy, but they are far from boring. The speeches of the members are punctuated, from time to time, by shouts of marha, which Kawakebi makes into the equivalent of the French bravo, and the "Hear ! Hear!" of the British

Parliament. Two of the meetings adjourn for noon prayers, and at the end of a third one members are served non-alcoholic refreshments. There is no doubt that Umm al-Qura is one of the most delightful political treatises to be written in any language.

Religious Ideas

Let us start by looking briefly into Kawakebi's religious ideas. Religion is of cardinal importance in his thought. He finds that the backwardness of the Moslem world is due mainly to religious, political, and moral causes.⁽⁵⁾ But religious defects are probably the main cause.⁽⁶⁾ His imaginary congress decides that the germ of Moslem disease is ignorance, and that the most harmful of ignorance is religious ignorance.⁽⁷⁾ The reform of religion is the easiest, most effective, and shortest way to political reform.⁽⁸⁾ He criticizes Moslems who do not perform their religious duties.⁽⁹⁾

Some sociologists in the West, he states, believe that religion has a crippling effect on individual and social

(5) Umm al-Qura, (Aleppo, 1959), pp. 158 - 161.

(6) Ibid., p. 225.

(7) Ibid., p. 192.

(8) Tabai al-Istibdad, (Cairo, Mohammed Attia al-Kutubi, n.d.), p. 15. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Tabai al-Istibdad are to this edition, and not to the 1957 expanded edition.

(9) Umm al-Qura, pp. 182 - 185.

progress, like that of opium on the senses or a cloud covering the sunlight. Kawakebi finds that this is true only of religions that are not based on reason, and Islam is not among them. Islam is based on pure reason. However, this purely rational Islam is not the Islam of the majority of Moslems of Kawakebi's day, but that of the Koran. (10)

Kawakebi embraces explicitly and unmistakably the Salafiya movement. His fictitious congress in Mecca, attended by Moslems belonging to all Islamic sects, adopts the Salafiya movement, and the statute it decides upon declares that the society which will be formed will model its religious conduct on a moderate Salafiya path. (11)

The Salafiya movement was an offshoot the Afghani-Abdu school. It advocated, like Afghani and Abdu, going back to the Koran, the Sunna, and the practice of al-Salaf al-Salih, the Pious Ancestors, of the early Moslem community, to regain original and uncorrupted Islam. It attacked medieval schools, and established the Koran and the Sunna as almost the sole authorities for truth in religion. It attacked bitterly Sufism, Islamic mysticism, and all the cults of prophets, saints, and tombs. All these it considered bid'a, innovations, that are foreign to Islam. It

(10) For the paragraph above, see Tabai al-Istibdad, (Aleppo, 1957), pp. 135 - 136.

(11) Umm al-Qura, p. 199.

attacked resignation and demanded that Moslems lead an active and vigorously constructive lives. It advocated rationalism and the reopening of the Gate of Ijtihad, individual interpretation, closed in the third century.⁽¹²⁾ All these views are expressed by Kawakebi.⁽¹³⁾ Similarly, the defects, as well as the merits, of the Afghani - Abdu - Rida thought, which has come to be known as the Modernist School that tried to effect an Islamic Reformation, are also apparent in Kawakebi's writings. He shares, for instance, with this school, its understandable anti-Catholic attitude, and its admiration for, and identification with, Protestantism.⁽¹⁴⁾ But like this school, this is done with ignorance or disregard of some of the basic tenets of Christianity and Protestantism. There are, for Kawakebi, Christian bida, innovations, as well as Moslem. Among these innovations that are not part of original Christianity are the doctrines of Trinity, and the Sonship.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Western world, for Kawakebi, is a totally materialist world threatened with destruction because of the loss of religion. Only the East can safeguard religion for it. "What" he asks the West "have you prepared

(12) There are, of course, differences in degrees of emphasis and detail between Afghani, Abdu, and Rashid Rida, the founder of the Salafiya School, but for our purpose the paragraph above suffices as a summary of their collective ideas.

(13) See for instance Umm al-Qura, pp. 13-15, 19, 26-28, 39-40, 43-44, 77, 86-87, 89-94, 107-110.

(14) Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 16-17, 21-22; Umm al-Qura, pp. 106-107.

(15) Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 16-17, 22.

for anarchists if they become a legion ? Explosives, of which there are now more than a thousand kind ? Or have you arranged for them poison gas that children can now prepare (sic)".⁽¹⁶⁾ He also reads into the Koran prefigurings of modern inventions and discoveries. Thus the verse that reads: "And certainly We create man of an extract of clay" stands for Darwin's theory of evolution; and when the Koran states, after speaking of ships: "And We have created for them the like thereof, whereon they ride" this refers according to Kawakebi to vehicles run by steam or electricity;⁽¹⁷⁾ and the verse: "Then he directed Himself to the heaven and it was vapour" stands for aether that is the origin of all beings, and photography which he calls "the capture of shadow" is seen in: "Seest thou not how thy Lord extends the shade ? And if He pleased, He would have made it stationary. Then We have made the sun an indication of it"⁽¹⁸⁾ However, Kawakebi later takes a more rational attitude in the interpretation of the Koran. He comments on the Koranic

(16) Ibid., p. 111.

(17) The Pakistani modernist Maulana Muhammad Ali adds aeroplanes to Kawakebi's steamships: "the like thereof: these are the ships that bear man in the air, the airships and the aeroplanes of to-day. They are spoken of as being created by God, because it is through the knowledge and means that God has given man that he is able to acquire the mastery of the air and make these ships", n.2085 a, p. 847, The Holy Qur'an, (Lahore, 1951).

(18) Umm al-Qura pp. 24-26; Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 54 - 55.

sura: "We have not neglected anything in the Book" by stating that the Koran has not neglected anything concerning religion, but has not encompassed all that exists in God's knowledge, as many people seem to think. (19)

Kawakebi's Salafi leanings do not lead him into any rigidity and fundamentalism. He advocates, like the modernist school at its best, a reconciliation between sharia and the conditions of modern life. The differences of opinion among the founders of Islamic rites, he states, will not be an act of divine mercy, (20) if it becomes a cause of religious dissention and hatred. These differences must be used well so as to relate sharia to changing conditions. For this purpose he recommends that the adoption of the controversial method of talfig be considered. (21) Talfig is an eclectic legal method by which precedents are derived from two or more schools of law. As the Islamic schools of law are rites, or madhahib (ways), and not sects in the Christian sense of the word, a Moslem can pass from one Madhab to another without committing a sin. Some jurists allow a Moslem to follow the rules of one madhab in a case or a particular point, and the rules of another madhab in

(19) Ibid., p. 141.

(20) This is a reference to the Prophetic saying: "The differences of opinion among the learned of my community is an act of divine mercy".

(21) Umm al-Qura, pp. 149-156.

another case or particular point, if his conscience permit him. But talfig is the individual's right. A mufti or a qadi, a religious judge, cannot employ it. He has to follow the rules of the school of law he belongs to.

The corruption of Islam is caused by "making it difficult", and by polotheism. The ignorant official theologians, "the turbaned men who are more harmful to religion than the devils", have rendered Islam rigid and difficult, while the Koran itself declares that God "has not laid upon you any hardship in religion". (22)

Moslems have come to practice al-shirk al-khafi, secret idolatry, the worship of others besides God. Kawakebi attacks very strongly Sufism, the cult of prophets, the belief that soothsayers and astrologers have supernatural knowledge, the regarding of saints as intermediaries between man and God, and the reverencing of tombs and holy places. (23) All these beliefs and practices constitute shirk, the association of partners (shuraka) with God, and this Kawakebi condemns as bitterly as the Wahhabis. It is significant that he makes the president of the Islamic congress assign the task of explaining what is real Islamism to the Wahhabi alim from Nejd. Kawakebi advocates very strongly the professing of the oneness of God, tawhid. His imaginary society is

(22) For the paragraph above, see ibid., pp. 71-72, 96.

(23) Ibid., pp. 79-93.

called the Society for the Education of the Muwahhidin.⁽²⁴⁾
Its slogan is "We Worship None but God".⁽²⁵⁾ This strict
theological monotheism will have, as we shall now see,
political significance in Kawakebi's thought.

Political Despotism

Despots, according to Kawakebi, fear nothing more than a knowledge of the meaning of: "There is no god but God" - a principle on which Islam and all other religions are based. When the tyrant's subjects come to understand that only God must be worshipped, and that He alone deserves absolute obedience, they will act accordingly and will cease to be subservient. Political despotism entails shirk, the sharing of the despot in God's powers and attributes, and its remedy is real tawhid, the belief in God's oneness. Whenever the light of tawhid prevails in a nation, its chains of slavery are broken. Despots take on for the common people, the powers, attributes, and the very names of God, assisted by the clergy. Political despotism is inseparably tied to religious despotism. When one exists in a nation, the other is inevitably brought in.⁽²⁶⁾

However, polytheism has been a means of political reform. To make their kings agree to share their powers

(24) Ibid., p. 191.

(25) Ibid., p. 200.

(26) For this paragraph, see Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 6, 32-33, 14-15.

with others, the wise men of Greece, had resorted to the duplicity of reviving the doctrine of polytheism, which they borrowed from the Assyrians and ancient Egyptians. By this doctrine powers in heaven were divided among different gods - there was a god of justice, a god of war, a god of the seas, and a god of the rain... etc. When this doctrine had captured the minds of people, they demanded that their despots give up autocracy and administer the earth as the gods administered heaven, and the despots gave in. And this, according to Kawakebi, is the device by which the Greeks established the republics of Athens and Sparta. It was also employed by the Romans. And this is also the origin of the separation of powers in all governments, whether monarchical or republican. But Kawakebi does not advocate the adoption of polytheism as a means of combating despotism, for polytheism is in itself a falsehood, and opens the door to charlatans of all kinds who will claim for themselves some of the attributes and powers of the Deity, and eventually become the supporters of despots. (27)

Kawakebi defines political despotism as an "attribute of the absolute government that conducts the affairs of its subjects wilfully and arbitrarily, with no fear of accountability or punishment." (28) A despotic government is the opposite of a just, responsible, limited, and constitutional

(27) For this paragraph, see Ibid., pp. 15-16.

(28) Ibid., pp. 7-8.

government. (29) However, an elected and a constitutional government can also be a despotic one: "The forms of despotic governments are varied, but this is not the place to discuss them in detail. It suffices to state here that the quality of despotism applies not only to the government of the single despot who had seized power by force and usurpation, but includes also the government of a limited and legitimate ruler by hereditary succession or by election, in cases where such ruler is not held accountable. The term despotism applies also to the government of the group even though that group was elected to office, because the mere fact of deliberation preceding a decision does not make a decision any the less despotic. It may modify it somewhat, but it may also be more tyrannical and more injurious than the tyranny of a lone despot". (30) A constitutional government can also be a despotic government when the executive power is not accountable to the legislature, and when the legislature is not in turn accountable to the people. (31) All governments may be despotic unless they are subject to strict and uncompromising supervision, as was the case in early Islam with the Caliph Othman, and as is the case in the present French Republic (the third) with the affairs of

(29) Ibid., p. 7.

(30) Ibid., p. 8. Translation by Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh, The Ideas of Arab Nationalism, (New York, 1956), p. 130.

(31) Tabai al-Istibdad, p. 8.

the medals (1887), Panama, and Dreyfus. (32)

Despotism demoralizes the whole of society. A despotic government's members are all tyrannical - from the great despot himself down to the policeman and the streetsweeper. (33) A general corruption of morals spreads from the despot, his attendants, and the higher classes, down to the lower classes of society. (34) The people come to practice lying, deceiving, hypocrisy, and self-abasement. (35) Progress in society comes to a stop, and the nation goes on declining until it perishes. (36) The despot is as unhappy as his subjects, for he lives in constant fear of them, tormented by his forebodings and his imagination. The lives of many despots end in madness. (37) Although Kawakebi tells us in the preface to his book that he refers to no particular despot or government, it is clear that he has modelled his psychopathic despot on Abdul Hamid. This fact was not to escape the attention of his contemporaries. (38)

There is a perpetual war between despotism and learning. The despot is the enemy of knowledge. However, the knowledge he fears is not that of religion in its otherworldly aspects nor that of philology. He dreads the

(32) Ibid., pp. 8-9.

(33) Ibid., p. 44.

(34) Ibid., p. 77.

(35) Ibid., p. 89.

(36) Ibid., p. 113.

(37) Ibid., p. 30.

(38) Philip de Tarazi, Tarikh al-Sahafa al-Arabiyya, (Beirut, 1913), Vol. II, p. 202.

sciences of life: theoretical speculation, rationalist philosophy, international law, politics, the foundations of civilizations, rhetoric, and history. These sciences broaden the human mind, and teach man what he is, what his rights are, whether he is oppressed, how to demand his rights, how to attain and safeguard them. The despot feeds on the common people, awam, who "commit suicide because they are afraid. This fear is the result of their ignorance." (39)

Despotism is dehumanizing. Animals are distinguished from plants by their wills. The prisoner of despotism is devoid of will power, and is therefore robbed out not only of the characteristic of man, but of the beast as well. (40) Man and society, on the other hand, reach an almost ideal state of perfection under just governments. Under such governments man is secure in his life and the enjoyment of his physical and mental capabilities, in his personal, religious, and intellectual freedoms; in his possessions; equal to all others and assured of justice. Under such governments man enjoys a life similar in some respects to the life of paradise promised him by religion. (41) This free man is a complete master of himself and is completely owned by his nation. When a nation reaches such a degree

(39) For this paragraph, see Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 27-29.

(40) Ibid., p. 70.

(41) Ibid., pp. 114-115.

of progress that every individual will be ready to sacrifice his life and possessions for it, then that nation will be able to dispense with the individual's life and possessions.⁽⁴²⁾ Few states have reached this almost ideal stage of progress. Among these are the Second Roman Republic and the Rashidin (orthodox) Caliphate.⁽⁴³⁾

Like Khaireddin before him, Kawakebi finds that order and justice in society are based on the Islamic principle of "commanding the good and forbidding the evil", and that this principle is put into practice in civilized nations by means of parliaments.⁽⁴⁴⁾ But unlike Khaireddin, he finds that the execution of this principle a duty that is obligatory to all Moslems, a fard al-ain, and not a fard al-kifaya, an obligation that only a sufficient number of Moslems are required to fulfill. According to him it is only men of religion who support despotism that have made it a fard al-kifaya.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The Removal of Despotism

At the end of Tabai al-Istibdad, Kawakebi sets out to discuss the ways and means of iradicating despotism. He adopts on this subject a gradualist and somewhat conservative attitude, although earlier, especially in the rhetorical passages of his book, he had been quite revolutionary.

(42) Ibid., p. 116.

(43) Ibid., pp. 113-114.

(44) Ibid., pp. 20, 72.

(45) Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957), p. 37.

Kawakebi maintains that the removal of despotism must be governed by these three principles: "1. The nation all the members or the majority of whom do not feel the pains of despotism does not deserve liberty.

2. Despotism must not be fought with violence, but gradually and with gentleness.

3. Before fighting despotism, its replacement must be ready"⁽⁴⁶⁾

Then he goes on to elaborate these three principles: "A people that had been abused for so long that it has become like animals or worse, will absolutely not demand liberty. It might avenge itself on the despot, but this will only be with the purpose of taking revenge on his person, and not in order to get rid of despotism. This will not benefit such a people, for it will be exchanging one disease for another, like substituting headache for stomachache." Such a people might also fight one despot with another. And this again will not benefit it; for should it succeed, the new leader will become its new despot. And finally such a people might attain liberty by chance, but again it will not benefit from it, for this liberty will soon turn into some sort of perturbed despotism.⁽⁴⁷⁾ And consequently the wise have decided that a people which has not been prepared for liberty will not benefit from it when they attain it. Liberty which is attained as a result of a senseless revolution is rarely useful,

(46) Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 127-128.

(47) Ibid., p. 128.

for revolution most often cuts down the tree of despotism, without pulling up its roots, and the tree of despotism soon grows again, stronger than ever. (48)

Despotism also must not be fought with violence, but with wisdom and gradualism. It can only be eliminated by education. Despotism is surrounded and supported by forces of all kinds: terror, the army, especially when it is a foreign army; the power of wealth and the wealthy; foreign support; men of religion, and the inertia of the common people. "These forces make of despotism a sword that cannot be opposed by the mere stick of public opinion". And fickleness is also in the nature of public opinion, which might rise this year to fall the next, or boil up today to subside tomorrow. It is therefore necessary to evolve a steady and a firm counter-force to despotism. Despotism, finally, must not be resisted by force, for a senseless rebellion will only cause destruction and bloodshed. However, a people sometimes rebel spontaneously. This happens when despotism becomes unbearable to them when the despot commits a cruel act in public, loses a war, insults religion and mocks the people, or an acute economic crisis occurs. (49)

It is also necessary to find a substitute for the despotic government before attempting to overthrow it. In taking any step, its purposes must be known beforehand in a

(48) Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957), p. 176.

(49) For this paragraph, see Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 129-130.

general way. A general knowledge of aims, however, will not suffice in combating despotism. The aims of rebellion must be clear, and they must be agreed upon by everybody, or by a majority, that is two thirds of the people or of the force possessed by the adversary. Otherwise only confusion and destructive civil war will take place, and victory will go to the despot. The objects of resistance, therefore, must be made public, and the people must be won over to them. The revolt of Imam Ali and his supporters had failed because they could not win over the people to their aims. This was perhaps due to the difficulties of communications in those days, and the non-existence of the press and of postal services. When the people are eventually won over, and a real yearning for liberty and an awareness of the pains of despotism has appeared among them, the despot is left no choice - he either gives up his despotism, or is removed. (50)

Kawakebi's ideas on revolution are both classical and contemporaneous with his day. When he lays stress on evolution and education, rather than revolution, he reflects some of the ideas current in Egypt after the failure of Arabi's revolt. In this he is closer to Mohammed Abdu than to Jamal el-Din al-Afghani. But unlike the Abdu of the post-Arabi period, he does not rule out completely the advisability of revolution and of revolutionary action. Here, he

(50) For the paragraph above, see Ibid., pp. 130-132.

is in direct line with non-Sunni approaches to revolution in classical Arab political thought. The Sunni approach, illustrated best in Ghazzali's writings, does not counsel rebellion against authority, no matter how tyrannical, so as to avoid bloodshed, destruction, and misery in society. The non-Sunni approach, to be found in the thought of the Mutazila, the Kharidjites, and the Zaidis, permits the rising of the people against their unjust rulers. But there are differences among these groups as to the probabilities of success and the conditions under which a rebellion must be undertaken. According to some, rebellion against an unjust ruler is the duty of any number of men who can come together. According to others, rebellion becomes obligatory only when the rebels are half the number of their opponents. The Mutazila would undertake rebellion when they felt themselves sufficiently strong to beat the unjust ruler and his supporters. The Zaidis, on the other hand, would have a number of men equal to the Moslems who fought in the Battle of Badr before rising against their ruler. Rebellion for all these groups, however, is preceded by the election of the new imam, ruler.⁽⁵¹⁾ When Kawakebi stipulates for undertaking a rebellion that a substitute for the despotic government be found first, and that those who would fight despotism be equal to two thirds of the number or the strength of their

(51) For these views, see al-Ashari, Makalat al-Islamiyyin, (Istanbul, 1930), Vol. II, p. 466.

opponents, his ideas are clearly and unmistakably based on these classical, but unorthodox, views concerning revolution in Arab political thought.

Anti-Militarism

Kawakebi holds very strong anti-militarist views. "It is an established fact" he writes, "that no just government, finding itself free from accountability and responsibility because of the nation's ignorance or negligence would fail rapidly to become despotic. Then it would not forego despotism, so long as it has at its service these two terrible forces: the ignorance of the people, and the organized soldiery". (52) And then Kawakebi maintains that Queen Victoria herself would not abandon the chance of becoming a despot, even if it were only for ten days of the remainder of her life, if she could only get control of her army. (53) Civilized nations have freed themselves from ignorance, but they have been afflicted by compulsory military service, which has made them more unhappy than ignorant nations. The inventor of compulsory military service can be said to be the devil himself, who has thus avenged himself on the sons of Adam. Militarism corrupts the character of a nation, kills all initiative in it, and costs it unnecessary expenditure. (54)

(52) Tabai al-Istibdad, p.9.

(53) Ibid.

(54) Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957), pp. 19-20.

One of the general causes of Moslem lethargy lies in their preference for earning their living in military and bureaucratic careers. (55)

There are no precedents in classical Arab political thought for Kawakebi's anti-militarist views, and it is difficult to determine their sources. There is, however, some internal evidence in his writings, which suggests that Kawakebi might have been influenced by the anti-militarist views of Edmond Demolins' A quoi tient la Supériorité des Anglo-Saxons ?, an Arabic translation of which had just been published. This translation by Fathi Zaghlool was to impress the Arab intellegentsia of his day very highly. There is also internal evidence which suggests that Kawakebi might have been influenced by the anti-militarist views of the European socialist and liberal press during l'affaire Dreyfus. And there is finally the possibility that Kawakebi has been influenced by the anti-militarist ideas of the Italian writer Vittorio Alfieri.

We must pause here and take up briefly the question of Kawakebi's indebtedness to Alfieri. It has been asserted for some time that Kawakebi has borrowed some of the ideas of Tabai al-Istibdad from Vittorio Alfieri's book Della Tirannide. This assertion has been recently carried to the point of referring to "al-Kawakebi's plagiarism from Alfieri!" (56)

(55) Umm al Qura, p. 161.

(56) Peter Partner, A Short Political Guide to the Arab World, (London, 1960), p. 107.

Its origin seems to lie in a passing remark of Ahmed Amin's to the effect that Kawakebi had derived many of Tabai al-Istibdad's ideas from Alfieri.⁽⁵⁷⁾ This remark was to be taken by Sylvia G. Haim and elaborated into the hypothesis that large parts of Tabai al-Istibdad are a faithful reproduction of Alfieri's Della Tirannide.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Her hypothesis gains weight from the fact that Della Tirannide seems to have been translated from French into Turkish by Abdulah Jevdat, and published in Geneva, in 1898, under the title of Istibdad.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Kawakebi knew no European languages, but spoke, read, and wrote Turkish, so it is possible that he may have read Abdulah Jevdat's translation. However, Sylvia G. Haim's interesting and on the surface quite convincing hypothesis cannot be established yet as a fact. A final judgment on this question can be passed only after Tabai al-Istibdad has been compared with Abdulah Jevdat's translation of Della Tirannide, and not with the original Italian work, as Sylvia G. Haim has done, for nineteenth century translations into Turkish were quite free, and it is therefore necessary to ascertain to what extent and in what form Alfieri's ideas were transferred from the French translation to the

(57) Ahmed Amin, Zuama al-Islah fi al-'Asr al-Hadith, (Cairo, 1949), p. 254.

(58) Sylvia G. Haim, "Alfieri and al-Kawakebi", Oriente Moderne, (1954), pp. 321-334.

(59) Ettore Rossi, "Una tradizione turca dell' opera 'Della Tirannide' di V. Alfieri probabilmente conosciuta da al-Kawakebi," Oriente Moderno, (1954), pp. 335-337.

Turkish of Abdullah Jevdat. It is also necessary to examine the articles that Kawakebi wrote for Ali Yusif's paper al-Muayyad. Tabai al-Istibdad, as we know from its foreward, is an expanded collection of these articles. Were Alfieri's ideas borrowed to pad the original articles and extend them to book length ? If so, what were Kawakebi's original ideas, and how similar were they to Alfieri's ?

Sylvia G. Haim, also, asserts that Kawakebi derived the ideas of Tabai al-Istibdad from Charles Fourier and from Rousseau's Contrat Social; while Norbert Tapiero, on the other hand, claims that Kawakebi derived the ideas of Tabai al-Istibdad, from Montesquieu's l'Esprit des Lois.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Kawakebi thus appears to have been influenced by different sources according to different people. The soundest explanation of this paradox might be also the simplest. Kawakebi, like other members of the intellegentsia of his day, must obviously have adopted the political ideas of 18th century European thinkers that were so fashionable in the Moslem world of the 19th century. He himself tells us in the foreward of Tabai al-Istibdad that it is based on what he had studied and observed, and on what he had borrowed. Kawakebi's contemporaries were to think that his religious and political ideas were very similar to those held by the Afghani - Abdu school and its disciples. They, in fact, thought them to be so similar as

(60) Norbert Tapiero, Les Idées Reformistes D'Al-Kawakebi, (Paris, 1956), p. 13.

to be identical. When Kawakebi's works first appeared anonymously, in newspapers then in book form, many thought that their author was Mohammed Abdu,⁽⁶²⁾ while some thought that he was Rashid Rida.⁽⁶³⁾ And long after Kawakebi's identity had become known, Louis Cheikho was to write that Umm al-Qura had been previewed by Mohammed Abdu.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Kawakebi was, however, to hit upon two new concepts that were, as far as we know, unexplored by any of his contemporaries: the concept of socialism, and that of Arab Nationalism. Let us now look into these two ideas in Kawakebi's thought.

Socialism

Only man and the female spider, writes Kawakebi, devour their own kind. Under despotism man practices a new and a more cruel form of cannibalism, in which he sucks his victim's lifeblood by exploiting him economically and by robbing him of the fruits of his labour. Half the human race, which numbers approximately 1500 million people, are a burden on the other half. The majority of this burdensome half consists of idle and unproductive womankind. However, "men have also divided up among themselves the hardships of life in an unjust manner. Men of politics, government, and

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- (62) Ibrahim Salim al-Nejar, "Min Thikriyat al-Madhi: Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi", al-Hadith, (1940), p. 6.
- (63) Rashid Rida, "Musab Azim bi-Wafat Alim Hakim", al-Manar, (1902), p. 279.
- (64) Louis Cheikho, Tarikh al-Adab al-'Arabiyya fi al-Rubu' al-Awal min al-Qirn al-'Ishrin, (Beirut, 1926), p. 18.

religion, and their dependants, whose total number does not exceed 1% of the human race, enjoy half or more of what human labour produces, and spend it all in luxury and extravagance. They decorate, for instance, the streets with millions of lamps for the sake of their passage there once in a while, without thinking of the millions of the poor living in darkness in their homes. Then there are the specialized craftsmen, the dealers in luxuries, the greedy and monopolistic merchants and their like. They too are about 1%, but each one of them lives on what tens of hundreds or thousands of workers and peasants have to subsist on. This unequal division between the sons of Adam and Eve is the outcome of political despotism." (65)

Under just governments, both the desire and the opportunity for the accumulation of wealth are lessened, unless the morals of people have been corrupted, for corruption of morals increases man's desire for extravagance. Despotism, on the other hand, facilitates the accumulation of wealth by immoral, illicit, and criminal methods, and the wealthy are the supporters of the despot and his allies. (66) Only the lower and weaker kinds of animals, like bees and ants, know hoarding. Man alone among the higher type of animals practices it by his accumulation of wealth. (67)

(65) Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 50-53.

(66) Ibid., pp. 59-60.

(67) Ibid., p. 55.

Man's accumulation of wealth must be subject to three conditions if it is not to be harmful. First, money must be acquired only by legal methods, that is as a reward for actual work. Second, the individual's accumulation of wealth must in no way entail injury to others, such as the monopolization of necessities, the exploitation of workers and the poor, or the possession of what is free and common, like land. Land was given by its Creator to all men; it is their mother, who feeds, nourishes, and embraces them. Early despots, however, have enacted laws by means of which they denied it to its children. The land of Ireland, for instance, is owned now by a thousand English economic despots, who enjoy two thirds or three quarters of the fruits of ten million Irishmen's labour. The conditions prevailing in Egypt, and in some other countries, are almost like those of Ireland, and will be even worse in the future. Many people in civilized Europe have nowhere to sleep. China, on the other hand, considered by civilized people a disorganized country, does not allow a person to own more than a certain amount of land not exceeding 20 square kilometers, less than 5 Egyptian feddans; and Russia, which is thought to be despotic and cruel by most Europeans, has passed lately for its Western and Polish provinces a law like that of China, which provides in addition that peasants will not be allowed to run up debts exceeding 500 francs nor be prosecuted for an unregistered debt. Unless Eastern governments remedy matters by enacting

a law similar to the Russian one, the conditions of agricultural land in 50 years or a century at most will be no different from those of Ireland. Third, the money that an individual makes must not exceed greatly his needs, for an excess of wealth is a destroyer of man's morals. The Koran refers to this when it says: "Man is indeed outrageous at seeing himself get rich " All religious laws, political, moral, and sociological wisdom ban interest, to maintain economic equality among men. Interest increases private fortunes, causing thereby a disturbance of this equality. It is also a kind of robbery, for it entails the making of profit without the expenditure of effort, and it therefore encourages idleness that demoralizes man.⁽⁶⁸⁾ All of Kawakebi's sympathies are with the poor and the meek, whom he designates, together with youth, as the soldiers of his fictitious society.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Kawakebi's hostility to economic injustice and to the rich, cannot be considered very original. Tahtawi had earlier attacked, as we have seen, economic injustice and the exploitation of individuals, particularly of peasants. Similarly, Shaikh Husain al-Marsafi, had attacked strongly Egyptian landowners, in his book Risalat al-Kalim al-Thaman, (Essay on Eight Words), published in 1881. What distinguishes Kawakebi from his predecessors and contemporaries alike, is his explicit adoption of the Western doctrine of socialism

(68) Ibid., pp. 56-58.

(69) Umm al-Qura, p. 210.

as a means of eradicating economic and social injustice and of realizing a higher way of life, and his attempt to reconcile this doctrine with Islam.

Kawakebi finds that society attains the perfect order under socialism. The socialist way of life is the most wonderful that the mind can imagine, and it is the life that the majority of the civilized Western world desires, but has found no way yet of acquiring, although it pursues it with organized societies and groups composed of millions of people. These are called al-Common, the Fabians, the Nihilists, and the Socialists. (70)

Kawakebi also finds that the Islamic system is a socialist one. "Socialism at the origin of Christianity and Islam" is one of the headings of his chapter on "Despotism and Wealth" in Tabai al-Istibdad. Socialism has, in fact, originated with Christianity and Islam, according to Kawakebi, but the Socialist life in Christianity has not left the realm of the potential to that of the actual. Not so with Islam, which has founded the most perfect socialist way of life. (71)

(70) Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957), p. 81; Tabai al-Istibdad, p. 55; Umm al-Qura, p. 60, Al-Common stood generally for the Communists in the usage of the day. See, for instance, "Ayuh al Ghani Tahathar," Al-Mugtataf, (1888), pp. 78-83, which clearly distinguishes al-Common as those who aim at dividing wealth among people not in accordance with their work but in accordance with their needs, from the Socialists who would transfer business and economic activity from the hands of the individuals to those of the state, organizing them in such a manner as to prevent the monopolization of wealth by the few and the doing of injustice to the poor.

(71) Tabai al-Istibdad, p.55; Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957), p. 81.

The Rashidun Caliphs, who established the most ideal state that human-beings ever knew, understood the real meaning of the Koran and carried out its teachings, and therefore they founded a socialist way of life and a government that equalized even their own persons with the poor of the nation.⁽⁷²⁾ Islam has established for mankind a law based on the principle that wealth is a value of labour and does not accumulate in the hands of the rich except by all manner of oppression and duplicity.⁽⁷³⁾

The principles of Islam and the particulars of its economic system are identical with those of Western socialism, according to Kawakebi. Al-Common, the Fabians, the Nihilists, and the Socialists, aim at establishing full or partial equality of standards of living among mankind; and they all struggle against economic despotism by demanding that the land, immovable property, and large industrial factories, be commonly owned by the people, that labour and its fruits be evenly divided amongst all; and that the government enact and apply laws that embrace the whole of economic activity, including its minute details. Islam has guaranteed the application of all these principles by: First, imposing the Zakat, (the alms tax), and the ushur, (the 10% title levied for public assistance), and organizing the distribution of their yield on public expenditure and on all categories of the needy,

(72) Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 17-18.

(73) Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957), p. 81.

including the debtors. By levying one fortieth of capital, Islam makes the rich contribute half of their wealth to the poor, for 1/40 of reasonable profit made, that is 5% a year, will halve the income of the rich; and thus the poor of the nation will catch up with its rich, and the accumulation of excessive fortunes that produce despotism and corruption of individual morals will be avoided. Second, Islam has prescribed work to the individual and has clearly prohibited the leading of parasitic lives. Third, Islam has made agricultural land the common property of all people, earnings from it to be enjoyed only by the individuals who work on it, subject only to the payment of the ushur or the kharaj, (tax on landed property), to the public treasury. Fourth, Islamism has laid down sharia rules that are total and embrace all matters, down to those pertaining to personal details, and has charged the government with their execution, as the majority of socialist groups demand now. (74)

The novelty and the nonconformity of Kawakebi's approach to socialism can be illustrated by contrasting it with the views of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. In his widely read Al-Radd ala al-Dahriyyin, (Reply to the Materialists), first published in 1886, Afghani had considered the Socialists, Nihilists, and Communists, hypocritical, materialist atheists,

(74) For the paragraph above, see Umm al Qura, p. 60; Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 55-56; Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957); pp. 81-83.

whose victory would only lead to the destruction of mankind. (75) For Kawakebi the Socialists, Nihilists, and Communists, are Western political groups struggling to attain the superior kind of life that had found its most perfect expression in Islam. Indeed, one of the causes of Islamic lethargy is the fact that the Islamic polity was originally "a parliamentary socialist one, meaning fully democratic, and had become, after the Rashidun Caliphs, because of internal strife, a monarchy bound by the basic rules of sharia, and eventually had become more like an absolute monarchy". (76) Islam had founded, as we have seen, the most perfect socialism, but the Arabs among all Moslems and all people are the best guided to the principles of socialist life. (77)

Arabism

Kawakebi is the first Arab thinker to evolve in his writings the modern concept of Arab nationalism. To understand the nature and the process of the evolution of this concept in his thought, we must start out by a brief examination of some of the ideological and historical determinants of Arab nationalism. We must begin here with religion. Islam is initially a profoundly national religion. There exists between it and the Arabs a very close, almost organic, relationship. Allah had declared: "An Arabic Koran have We sent down,

(75) Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Al Radd ala al-Dahriyyin, (Cairo, 1935), pp. 57-58.

(76) Umm al-Qura, p. 29.

(77) Ibid., p. 221.

that ye might understand it", and "Verily, from the Lord of the worlds hath this Book come down ... In the clear Arabic tongue", and "Had We made it a Koran in a foreign tongue, they had surely said 'Unless its signs be made clear'... What ! in a foreign tongue and the people Arabian". The Prophet was a pure Arab, and he had said: "Love the Arabs, because I am Arab, and the Koran is Arabic, and the language of the people of Paradise is Arabic"; and he had also declared: "If you hate the Arabs, you hate me", and "If Arabs are humiliated, Islam is humiliated". Religion had thus given the Arabs a strong sense of racial and linguistic distinctness and a powerful sense of historical importance - two of the most potent factors in the formation of modern nationalism. Dostoevsky said that every people must consider itself the "God bearing people" in order to have any faith in its future. There is no doubt that the Arabs believed themselves to be a people that bore God's Prophet, who conveyed to man God's final and most perfect Revelation, in his and their own language. Classical Arab political thought, both Sunni and Shii, drawing authority from such Prophetic traditions as: "The Imams are from Quraish" and "As long as there remains one man of the Quraish, so long shall that man be my successor", has reflected and enshrined Arab preminence in Islam by insisting that the Caliph, head of all the Moslem community, belong to Quraish, that most pure and noble Arab tribe of the Prophet.

According to many serious students of Islam, the

Prophet addressed the message of Islam to Arabia and to the Arabs alone. Sir William Muir writes: "His (the Prophet's) world was Arabia; and for it Islam was sent. From first to last the call was made primarily to Arabs and to them alone!"⁽⁷⁸⁾ Islam was, however, to acquire a universal character. This had earlier happened to Christianity too. "His (Jesus') preaching referred only to Israel ... This universalism (of Christianity) was not yet to be found in the teaching of Jesus; it became manifest in the epistles of Paul, and even then hesitantly ... So, finally, 'there is no distinction between Jew and Greek'.⁽⁷⁹⁾ In Islam, the universalistic attitude, justified by interpretations of such Koranic verses as: "The believers are but brothers" and "O Men, We have created you of a male and a female and have made you into peoples and tribes, that ye may know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most pious of you", were to be stressed more and more as the Arabs poured out of Arabia and started to convert non-Arabs to Islam - These non-Arab Moslems, called mawali, clients of the Arabs, and treated as inferiors, seeking to improve their lot, were later to invent Prophetic

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- (78) Sir William Muir, Annals of the Early Caliphate, (London, 1883), p. 61. See also C. Snouck Hurgronje, Mohammedanism, (New York, 1916), pp. 49-51. A. Kuenen, National Religions and Universal Religions, (London, 1882): "The Arabic nationality was not the cradle but the boundary-wall of Islam", p. 53. J. Wellhausen finds Islam replete with pre-Islamic Arab elements: "Islam was in existence before the Koran," The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall, (Calcutta, 1927), p. 9.
- (79) Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism; A Study in Its Origins and Background, (New York, 1944), pp. 48-49.

hadiths in support of Islamic universalism and equality. Thus the passage: "(All) men are equal in Islam. Men are but the outer margins of the ground that Adam and Eve cultivated. The Arab has no superiority over the foreigner, 'ajam, nor the foreigner over the Arab save in the fear of God ... Bring me not your genealogies, but your (good) deeds" was inserted into the Prophet's famous oration on his "farewell pilgrimage", in the history of Yaqubi, written in the ninth century. This passage is not contained in the versions of the speech given by the Prophet's biographers, Ibn Hisham and Waqidī, who preceded Yaqubi by more than half a century.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Eventually Islam was to assume as universal, and as supra-national a character as Christianity.

However, the struggle between the Arab and the non-Arab people for supremacy within Islam continued, naked and bitter.⁽⁸¹⁾ In the course of this struggle the mawali were to develop the Shu'ubiyah, (belonging to the peoples, the non-Arabs), movement, which claimed equality or superiority of the non-Arabs. In the heated and prolonged literary and intellectual controversy between the Arabs and the Shuubis, men like al-Jahiz, ibn-Durayd, ibn-Qutaybah, al-Tawhidi, al-Baladhuri and al-Asmai, wrote of the unique and distinctive characteristics of the Arabs and of the superiority of

(80) Reuben Levy, The Social Structure of Islam, (Cambridge, 1957), p. 61.

(81) For an account of this struggle in the Eastern Caliphate, see Mohammed Badi Sharif, Al-Sira Bayn al-Mawali wal Arab, (Cairo, 1954).

the Arab race and culture. They, in effect, produced in their works a highly developed concept of an Arab Volksgeist. Their pride in, and their exalting of, the Arab people extended to pre-Islamic Arabs.⁽⁸²⁾ Historically, the Shuubiyah movement was to triumph, for the Arabs first lost their political hegemony in Dar al Islam, to the Persians, in the eighth century, and then to the Turks, in the ninth century. But nominal Arab hegemony was always kept, in the form of an Arab Caliph, who reigned but often did not rule. With the Ottoman conquest of the Arab World in the 16th century, and the transfer of the Caliphate from the Arabs to the Ottoman Turks, the Arabs ceased to reign, as well as to rule. Because of their special position in Islam, they were treated at the beginning with a certain deference by the Turkish ruling class.⁽⁸³⁾ The Arabs, on the other hand, weak, exhausted, and poorer than the Turks, for the discovery of the route round the Cape of Good Hope had economically affected them much more than the Turks,⁽⁸⁴⁾ submitted to Ottoman Turkish rule. Islam

(82) See for instance Abu Hayan al-Tawhidi (d. 1023), Kitab al-Imta' wal-Muanasa, (Cairo, 1939), Vol. I, pp. 70-96. Ibn Qutaybah (d. 889) boasts of the fact that Islam incorporated into its ordinances many pre-Islamic Arab customs and practices, and also says that God told the Moslems: "You are the best nation raised up for men" when they were all Arabs and had not been joined yet by the non-Arabs, Kitab al-Arab, in Rasail al-Bulagha, (Cairo, 1913), edited by Mohammed Kurd Ali, p. 291.

(83) H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, Vol. I, Part I, p. 160.

(84) G.W.F. Stripling, The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs, p. 38.

was to become for them the foundation of polity and of individual and collective loyalty; and their allegiance was given to the Turkish Sultan as the Imam of the Moslems and the Protector of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, the Khadim al-Haramain al-Sharaifain, the Servant of the Two Holy Sanctuaries. Even for the Christian subjects, the Turkish Sultan seems to have acquired the attributes of their legitimate "basileus"⁽⁸⁵⁾ But the tension between the Arabs and the Turks does not seem to have died out completely.⁽⁸⁶⁾ For an illustration of the nature of relations between Arabs and Turks at the beginning of the nineteenth century, we must again go to Abdul Rahman al-Jabarti. Al-Jabarti recounts how, in 1798, the British fleet landed ten Englishmen in Alexandria, who were to warn the Egyptians of a French attack on Egypt and offer them British aid in repelling it. But the Egyptian notables who met them refused this aid, telling the Englishmen: "This country belongs to the Sultan, and neither the French nor any other foreigners have any business here. So be good enough to leave us".⁽⁸⁷⁾ And when after the rebellion of Cairo against the French in 1800, General Kléber admonished the Egyptian leaders for siding with the Ottomans, we find them telling him that they did so because

(85) "Turks" in Encyclopediadia of Islam, Vol. IV, p. 964.

(86) For this tension in the 18th century, see Albert Hourani, A Vision of History, (Beirut, 1961), pp. 35-70.

(87) Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, 'Ajaib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar, Vol. III, p. 2.

the Ottoman "is our old Sultan and the Sultan of the Moslems".⁽⁸⁸⁾ However, within this universal, supra-national, Islamic Sultanate, sharp social and national tensions existed between the Arabs and the Turks. Thus the official minutes of the trial of Sulaiman al-Halabi, who had assassinated the very same General Klébér, records that when Sulaiman al-Halabi is asked to what millet, religion, he belongs, his answer is: "millet Mohammed (Islam)". But when, on the other hand, he is asked whether he knows the Turkish grand vizier and if he had met him, he answers: "I am ibn al-Arab, son of the Arabs, and the likes of me do not know the grand vizier!"⁽⁸⁹⁾

It is clear that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Turkish ruling class in the Ottoman Empire had developed the inevitable sense of superiority that all ruling classes eventually develop towards their alien subjects. No assimilation of the Turks by the Arabs, or the Arabs by the Turks had ever taken place. The two people had remained absolutely separate under Ottoman rule. "The Mamelukes, after all, had practically been brought up in Syria and Egypt, and consequently they had some interest in the appearance and reputation of their home. The Turks, however, were sent for

(88) Ibid., p. 112.

(89) Ibid., p. 124. The term Abna al-Arab applied then "to the Arabic-speaking townspeople and peasantry to distinguish them from the Turkish ruling class on the one hand and the nomads or Arabs proper on the other" - Bernard Louis, The Arabs in History, (London, 1960), p. 15.

a term, none too long to familiarize themselves with the conditions of their charges and very frequently, after a brief sojourn amongst the Arabs, they returned to Turkey for the rest of their lives, or were assigned to some other posts remote from the Arabs, or at best in other parts of the Arab lands where conditions were quite different from those with which they were familiar ... Assimilation could not take place under such conditions."⁽⁹⁰⁾ And in the course of the nineteenth century the Turkish ruling class, fighting one separatist movement after another, was to develop a deep suspicion and fear of the Arabs, who constituted the largest non-Turkish element in the multinational Ottoman Empire. The Arabs, on the other hand, had given the Turks grounds for suspicion and fear by the Mohammed Ali and the Wahhabi movements. And there was, besides these two separatist movements, the ever rebellions Yemen. So the Turks were to accuse Arabi Pasha of trying to establish an Arab State,⁽⁹¹⁾ and rumours charged Khaireddin Pasha al-Tunisi with the intention of founding a Grand Arab Kingdom, comprising Tunis, Tripolitania, and Egypt.⁽⁹²⁾ Such suspicions were, of course, bound to put ideas into some Arab minds, even if they were originally devoid of them.

(90) G.W.F. Stirling, The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs, p. 59.

(91) Jurji Zaydan, Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq, (Cairo, 1910), Vol. I, p. 279.

(92) Khaireddin al-Tunisi, "A Mes Enfants," Revue Tunisienne, (1934), p. 358.

The Turkish claim for the Caliphate and the leadership of all Moslems was to be revived by Sultan Abdul Hamid for his political ends. The claim of a Turkish sultan to the Caliphate rested on weak theoretical and historical foundations, for the Caliphate theoretically had to belong to the Arab tribe of Quraish, and historically there was no evidence that it was ever actually transferred from the last Arab Caliph Mutawakkil to the Turkish Sultan Salim in the 16th century. Perceiving the weakness of his claim and suspicious of Arab separatist tendencies, Abdul Hamid set out, in his characteristic manner, to tighten his grip on the Arabs and to win them over at the same time. About 1890 he removed from the mosques of Istanbul the extracts from the Sacred Books that contained a reference to the qualifications required in the Caliph. (92) The appointment of Khairuddin Pasha al-Tunisi to the premiership of the Empire, in 1878, on the other hand, might have been one of Abdul Hamid's measures for winning Arab sympathy. (93) But all of Abdul Hamid's attempts to win Arab sympathy came to nothing, for under his despotic and corrupt rule suspicion between Arabs and Turks increased. (94)

(92) Zeine N. Zeine, Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism, (Beirut, 1958), p. 66, n.3.

(93) Mohammed Jamil Beyhum, Kawafil al-Uruba wa Mawakibiha Khilal al-Ustur, (Beirut, 1950), Vol. II, p. 17.

(94) Zeine N. Zeine, Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism, p. 54.

To understand the emergence of the concept of Arab nationalism in the thought of Kawakebi, this concept must be placed against the proper ideological and historical background: the Arabs, given a profound sense of racial and cultural distinctness and distinction by Islam, possessors of a highly developed Volksgiest, but subjects of a universal, supra-national, Islamic state, that had revived its feeble claim to the Caliphate, at its most weak, corrupt, and despotic period of history. To this we must add the fact that the Arab intelligentsia of the 19th century, as typified and illustrated in this study by Tahtawi and Khairiddin at-Tunisi, were to be highly impressed by the secular nationalism of the West in the 19th century, and were to ascribe to this nationalism the strength and prosperity of European states. The strength of nationalism in the West is also noted by Kawakebi who finds in this fact a cause of the cohesion and progress of contemporary Western nations.⁽⁹⁵⁾ He is also aware of the fact that loyalty is given to nationalism in the West, as against religion in the East.⁽⁹⁶⁾

The heart of the Islamic community, according to Kawakebi, is the Arabian Peninsula; for it contains the Kabah and the Prophet's Tomb.⁽⁹⁷⁾ The Peninsula is also inhabited by the Arabs, who, together with the Arabs of

(95) Umm al-Qura, pp. 63, 185.
(96) Tabai al-Istibdad, p. 34.
(97) Umm al-Qura, pp. 10, 218.

Iraq and North Africa, constitute the core of Islamic unity.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Islam originated among the Arabs, and in their own language, so they are its kith and kin, its carriers, its keepers, and its protectors.⁽⁹⁹⁾ In Kawakebi's thought about Islam, the Arabs and the Arab element are clearly its centre of gravity. Mohammed is Quraishite Arab.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Arabic is the language of the Koran, and is made immortal by it. Arabic is also the religious language of 300 million Moslems people.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ The Arabs, of all Moslems, have the greatest knowledge of the laws of Islam, because they were the first people to embrace it. Many Prophetic hadiths testify to the soundness of their religious faith. Their Islam is still Salafi, pure, flexible, and free from confusion.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Non-Arabs have corrupted the early Islam of the Salaf al-Salih and made it rigid. They have introduced innovations and superstitions into it, and not knowing Arabic, they could not understand the Koran and the sunna, so they confused religion and complicated it.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Islamic, in effect, has come to mean Arabism for Kawakebi. He thus interprets the historical fact that in the spread of early Islam, Arab non-Moslems, unlike the non-Arabs, were given no freedom of choice, and were forced to

(98) Ibid., p. 219.
(99) Ibid., p. 14.
(100) Ibid., p. 77.
(101) Ibid., pp. 82, 220.
(102) Ibid., p. 219.
(103) Ibid., pp. 36, 37, 43, 89, 101.

accept Islam and become Moslems, by the argument that this does not indicate that Islam spread by the sword, as its critics imagine, but that the sword was used for the conversion of Arabs alone, so as to effect "political unity (in Arabia) through racial unity".⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ He goes so far as to express his wish that non-Arabs had never embraced Islam - a sentiment that can hardly be reconciled with the Moslem's traditional duty to extend the Domain of Islam, Dar al-Islam, as wide as possible.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Kawakebi also finds that the Arabs, of all Moslems, possess the strongest sense of asabia, esprit de corps, and of pride, as they retain their bedouin characteristics and qualities. They are the purest in race, for they do not mix with others, and their princes have the noblest ancestry. They are the most jealous guardians of their freedom and independence.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ The Arabs, since pre-Islamic days, have rarely tolerated despotism.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ They are, of all Moslems, the best able to bear hardships and the most adaptable to difficult conditions, for they have not been debased and corrupted by luxury. They are the most ancient of civilized

(104) Ibid., p. 112. Two years after Kawakebi, Wellhausen was to give the same interpretation of this historical fact: J. Wellhausen, The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall, p. 24. The original Das Arabische Reich und sein Sturz, was first published in Berlin, in 1902.

(105) Umm al-Qura, p. 29.

(106) Ibid., pp. 219 & 220.

(107) Tabai al-Istibdad, p. 10.

people, as proven by the magnificence of their literature. Also, the Arabs, of all nations, are the most respectful of their pledges, the most philanthropic towards humanity, and the most generous towards their neighbours; and this is proven by the preference of Jews to emigrate to Arab countries, and the fact that Arabs did not take part in the massacre of Armenians. (108) The qualities for which Kawakebi praises the Arabs, are the familiar virtues that classical Arabic literature attributes to Arabs and to bedouins: purity of descent, richness of language, courage, pride, loyalty and fidelity, magnanimity, generosity, love of freedom, and the ability to stand hardship. These qualities make up the Arab Volksgeist as seen by the Arabs. To them Kawakebi has added two new virtues that are obviously inspired by his political ideas. He states, as we have seen, that the Arabs, of all Moslems and of all nations, are the best guided to the principles of the socialist way of life. He also declares that the Arabs are the most ancient people to practice, shura, consultation, between the rulers and the ruled. (109) We have noted the Western origin of the idea of "the socialist way of life". Let us now take the virtue of "consultation" that Kawakebi sees in Arab bedouin life. An examination of the Arabic proclamations of the French expedition to Egypt shows us that the French used the term mashyakha for république.

(108) Ibid., pp. 220 - 221.

(109) Ibid., p. 221.

Mashyakha is an Arabic noun, derived from the word shaikh, which means "elder" or "senior" of a tribe, its chief, and thus communicates the sense of rule by shaikhs. Professor Bernard Lewis rightly observes that "the use of this bedouin term (mashyakha) was no doubt intended to suggest the relative freedom and equality of the Arab tribe, as against the autocratic type of governmental authority connoted by the more familiar terms of dawla and hukuma". (110) How does Kawakebi conceive of this liberal type of rule, rule by consultation, to exist in bedouin society? Like Khaireddin al-Tunisi before him, he equates ahl al-hal wal-akd in Islam with the members of parliament in the West. These people, writes Kawakebi, elect the imam by baya, and had in fact ruled in Umayyad and the early Abbasid states. Ahl-al-hal wal-akd, and the members of Western parliaments, Kawakebi goes on to equate with the chiefs of clans in the bedouin tribe, who, according to him, decide policies for the shaikh of the tribe, whose only function is the execution of these policies. (111) Thus the two main currents in Kawakebi's political thought - his hostility to despotism, personified in the non-Arab Sultan Abdul Hamid, and his Arabism and his anti-Turkish feelings that we shall presently examine, meet in the new quality he attributes to the Arabs: their

(110) Bernard Lewis, "The Concept of Islamic Republic", Die Welt des Islams, (1956), p. 2.

(111) Umm al-Qura, pp. 66 - 67.

non-despotic form of government. This intermingling of the two currents in Kawakebi's thought can be further illustrated by his assertion that the non-Arab Moslem would not hesitate to abandon Islam but for the use they make of the Koranic verse that declares : "Obey God and obey those in authority from among you". However, these foreign rulers, according to Kawakebi, ignore the requirements placed on the ruler by the conditions embodied in the words "those in authority", that is plural and pertaining to more than one, and the words "from among you" (i.e. from among the Arabs).⁽¹¹²⁾ These two currents - hostility to autocratic rule and the consciousness of Arabism - were later to meet and reinforce each other in the pre-World War Arab nationalist movement.

Kawakebi wishes that non-Arabs had never embraced Islam for two reasons: they have corrupted Islam, and deprived the Arabs of their most important right in Islam, i.e. the right to the Caliphate.⁽¹¹³⁾ He limits, however, his hostility to the Turks amongst the non-Arab Moslems. The Turkish delegate to his fictitious Moslem Congress, he calls al-Mawla al-Rumi, thus relegating the Turk to the inferior status of the non-Arab mawali in early Islam, and casting by the employment of the term Rumi doubts on the sincerity of the Turk's Islam. As against al-Mawla al-Rumi, the delegate from Afghanistan is called al-Fakih al-Afghani and the Persian al-Mujtahid

(112) Ibid., pp. 36-37.
(113) Ibid., p. 29.

al-Tabrizi. He finds the Islam of the Turks hypocritical and superficial. The Turks, he maintains, have given Islam nothing but a few mosques to have the names of their sultans proclaimed from their pulpits. They have introduced into Islam blind obedience and superstition. (114) The Ottomans harmed Islam in the prime of its youth by destroying the Abbasid Caliphate and all that the Arabs had built. (115) The respect paid by most Ottoman sultans to the rites of religion is absolutely superficial. (116) These sultans in reality put the interests of the state before those of religion. (117) The following are some examples of their anti-religious conduct - Mohammed the Conqueror, who was the best of the Ottoman House, was to put the interests of the state above those of religion, and to conclude a secret treaty with Ferdinand of Aragon and his wife Isabella, to support them against Bani al-Ahmar, the last Arab state in Spain, consenting thereby to the killing and the apostasy of 15 million Moslems. Sultan Selim destroyed the Abbasid House by treachery, and while he was killing Arabs in the East, the Spaniards were killing them in the West. The Ottomans worked for the destruction of 15 Moslem states and governments. They repeatedly attacked the Yemen and respected there neither religion, nor brotherhood, nor humanity; the

(114) Ibid., pp. 170-171.
(115) Ibid., p. 238.
(116) Ibid., p. 288.
(117) Ibid., p. 231.

Ottoman soldiers even surprized and killed the Moslems in Sana and Zubaid while they were praying. Sultan Mahmoud copied from the Franks their dress and forced it on his court and on the men of the state, while Sultan Abdul Majid permitted the drinking of alcohol and usury. (118)

From this most bitter attack on the Ottoman Turks, Kawakebi launches on an indictment of Ottoman rule, in the course of which he offers a remarkbly incisive analysis of the weakness and decay of the Ottoman Empire in its last days. He maintains that most of the weakness came out in the last 60 years, when the Empire started to reorganize itself, divesting itself of its old traditions on the one hand, but unsuccessful in acquiring or originating new institutions that could take their place, on the other hand. He finds that after the Tanzimat, the centralization of administration and the unification of legislation increased in the multi-national Empire, and that the restraint placed on the bureaucracy by its traditional responsibility to the sultan disappeared. (119) Kawakebi finds that the process of decay and weakness in the Empire has particularly accelerated in the preceeding twenty years, in which the Empire lost two

(118) Ibid., pp. 228-231.

(119) Ibid., pp. 162-163. It is interesting to note in this connection that Professor Bernard Lewis, in a recent and a most serious study of Turkish history, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, also finds that the tendencies for an unrestrained and centralized despotism in the Empire increased with the removal of traditional checks after the Tanzimat.

thirds of its possessions, and is threatend by the loss of the remaining third because of the depletion in manpower and the sultan's autocratic polecies.⁽¹²⁰⁾ Kawakebi also points to the confusions and inefficiency that are caused in the Empire by its stubborn attempt to apply to its multi-national and racial population unified codes of law, by means of a superficially inflated multi-national and racial administrative apparatus. He complains, further, of the lack of homogeneity between the governors of the provinces and the local populations. He refers to the bad conditions that prevail in Hejaz, because of the disputes and lack of coordination between the three authorities that administer it: the local Emirate, the civil authorities, and the military. The Empire also suffers from uncontrolled, inefficient, and extravagant financial policies, that have burdened it with foreign debts. There is supression of freedom of thought and the subjects of the Empire are never consulted. The Empire's weak foreign policy results from all this internal corruption and inefficiency.⁽¹²¹⁾

Kawakebi finds that the Ottoman Empire follows a highly discriminating policy towards the different nationalities that compose it. The Arabs, who are distinguished by constituting two thirds of the subjects of this Empire, are deprived of their rights to government posts and to financial

(120) Umm al-Qura, p. 162.

(121) Ibid., pp. 163-166.

rewards.⁽¹²²⁾ Kawakebi writes that the non-Arabs who founded Islamic states, such as the Buwayhids, the Ayyubis, the Saljuks, and the House of Mohammed Ali, all soon become Arabised, acquired Arab characteristics, mixed with them, and became part of them. Only the Ottoman Turks prided themselves on keeping apart, and have not tried to Turkify their subjects nor to accept to Arabic themselves. They are willing, however, to imitate others, and Germanify and Frenchify themselves. There can be no reason for this, save their strong hatred of the Arabs, which can be inferred from the expressions they use about them. Then he goes on to give us these expressions in the original Turkish with their Arabic translations, for instance "Dirty Arab", and "Gipsy Arabs", the Arabs of Hejaz they call "Arab Beggars", and those of Egypt "Blind Fellahs".⁽¹²³⁾ The Arabs reciprocate by only two expressions. They say that the Turks, together with lice and locusts, have been created to oppress and to destroy. They also call them Rum, thus showing their suspicion of the sincerity of their Islam.⁽¹²⁴⁾ As we have seen, Kawakebi himself had called the Turkish delegate to his fictitious congress by this last derogatory name.

Kawakebi concludes by asking the Ottoman Sultan not to be deceived or led astray by hypocrites who want him to assume the Caliphate on the grounds of descent from Quraish,

(122) Ibid., p. 164.

(123) Ibid., pp. 169-170. Kōr Fellah" is the "Blind Fellah" and not the "Boorish Fellah" as translated by Kawakebi.

(124) Umm al-Qura, p. 170.

its transfer from the last Abbasid Caliph; his actual possession of it, election, or the guardianship of the Prophetic relics. (125) He calls on the Turks to repair all the harm done by them in past centuries by giving up the Caliphate to the Arabs who are fit for it, and by handing them back the care of religion whose protectors they are. (126)

An Arab Caliph from Quraish must be installed in Mecca. Kawakebi requires that this Caliph possess all the classical qualifications for the post; obviously, only thus can he demand that the Caliph be an Arab. But otherwise, the Arab Caliphate he proposes to establish resembles neither the classical Sunni Caliphate of theory, nor that of practice. It is, in reality, an Islamic Papacy, divested of all temporal authority, with the Caliph a mere president of a republic, enjoying very limited powers. Kawakebi's Caliph cannot interfere in the political or the administrative affairs of Moslem sultanates and emirates. He only gives his approval to the appointment of sultans and emirs. His name will be mentioned before their names in the khutaba (the sermon given on Friday services and some other special occasions), but will not figure on coins. The Caliph's political authority will extend only over Hejaz, but even this authority is greatly limited, for he has to exercise it with the concurrence of a special Hejazi Council of Consultation, Shura. Besides this

(125) Ibid., p. 232.

(126) Ibid., p. 239.

Council, there will be a General Islamic Council. The Caliph only proclaims the decisions of this Council and supervises their execution. Kawakebi further deprives the Caliph, who in classical theory and practice the commander of the armies, amir al-muminin, (commander of the faithful), from all military authority. His proposed Caliph is to have absolutely no army under his command. A force of two to three thousand soldiers will be intrusted with keeping security of the Hejaz. The soldiers of this force will be drawn from all Moslem sultanates and emirates. The commander in chief will belong to one of the small emirates, and will receive his orders from the General Islamic Council. The Caliph will be elected by the bayya of this General Islamic Council for a period of 3 years. His election must conform to special conditions which do not conflict with sharia. The Caliph's election is invalidated if he violates one of these conditions.⁽¹²⁷⁾ It is clear that Kawakebi's Caliph has ceased to be khalifat rasul Allah, the vicegerent of the Apostle of God, amir al-muminin, commander of armies, imam al-Muslemin, the leader of all Moslems, and has come to be a mere Monsieur le Président of the Third French Republic, that Kawakebi so admires.

The General Islamic Council will consist of about one hundred members elected by the Moslem sultanates and emirates. It will meet every year for two months, either in Mecca or

(127) Ibid., pp. 234-236.

Taif, just before the season of Pilgrimage. At the beginning of each season, the Council will elect the Vice-President, who will act on behalf of the Caliph. The General Council's functions will be limited to religious matters, and will not extend beyond the examination of vital religious questions that affect the policies of the ummah, such as the opening of "the gates of Ijtihad", the rendering of obedience to just governments even if they are non-Moslem, and the discontinuing of blind obedience to a person as just as Omar ibn al-Khatab. (128).

Kawakebi and Blunt

We have examined Kawakebi's ideas on Arabism and the ideological and historical background from which they evolved. We must now digress a little, and take up the question of these ideas' connection with those of the English poet and publicist Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840 - 1922). Miss Sylvia Haim, who had advanced the hypothesis that the ideas of Tabai al-Istibdad were borrowed from the Italian writer Vittorio Alfieri, was later to claim that Kawakebi's ideas in Umm al-Qura "are not his own, but are a foreign importation" from Blunt's The Future of Islam, that was first published in 1882. (129) "Al-Kawakebi's relation to this European source (The Future of Islam) is, in this case"

(128) Ibid., pp. 234-237.

(129) "Blunt and Kawakebi," Oriente Moderno, (1955), pp. 132-143.

she writes, "less direct than the earlier one (Della Tirannide)". However, a thorough consideration of the question she raises and a comparison between the two books fails to establish even an indirect connection between them. Miss Haim suggests, for instance, that Kawakebi's ideas on bedouins are derived from Blunt. "These views," she writes, "are extremely new. Before al-Kawakebi bedouins, instead of being idealized, were looked upon as wild, pagan, faithless destroyers of God-fearing men". Now, any acquaintance with the anti-mawali and anti-shubbi writings in Arabic will easily reveal that bedouins are not so regarded in them. The non-Arab Moslems were, inevitably and understandably, to pick on the bedouin origin of the Arabs to prove their superiority over them. Shubbi literature is replete with attacks on bedouins, the poverty of their life, the boorishness and primitiveness of their customs, food, and dress. A shubbi poet was to say in the tenth century: The Arabs boast of being masters of the world and the lords of the people. Why don't they rather boast of being shepherds and camel drivers ?

Another shubbi poet, al-Motawakeli, tells the Arabs to abdicate from the throne of Persia and go back to their original Hejaz, to eat lizards and herd camels. Now, Arabs, just as inevitably as non-Arab Moslems, were to praise the bedouin and to idealize his life and his qualities. Thus

Abu Hayan al-Tawhidi enumerates the charges levelled at the bedouins, and sets out to refute them one by one. In doing so, he praises them for their ability to stand hardship, their loyalty, and the purity of their life - all qualities for which they are praised by Kawakebi.⁽¹³⁰⁾ Al-Jahiz praises the Turks by calling them "the bedouins of the non-Arabs".⁽¹³¹⁾ Thus Kawakebi's idealization of the bedouins cannot be considered "extremely new".

Miss Haim further alleges that Kawakebi's anti-Ottoman sentiments and his ideas on the Caliphate and its transfer to the Arabs were also derived from Blunt's The Future of Islam. An examination of The Future of Islam itself will reveal how groundless this allegation is. Wilfred Scawen Blunt was a widely travelled man in the Islamic world, from North Africa to India; and in 1881 he had spent some months in Jedda, Syria, and Egypt. In The Future of Islam written upon his return from this last trip, he constantly reports on the impressions he got on it, the conversations he had, the opinions he heard. He writes, for instance, that in Jedda he "neglected no opportunity which offered itself for listening and asking questions".⁽¹³²⁾ Among the things he listened to in the countries he visited, were :

(130) Abu Hayan al-Tawhidi, Kitab al-Imta' wal-Muanasa, Vol. I, pp. 78-88. See also Ibn Qutaybah, Kitab al-Arab.

(131) Abu Othman al-Jahiz, Thalath Rasail, (Leiden, 1903), p. 45.

(132) Wilfred Scawen Blunt, The Future of Islam, (London, 1882), p. 6.

"I found the opinion (among the ulema) last year to be nearly universal that Abd el-Hamid was destined to be the last Caliph of the House of Othman".⁽¹³³⁾ And: "Is there then in Islam, east, or west, or south, a man of sufficient eminence and courage to proclaim himself Caliph, in the event of Abd el-Hamid's political collapse or death? What would be his line of action to secure Mohammedan acceptance? Where should he fix his capital, and on what arms should he rely? Whose flag should he display?... These questions, which are being cautiously asked of each other by thoughtful Mussulmans in every corner of the east... Mussulmans are profoundly convinced that on its present basis it (the Ottoman Empire) will not long survive".⁽¹³⁴⁾ And: "in the opinion of some a likely candidate for the Caliphate succession may be looked for in the Viceregal family of Egypt".⁽¹³⁵⁾ But "there is, therefore, a conviction that the removal of the seat of supreme authority (the Caliphate) when made, will be towards the centre, not to any new extremity of Islam... and to the majority of far-sighted Mussulmans it is rapidly becoming apparent... that the only true resting-place for theocracy is in Arabia, its birthplace and the fountainhead of its inspiration".⁽¹³⁶⁾ And "Indeed, 'Mecca, the seat of the Caliphate" is, as far as I have had an

(133) Ibid., p. 93.
(134) Ibid., pp. 94-95.
(135) Ibid., p. 114.
(136) Ibid., pp. 99, 100.

opportunity of judging, the cry of the day with Mussulmans".⁽¹³⁷⁾ Blunt also informs us that "in the year following the disastrous Russian war, when Constantinople seemed on the point of dissolution, the Arabs began to talk openly of making El Husseyn ibn Aoun Caliph in the Sultan's place".⁽¹³⁸⁾ And finally, he lets us know that when Sherief Husseyn ibn Aoun was murdered in 1880 by an Afghani dervish "all (in Jedda) point to the Stamboul-Camarilla and even the Sultan himself as its (the murder's) author".⁽¹³⁹⁾ Miss Haim also attempts to prove the derivative nature of Kawakebi's ideas by pointing out that Kawakebi finds that the change of the seat of the Caliphate will result in the uniting of all Islamic sects, including the Shias and the Wahhabis, an idea first put out by Blunt. This is how Blunt puts the idea: "I have even heard it that a Caliphate of Koraysh at Mecca would go far towards reconciling the Schismatics, Abadhites, and Shias with Orthodoxy; and I have reason to believe that it would so affect the liberal quarters of Wahhabism".⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ It is clear from this instance, as well as from the others, that Blunt is reporting the climate of opinion among some Arabs in the eighties and nineties of the nineteenth century. He is, in fact, corroborated by

(137) Ibid., pp. 129.
(138) Ibid., pp. 122-123.
(139) Ibid., p. 126.
(140) Ibid., p. 130.

some foreign observers of the same period. Thus in 1882 the British Political agent at Jeddah reports that: " It is within my knowledge, however, that the idea of freedom does at present agitate some minds even in Mecca ". (141) A Frenchman who travelled extensively in the Arab Countries of North Africa, the shores of the Red Sea, and Iraq in 1883, writes: " Everywhere I came upon the same abiding and universal sentiment: hatred of the Turks... The notion of concerted action to throw off this detested yoke is gradually shaping itself ". (142) And the British Consul-General in Beirut sends his government the text of a revolutionary placard that had been posted up in Beirut in 1880, which contains an indictment of Turkish rule and describes " the Sultan's tenure of the caliphate as a usurpation of Arab rights" and accuses the Turks of " habitually transgressing the laws of Islam ". (143)

Obviously the revival of the Turkish claim to the Caliphate, at a time in which the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was becoming clear to its Moslem subjects, was bound to raise all kinds of questions concerning the nature, functions, and the ultimate destiny of the Caliphate; hence all the ideas and discussions that Blunt reports. In such a climate of opinion, Kawakebi was voicing ideas

(141) Quoted by George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, (Beirut, n.d.), p. 90.

(142) Ibid.

(143) Ibid., p. 83.

that were germinating in the Arab mind. Given the intense Arabism of Islam, the Arabs' right to the Caliphate, that all orthodox schools of jurisprudence insist on, the mounting tension between the Arabs and the Turks, it was only natural that Kawakebi would demand the transfer of the Caliphate from the Turks to the Arabs. Given his hatred of despotism, and his admiration for the secular Western parliamentary form of government - which he shares with Tahtawi and Khaireddin, and indeed with all the Arab intellegentsia of the nineteenth century - it was only natural that he will conceive of his proposed Arab Caliphate as a kind of a Papacy, and his Caliph as an elected president of a republic, possessing limited powers, and responsible to an elected council.

To the best of my knowledge there are no references in the Arabic literature of the day to Blunt's ideas, with the exception of a few critical remarks of Mustapha Kamel.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ The Future of Islam has not been translated into any language that Kawakebi could read. Miss Haim is aware of this fact, but she still maintains that somehow Kawakebi might have acquainted himself with Blunt's ideas, perhaps by meeting him personally in Cairo. There is no evidence of such a meeting, and what is more: Kawakebi had not written Umm al-Qura in Cairo, but in Aleppo.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ His son had copied

(144) Mustapha Kamel, al-Masalah al-Sharqiyyah, (Cairo, 1898), pp. 21-22.

(145) Umm al-Qura, Foreward. See also al-Hadith, (1952), pp. 545, 548.

Umm al-Qura for him in Aleppo, ⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ and he had published it in Cairo soon after his arrival there. ⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ His very good friend in Aleppo, Shaikh Said al-Ghazzi tells us that he had read Umm al-Qura "many times in Aleppo". He also tells us that he felt that Kawakebi intended to print Umm al-Qura in Egypt, as he could not publish it anywhere else, so he warned him against going to Egypt, as this would have made the authorities regard him as one of the Jeunes Turcs who opposed Abdul Hamid, and thereby make his return to Aleppo extremely difficult. ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

Tahtawi's Arabism

To see further how innate to the Arab mind were the ideas out of which Kawakebi evolved his concept of Arab Nationalism, and the form in which these ideas were expressed in the nineteenth century, we must go back to Riffa al-Tahtawi. Tahtawi developed, as we have seen, the idea of an Egyptian watan, fatherland, within the Islamic community, but clearly distinct from it. We shall now note in his thought, first a profound consciousness of, and pride in, the Arabs and their culture, and second his identification of the Egyptians with the Arabs.

The starting point for Tahtawi's ideas on this subject is again to be found in the classical, ever-present,

(146) Asad al-Kawakebi, "Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi", al-Hadith, (1952), p. 550.

(147) Rashid Rida, al-Manar (1902), p. 279.

(148) Kamel al-Ghazzi, "Tarikh... Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi", al-Hadith (1929), pp. 448, 449.

dichotomy in the Arab mind between the Arab and the non-Arab Moslems. He prays to God in the foreward of Takhlis, to rouse all the Islamic peoples, Arabs and non-Arabs, from the slumber of ignorance.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ And it is clear, from the Takhlis and his other writings, that he regards the Arabs as superior to all the non-Arab Moslems, as well as being distinct from them; the Arabs, indeed, are superior to all other peoples. Thus Asia is the noblest of all five continents, for it contains the holiest of all places, Mecca, Medina, the Prophet's Tomb, and it further contains "the Arabs, who are the noblest of all tribes, and whose tongue is the most eloquent of all tongues, and to whom belong Banu Hashim (The Prophet's family), who are the salt of the earth the substance of glory, and the sheild of honour".⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ But the Arabs are not merely a tribe, they are also a race;⁽¹⁵¹⁾ and as such they are superior to all other races. Thus towards the end of Takhlis, Tahtawi who is, as we have seen, a great admirer of the French and their institutions, writes: "And now nothing is left me except to give the summary of this voyage and of what I have scrutinized closely and considered carefully, so I say, after reflecting on the customs of the french and their political conditions, that I have found that the French are more similar to the Arabs than to the Turks and other races".⁽¹⁵²⁾ He writes that the free-

(149) Takhlis al-Ibriz, p. 5.

(150) Ibid., pp. 115-116.

(151) Manaahij, pp. 294, 405.

(152) Takhlis, pp. 199-200.

dom that the Westerners are always seeking has been one of the characteristics of the Arabs in ancient times. This is proven by a debate that had taken place between the pre-Islamic Ghassanid Arab King Numan ibn-Munthir and the Persian King Chosroes in the presence of Byzantine, Indian, Chinese, Persian, and Turkish delegates. The Arab King had declared the Arabs superior to all other peoples, so the Persian King pointed out to him the primitiveness, poverty and chaos of the Arabs' life. The Arab King, in the course of rebutting the Persian, enumerates the virtues of the Arabs: their ability to stand hardships, the purity of their ancestry, their courage and generosity, their loyalty, the magnificence of their language, and their love of freedom and hatred of personal rule.⁽¹⁵³⁾ Tahtawi also finds that the French are similar to the Arabs in their pride and in their lack of meanness of soul. These two characteristics have ceased to exist among most Arabs; but this is only because of the disasters that have befallen them and the oppression they were subjected to.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ Finally Tahtawi writes that it has been proven by both 'akl (reason) and nakl (revelation, religion), that the Arabs are the most courageous, intelligent, and gallant of all nations, and that their tongue is the most perfect of all tongues in expressiveness. Reason judges the Arabs to

(153) Ibid., pp. 202-205. For this debate in classical Arabic literature, see Ibn Abd-Rabbihi (d. 940), al-Iqd al-Farid, (Cairo, 1884), Vol. I, pp. 124-126.

(154) Takhlis, p. 202.

have been so, though they did not practice, prior to Islam, some of the rational sciences, like medicine, mathematics, and logic. But when Islam came and lifted the darkness from their hearts and souls and revived their powers, it completed their perfection. The Prophet had said: "If Arabs are humiliated, Islam is humiliated". This was borne out by the fact that it was the Arabs who conquered countries, strengthened and exalted by Islam, and civilized them with knowledge. Others have expanded this knowledge, but this does not matter, for Arabs can now borrow the knowledge of modern times, and in their turn add to it. The achievements of the Arabs are immortal in the history of the world, as can be clearly seen in the pre-Islamic civilization of Yemen. (155)

Tahtawi had given the Egyptians, as we have seen, a separate existence, based on the watan of Egypt, but he regards them at the same time as Arabs. He cites, for instance, the remarks of a traveller who had written about Egypt and had maintained that most of the reforms that are needed by Egypt would have been carried out by the French had it remained under their rule. The belief that France or any similar country is entitled to annex Egypt with the purpose of reforming it, Tahtawi finds very misleading. The motive or cause, illa, of the amalgamation of people is

(155) Manaahij, pp. 150-151.

race, Jinsiyya, and in reality Mohammed Ali and his successors have carried out the majority of the reforms mentioned by the traveller. After praising Mohammed Ali's reigning grandson in two lines of verse, Tahtawi goes on to write: "And here we repeat again that the cause of the amalgamation (of people) is race, and the House of Mohammed Ali has been Arabised. Only the ignorant will fail to see this. God is Great, all virtues belong to the Arabs".⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ He also writes that at first only Turks and Mamluks were allowed to enroll in the Staff School in Egypt, and that later the sons of Arabs joined them, but were not allowed promotion in the army beyond a certain rank; however Ibrahim Pasha was later to discontinue this practice in regard to the sons of the Arabs and the sons of the Sudan, and give them equality with the others.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

Kawakebi, the Precursor of Arab Nationalism

Kawakebi's Arabism goes beyond Tahtawi's traditional consciousness of the Arab people's distinctness and distinction. By secularizing his concept of Arabism, and by making it, rather than Islam, the basis of polity and loyalty, he transforms Arabism into Arab Nationalism, and with this transformation he establishes himself clearly as the precursor of the doctrine of modern Arab nationalism.

(156) Ibid., pp. 247-248.
(157) Ibid., pp. 247-248.

The Ottoman Empire, in which Kawakebi lived, was a multi-national Islamic theocracy, that organized its subjects according to their religions and not their nationalities. The dominant element in the Empire was the Moslem community, composed largely of Turks and Arabs. The non-Moslem element in the Empire was in turn organized according to religious denominations, into religious communities that were called millets. These included more than one nationality; and thus the Greek-Orthodox Christian millet in the Ottoman Empire was composed of Greeks, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Arabs. For the Ottoman Empire, in theory as well as in practice, religion was the differentiating and dividing factor between one Ottoman community and the other. For Kawakebi this is not so, for he has replaced religion by nationality, and thus cut across the traditional boundary lines of the Ottoman communities, and regrouped them around the new criterion of differentiation he has adopted, namely nationality. He thus does not explain the refusal of the Yemenites to submit to Ottoman rule, as somebody else might have done, by the fact that the people of Yemen are Zaidi Shiis while the Ottoman Turks are Sunnis, but by the Arabs' desire for freedom and independence and their unwillingness to submit to oppression.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ He finds, on the other hand, that the civil disturbances of the sixties between the Christian and Moslem Arabs of Lebanon and Syria were not born out of any national or religious

(158) Umm al-Qura, p. 220.

fanaticism, but out of the British enticements to a group of Druzes and Napoleon III's enticements to the Christians. (159)

For Kawakebi the bond of nationality transcends that of religion, and on its basis he gives the Arabs, Christians as well as Moslems, a corporate identity of their own, and demands that this identity find political expression. He addresses the Christian Arabs thus: "O people, and I mean you the non-Moslems who use the letter dad (who speak the Arabic language and are Arabs) (160) I appeal to you to forget past wrongs and rancour, and what has been committed by fathers and grandfathers. Enough has been suffered at the hands of trouble makers . I do not consider it beyond you, you who had the priority of enlightenment, to find the means for union. Witness the nations of Austro-Hungary and the United States of America who have found, through enlightenment, several effective ways and means of achieving patriotic rather than religious union, national rather than sectarian accord, and political rather than administrative conjointment. So why should we not then think of following one of these, or a similar way ? Let the wise men among us tell the non-Arabs and the foreigners who instigate ill-will among us: allow us to manage our own affairs, understanding each other with

(159) Ibid., p. 221.

(160) The letter dad is the thirteenth letter in the Arabic alphabet, and according to Arabs it is found only in their alphabet and its correct pronunciation is the test of a true Arab.

the Arabic language, having for each other the compassion of brotherhood, consoling each other in adversity, and sharing alike in prosperity. Permit us to manage our affairs in this world, and make religions rule only the next. Let us come together around the same declarations: Long live the nation . Long live the watan, the fatherland . Let us live free and strong ."(161) In this passage, quoted in full, Kawakebi expresses his belief in the existence of an Arab watan, fatherland, inhabited by an Arab nation, whose members are united by the possession of a common language and the common feelings and emotions that are bound up with it, and who must form a political entity of their own. This is unmistakably the doctrine of modern Arab nationalism; and Kawakebi has become its precursor by making the passage from the Arabs' classical intense consciousness of themselves and of their Arabism, as expressed in a distinct Volksgeist of their own, to a modern restatement of this consciousness, whereby the Arabs acquire the identity of a nation in the modern sense of the word, and then to demand that this nation form a nation-state.

In arguing for the establishment of a secular bond between the Arabs, Kawakebi appeals to non-Moslem Arabs not to be led astray by Western machinations. The West's claim to religious brotherhood with some Arabs, he writes, is a falsehood and a deception, for the Westerner has become a

(161) Tabai al-Istibdad, p. 107.

pure materialist, and his only religion is that of making material gain. The French persecute their own clericals, so when they claim to champion religion in the East, they are like the hunter who whistles behind his trap to catch his prey.⁽¹⁶²⁾ Had religion had any influence on the Westerner there would have been no hatred between the Germans and the French, or between the Saxons and the Latins, nay between the Italians and the French.⁽¹⁶³⁾ It is clear that Kawakebi has learned well the lessons of Western nationalism and secularism. Finally, Kawakebi's Arabs are the people of the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and North Africa.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ Here again, Kawakebi unmistakably anticipates the modern Arab nationalist, for whom the Arab nation is made up of all these people.

In a sense, Kawakebi is aware of a cleavage in orientation that was forming between the Eastern and the Western parts of the Arab World; for he complains that the majority of Indian, Egyptian, and Tunisian Moslem masses, show no sympathy with the plight of Moslems outside their own countries, and even regard with hostility all those who are angry with their rulers, and may even consider them renegades from religion, as though a ruler's being Moslem makes obedience to him a duty that is incumbent on all Moslems, even when he is

(162) Ibid., p. 108.

(163) Tabai al-Istibdad, (1957) p. 194.

(164) Umm al-Qura, pp. 169, 219, 221.

unjust and a destroyer of their countries and of their children.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ The strength of the Pan-Islamic movement among the Moslems of India and their sympathy with the Ottoman Empire is a well known fact that lies outside the scope of this study. However, Kawakebi's reference to Egypt and Tunis is interesting and germane to this study, for it points to the divergences that were developing in the orientation of the nationalist movements in the Asian and the African parts of the Arab World. With the French occupation of Algeria in 1830 and Tunis in 1881, and the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, Western imperialism was to become the target of nationalist agitation in these countries, and indeed in all North Africa which was subjected to mounting Western pressure. To resist Western domination, the North African nationalist movements were to embrace the Pan-Islamism of Abdul Hamid and to rally around the Ottoman Empire. For the Egyptian and the North African people this was easy to do; for they, unlike the Arabs of the East, had in most cases known only nominal Ottoman rule. Egypt had, under the rule of Mohammed Ali and his successors, and in isolation from the rest of the Arab provinces, developed a kind of local Egyptian patriotism. We have seen this patriotism exist side by side with the consciousness of Arabism in Tahtawi's thought. But Tahtawi's Arabism did not develop into Kawakebi's Arab nationalism, for it was submerged in

(165) Ibid., p. 34.

Pan-Islamism. In fighting British domination, Egyptian patriots were to embrace Pan-Islamism, and pin their hopes on the Ottoman Empire. Thus when Kawakebi was attacking bitterly Abdul Hamid and Ottoman rule and advocating the replacement of religious bonds by those of nationality, the famous Egyptian patriot Mustapha Kamel was calling Abdul Hamid the greatest sultan that ever sat on the throne of the House of Othman, and was declaring that the continuance of the Ottoman Empire was a necessity for mankind, and that it was the duty of all Moslems to rally around the sacred Islamic Caliphate, that Egyptians had to hold fast to the bonds that tied them to the Ottoman Sultanate, and finally that politics are inseparable from religion.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ This extreme Egyptian Pan-Islamism was not only to isolate the Egyptians ideologically from the Arabs of the East, but also from the Turks of the Ottoman Empire itself. Thus when an attempt to assassinate Abdul Hamid in 1905 was to fail, the great Turkish poet Tewfik Fikrat was to lament in his poetry its failure, while Ahmed Showki, the celebrated Egyptian poet, was to congratulate in a long poem Abdul Hamid and see in his escape the escape of true religion, al-din al-hanif.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ And when Egyptians were calling the Istanbul of Abdul Hamid Dar al-Khilafa, the Abode of the

(166) Mustapha Kamel, al-Masalah al-Sharqiyyah, pp. 11, 13, 23, 259, 279.

(167) Sati al-Husri, Safahat Min al-Modhi al-Karib (Beirut, 1948), pp. 82-87.

Caliphate, Tewfik Fikret was calling it in his famous ode Sis, the Mist, "whore of the world ." Egyptians were indeed to become plus Calipheste que le Caliph, so that when the Arab Sharif of Mecca was to lead in 1904 one of the frequent internal disturbances in Hejaz, Ahmed Showki was to appeal to Abdul Hamid "the Caliph of God" not to spare the sword against the Sharif and to disregard the Sharif's relationship to the Prophet. (168) And when finally Abdul Hamid was overthrown by the coup of 1908, that caused ecstatic joy in Turkey and the Arab World, Hafiz Ibrahim, another celebrated Egyptian poet of the period, was to write an ode in which he lamented his abdication, reiterated his admiration for the sultan, and expressed his distress that the Moslem subjects of Abdul Hamid rejoiced over his plight, even before the Christians, the Druzes, and the Jews. (169) Other North African countries were also to give their sympathy, down to the First World War, to the Ottoman Empire. (170) In his early awareness of the developing ideological cleavage between the national movements in the Eastern and the Western parts of the Arab World and in his complaint against it, Kawakebi was anticipating the modern Arab nationalists who were later to attempt to bridge this cleavage.

(168) Ahmed Showki, al-Showkiat, (Cairo, 1953), Vol. I, pp. 252-255.

(169) Hafiz Ibrahim, Diwan Hafiz, (Cairo, 1922), Vol. III, pp. 30-37.

(170) See Alal al-Fasi, Al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyah fi al-Maghrib al-Arabi, (Cairo, 1948).

In view of the later development of the doctrine of Arab nationalism, I have stressed so far the secularist nature of the idea of Arab nationalism in Kawakebi's thought. The overstressing of this point at the expense of accuracy must be avoided by the writer on Kawakebi. Like all precursors of new ideas and concepts, Kawakebi retained many of the old. A Kepler keeps his belief in astrology; and Vindiciae contra tyrannos, in some ways the Tabai al-Istibdad of the Christian West in the 16th. century, urges resistance to kings, but still maintains that their powers come from God. Old ideas are stubborn things, and they die hard, even in the minds of men evolving new ones; and so it was with Kawakebi. Thus he still calls the town he lives in "my watan".⁽¹⁷¹⁾ He does not seem to have achieved the complete and absolute secularism of the modern Arab nationalist, so he is still able to define umma as "the sum of individuals with a common ancestry or watan, language, or religion, just as a building is a collection of stones",⁽¹⁷²⁾ This, of course, is a definition that is not acceptable to a Sati al-Husri; but Kawakebi's ideas must not be juxtaposed with those of a Sati al-Husri. Kawakebi had distinguished, as we have seen, between the Arabs and all the other Moslem peoples, and had demanded that Arabs, non-Moslems as well as Moslems, have a corporate political existence of their own. This view must

(171) Umm al-Qura, p. 4.

(172) Tabai al-Istibdad, pp. 95-96.

be compared with the ideas current at the time of Kawakebi, such as those of Mustapha Kamel. Kawakebi's friend Rashid Rida was writing in 1899 that Moslems had no nationality other than their religion, and was maintaining that Britain's conversion to Islam and its upholding of the sharia would entitle it to rule all of the East and of Africa,⁽¹⁷³⁾ and when in 1902 he came to republish Umm al-Qura in his journal al-Manar he was to point out his disapproval of Kawakebi's separation of religious and temporal powers and try to edit Umm al-Qura by deleting Kawakebi's attack on the Ottoman Empire.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Kawakebi's concern with the Caliphate and its fate is another point not shared by the secularist modern Arab nationalist, but is again understandable when viewed against his times. It was inevitable that the Caliphate would become a bone of contention between the early Arab nationalist and his Turkish overlord; and thus even the early Christian Arab nationalist Nejib Azouri was to pick on it in 1905 and to write: "the spawn of Ertogrul (the semi-legendary founder of the Ottoman Empire) usurped the Caliphate of Islam".⁽¹⁷⁵⁾

Kawakebi is also not completely free from Pan-Islamic ideas that had been so forcefully advocated by Afghani, so he conceives of a Moslem Union, to which all Moslem people

(173) Al-Manar, (1899), p. 324.

(174) Ibid., (1902), pp. 279, 910.

(175) Quoted by Lothrop Stoddard, The New World of Islam, (New York, 1922), p. 172.

have their contributions to make. Thus he assigns in this union the organization of military forces to the Afghans and their neighbours in the East, and Morocco and the other North African emirates in the West. He entrusts Persia, Central Asia, and India with cultural and economic matters. Diplomacy he assigns to the Turks, adding in a malicious footnote that this is because they are the masters of dissimulation and fickleness.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ The Arabs, however, are the only instrument who can effect Islamic union, and not only this union but indeed Eastern union.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Thus Kawakebi tries to work out some synthesis between his Pan-Arabism and the Pan-Islamism of his day. It is perhaps this strong and prevailing Pan-Islamism of his day which prevents him from severing all relations with the Moslem Turks and the Ottoman Empire. He thus demands that the nationalities that compose the Empire have their own administrative autonomies, like that of the United States and the German federation.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Kawakebi, further, repudiates any partiality for the Arabs, and maintains that his programme for the Caliphate and its transfer to the Arabs is in the interests of the Ottomans themselves and that it is the only means by which they can renovate their political life.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ But Kawakebi remains, in spite of these views, the unmistakable precursor of modern Arab

(176) Umm al-Qura, pp. 217-218.
(177) Ibid., p. 222.
(178) Ibid., p. 163.
(179) Ibid., pp. 238-239.

nationalism, for the majority of the pre-World War Arab societies and the Arab Conference of 1913 that voiced the aspirations of the early Arab nationalists, were to demand only the granting of administrative autonomy to the Arabs within the Ottoman Empire.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ It is more significant to examine the four proclamations that were issued by the Sharief of Mecca who led the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman rule. These four proclamations, issued between June 1916 and March 1917, contain the official ideology of the Arab Revolt. They duplicate, in an extraordinary manner, Kawakebi's ideas and indictment of Ottoman rule a decade and a half after the publication of Umm al-Qura. They repudiate, for instance, all prejudice against the Turks and all intentions of harming the Islamic cause. They maintain that the Revolt is in the interests of the Ottoman Turks themselves, as well as in the interests of all Moslem peoples. They charge the Unionist rulers of the Empire with having caused the loss of Ottoman territory to the foreigners. The Turks have ceased to execute the Islamic sharia and to take religion seriously. They have bombed the Kabah and have not respected religion and humanity in Hejaz. The Arabs occupy a special position in Islam, and the Prophet had said: "If Arabs are humiliated, Islam is humiliated". They, however, nowhere demand, like Kawakebi, the transfer of the Caliphate

(180) George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp. 109, 110, 112. Al-Lujnat al-Ulya li-Hizb al-Lamarkazia, Al-Mutamar al-Arabi al-Awal, (Cairo, 1913) p. 113.

from the Turks to the Arabs and they add to Kawakebi's charges the accusation of Turks of fighting the Arabic language.⁽¹⁸¹⁾ Otherwise, these proclamations are such an exact duplicate of Kawakebi's indictment of Turkish rule, that one is tempted to read them into the "Proclamation that Time will Unvail", that Kawakebi has written entirely in code, and with which he has concluded Umm al-Qura. The secret Arab nationalist societies that prepared for the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman rule were to resemble in many ways Kawakebi's fictitious society. This fact, together with the Nostradamustic nature of Kawakebi's ideas, such as his remark that his society must maintain a secret branch in Mecca⁽¹⁸²⁾ (from which in fact the Arab Revolt was later to erupt) has indeed made some writers assert that the society he so realistically describes in Umm al-Qura had in fact existed.⁽¹⁸³⁾ This assertion is absolutely unfounded, for there is no historical evidence to support it. But politics, like nature, often copies art; and this seems to have taken place in the case of Kawakebi.

There is, however, evidence that points to Kawakebi's actually attempting to bring about what he had preached, by working for the establishment of an Arab State with Khedive

(181) Amin Said, Al-Thawra al-Arabiyya al-Kubra, (Cairo, n.d.), Vol. I, pp. 149-165, 287-290. Al-Kibla, Nos. 11, 31, 58.

(182) Umm al-Qura, p. 197.

(183) K.T. Khairallah, Le Problème du Levant: Les Régions Arabes Libérées, (Paris, 1919), p. 26.

Abbas II as its Caliph. Kawakebi had been, as we know from those who knew him, a friend of Abbas II, whom he had praised in Umm al-Qura for his "religious fervour and Arab zeal" and had hoped for his support.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ It is very probable that Kawakebi was actually to win this support, for Khedive Abbas II, according to some sources, is supposed to have encouraged the Pan-Arab movement and to have aimed at being the Caliph of an Arab State.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Abbas II had been accused by the British government of supplying the anti-Turkish rebellion of Yemen in 1901 with arms and money, and leaflets calling for his proclamation as a Caliph had actually been distributed in Yemen and other Ottoman provinces.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ Abbas II's chief of the Khedivial cabinet, who was to end by becoming pro-Ottoman like his master, understandably denies these charges in his memoirs, but records on another occasion that Abbas II had actually financed in 1902 an attempt to overthrow Abdul Hamid.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ In 1901 and 1902 Kawakebi had taken long trips to Arabia and Yemen, and had even reached India, with no apparent purpose for these trips. All of Kawakebi's friends, acquaintances, and contemporaries agree that he was sent by Abbas II on these trips to advocate the establishment of an

(184) Umm al-Qura, pp. 213-214.

(185) See Lothrop Stoddard, The New World of Islam, pp. 201-202, and Ahmed Shafiq, Mudhakarati fi Nisf Qarn, (Cairo, 1936), Vol. II, Part II, pp. 269-270.

(186) Ahmed Shafiq, Mudhakarati fi Nisf Qarn, Vol. II, Part II, p. 367.

(187) Ibid., Vol. II, Part I, pp. 8-9, 269.

Arab State with Khedive Abbas II as its Caliph.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ Kawakebi's very good friend Ibrahim Salim al-Najjar informs us that Kawakebi was paid by Abbas II a monthly salary of 50 Egyptian pounds.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ As a historian of ideas, the full investigation of this question does not concern me, but I think that in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we are entitled to regard Kawakebi as a precursor of Arab nationalism in action, as well as in thought.

(188) See Ibrahim Salim al-Najjar, al-Hadith, (1940), p. 7; Mohammed Kurd Ali, Mudhakarti, Vol. II, p. 610; Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqad, Al-Rahala Kaf: Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi, (Cairo, 1959), pp. 177-178.

(189) Al-Hadith, (1951), p. 120.

The Nineteenth Century and After

The political ideas we have examined in the preceding chapters were evolved out of a concrete historical situation. This historical situation, and the challenges and responses produced by it, have been magnificently described by Professor Arnold Toynbee. (1) In an encounter between two contemporary civilizations the weaker, often, as demonstrated by Professor Toynbee, attempts to fight the stronger by mastering its secrets and turning its own weapons against it; Peter the Great of Russia is the archetype of the man of action who adopts this attitude. In the encounter between the exhausted Islamic world of the nineteenth century and the civilization of the West, Islam was to produce its own men of action of this type: Sultan Mahmud II in Turkey, Mohammed Ali the Great in Egypt, and Bay Ahmed in Tunis. These men of action were understandably to be impressed mostly with the military superiority of the West, and in consequence they tried to adopt Western military arms and techniques, but "one thing leads to another" as Professor Toynbee points out, and the adoption of the purely material and military elements of a culture are followed by the absorption of the other non-

(1) See Arnold J. Toynbee, A study of History, Vol. VIII, (London, 1954). For shorter explanations of this particular historical phenomenon, see Toynbee's Civilization on Trial, (London, 1953), pp. 184-212, and The World and the West, (London, 1953).

military elements of that culture. Nowhere is this historical phenomenon of fighting a superior civilization by adopting its own weapons, and the progression from borrowing the military and material elements of the culture to the appropriation of the non-military and non-material elements, illustrated as clearly as in the writing of Khairuddin al-Tunisi, himself a military man of action. And it is perhaps not without significance that Professor Toynbee, to whom goes the honour of the discovery and the elaboration of this phenomenon, takes the trouble of informing us that he possess two copies of Muqadamat Kitab Aqwan al-Masalik fi Marifat Ahwal al-Mamalik, one in Arabic and the other in French. (2) Only eight, out of the forty-four youngmen that were sent to France by Mohammed Ali in 1826, were assigned to study social and non-military sciences; and one of those eight youngmen was Tahtawi. (3)

The political thought of the nineteenth century was mainly written by the youngmen who came in contact with Western culture abroad or in Western-type schools in their own countries. As a result of their contact with the West, and the emergence of this Arab intelligentsia, the Arab world was to experience a Renaissance and a Religious Reformation.

(2) Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, Vol. VIII, n.2, p. 692.

(3) For a list of the names of the students and the subjects they were assigned to study, see J. Heyworth-Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt, pp. 159-163.

The Renaissance

In many ways Tahtawi is a typical man of the Renaissance - all knowledge is his domain, and all knowledge is new to him. He writes prose and poetry; he writes about politics, history, geography, education, grammar, religion, law, geometry, and mineralogy. In the manuscript of Takhlis he introduces his readers to Western music and transcribes for their benefit the first three notes of the Western scale of music. (4) He also tells his readers in the original manuscript of Takhlis about some Western scientific notions that contradict the teachings of divine books but are difficult to refute "such as saying that the earth revolves", but in the published copy, fearing perhaps the fate of a Galileo, he deletes the reference to the revolution of the earth. (5) He writes of the transplanted palm trees he had seen in Paris and of the ones which were found in America, when it was discovered, and so could not have been transplanted from somewhere else, and this phenomenon proves to him the error of the 13th century cosmographer al-Qazwini who had written that palm trees grow only in the lands of Islam. (6) And in the same chapter in the Takhlis he describes with admiration the carriages that watered the streets of Paris. But Tahtawi,

(4) Takhlis al-Ibriz, (Cairo, 1958), pp. 33, 34.

(5) Takhlis, (Cairo, 1958), pp. 37-38; Takhlis, (Cairo, 1834), p. 122.

(6) Takhlis, (Cairo, 1834), p. 43.

in spite of the almost universal range of his knowledge and interests, is no Leonardo. A Leonardo would not have described a street watering carriage that he had seen in a foreign town; he would have designed one. And in this fact lies the great difference between the Arab Renaissance of the 19th century, and the Western Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries. The Arab Renaissance is a second hand one, a ready made one. No Arab Columbus discovers America, no Arab Gutunberg invents the printing press, and Tahtawi's writings are mostly translations and derivative. It is obvious that this Renaissance had not grown up inside the Arab mind, but that it had rubbed off on it in its contact with the West; hence the superficiality of this Arab Renaissance. But an Arab Renaissance, of sorts, has, all the same, taken place: America has been discovered and the printing press has come to the Arab world. The Arab mind in the nineteenth century found new ideas, new concepts, new worlds, and new possibilities. And this explains the childlike exuberance of Tahtawi. Not for him the majestic brooding of an Ibn Khaldun contemplating the death of an old civilization, but the joie de vivre and the excitement of a man attending the birth of a new one. Tahtawi's attitude is more akin to that of Ulrich von Hutten's "It is a joy to live". It is this Renaissance exuberance, coupled with the optimism of the nineteenth century and its belief in the possibility of unlimited progress, that enables the Arab mind in the nineteenth century to

overcome its initial feelings of inadequacy and inferiority vis a vis Western supremacy, and to produce the political ideas with which it hopes to reform Arab society. In a sense, the comparative poverty of contemporary political theory can be traced to the loss of this original optimism, or should we say innocence?

The Religious Reformation

Arab intellectual stagnation prior to the nineteenth century had been caused mainly by Islamic Scholasticism. The triumph of the Asharite orthodox theology, Kalam, over the Mutazila in the third Islamic century, was, in effect, the victory of the most rigid Scholasticism over Rationalism in the Arab mind, for Asharite theology demanded that the Moslem believe bila kayf, "without asking why". By closing the "Gate of Ijtihad", the Moslem was denied the right of "the exercise of judgment"; and thus he and Islam itself were condemned to immobility, for ijtihad, as Mohammed Iqbal has said, is the "principle of movement" in Islam. However the encounter between the Arab world and the West in nineteenth century, instigated political, sociological, and intellectual movements in the Arab world, and the Arabs started to ask "why". Tahtawi praises the French for always wanting to know the origin of things. But even before him, Jabarti with whom this study starts, is impressed by the fair trial given to the killer of General Kleber "by those people who are governed by reason and have no religion (i.e. Islam)", and he contrasts

this with the conduct of some "who profess Islam". The "why" in a sense has been asked in this instance, and Jabarti has started with this observation the process of Islamic Reformation, which in the course of the nineteenth century was to lead, on the one hand, to secularism and the belief that society can have justice without religion, and on the other hand to the attempt to put reason back into religion. At present, we are concerned with this second current.

The Islamic Reformation of the nineteenth century is an attempt to set Islam in ideological movement again and to give answer to the "whys" that Moslems had started to ask. The theological answers that this Reformation gave do not concern us in this study, and they have been brilliantly presented and discussed by Professor H.A.R. Gibb in his Modern Trends in Islam, and Dr. Charles C. Adams in his Islam and Modernism in Egypt. We have dealt with some of its most pertinent points in the previous chapter. This Reformation, however, was to have political implications too, for it led, as we have pointed out, into secularism; and it, also, gave the political thinkers dealt with in this study, the theological framework within which they evolved their political theories. Their Islam is the Islam of this Reformation, so much so that readers of the day would suspect Mohammed Abdu, the Greatest of all the reformers, of writing Kawakebi's books.

There are, in addition, some striking similarities between the political ideas we have examined and some of those

that were evolved by this religious Reformation. We should like now to point to two of these. Islamic religious reformers are as aware as the political thinkers of Western superiority. Afghani is obsessed with the physical and military weakness of Moslems vis a vis the West; this obsession is clear in al-Urwah al-Wuthqa, and in his eloquent appeal to Pan-Islamism. But this is true also of a man as mild as Mohammed Abdu, and at the post-Arabi period in which he had become almost completely apolitical. In his al-Islam wa al-Nasraniyyah ma al-Ilm wa al-Madaniyyah, published in 1901, he expresses his amazement at the fact that Christianity which is an other-worldly and a peaceful religion that commands Christians to "whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" has conquered the world by its military sciences. Islam, on the other hand, a religion of strength, which commands its followers to "make ready for them whatever force you can" (Koran 8:60), has been surpassed by others in military strength and inventiveness, and consequently many Moslems have fallen under foreign domination. He wonders how the machinegun, the Krup gun, and the Martin rifle, have been invented by the Christians and not the Moslems. (7) For Abdu the solution of this dilemma is clear; he urges Moslems to follow the advice given by the first Caliph to his general,

(7) Mohammed Abdu, al-Islam wa al-Nasraniyyah ma al-Ilm wa al-Madaniyyah, (Cairo, 1960), pp. 21-23.

Khalid ibn al-Walid: Fight them with what they fight you, the sword with the sword, and the lance with the lance. (8) Khaireddin had urged the Moslems to take the same attitude and he had quoted the very same advice of the first Caliph. (9) But Abdu, like Khaireddin, does not refer to mere material weapons; all that is used in a violent struggle or a peaceful competition is a weapon according to Abdu - such as science, commerce, industry, justice, and religion, (10)

For Abdu the Islam of his day is not true Islam. (11) It has been corrupted by the non-Arab Persian and Byzantine mawali who introduced religious controversies into it, while Persians and Indians introduced Sufism into it. (12) "Islam was an Arab religion" writes Abdu, but an Abbasid Caliph committed the mistake of enlisting for political reasons Turks and other people in his army, and thus "Islam was un-Arabised", and those foreign soldiers who "put on Islam like a dress, without its penetrating into their conscience" ended by ruling the Caliph himself. (13) The religious Reformation by repudiating the Islam of its day, and going back to early Islam was in effect going back to Islam at its most Arab. Thus Mohammed Abdu, who in no way was an Arab nationalist, was unconsciously helping to heighten consciousness of Arabism.

(8) ibid., p. 91.

(9) Muqadimat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, pp. 5-6

(10) Al-Islam wa al-Nasraniyyah ma al-Ilm wa al-Madaniyyah, pp. 91-92.

(11) ibid., p. 169.

(12) ibid., pp. 79-80.

(13) ibid., pp. 166-167.

There is one final point to make. Many have observed that the Islamic Reformation had been a very mild one. Lord Cromer had gone as far as writing: "Islam cannot be reformed; that is to say, reformed Islam is Islam no longer; it is something else". (14) This, of course, is nonsense. Is not reformed Christianity "something else", according to the Holy See? But the fact remains that Islam knew no real Reformation. Erasmus refused the cardinalship that was offered him, Mohammed Abdu became the Grand Mufti of Egypt, in 1900. Mohammed Abdu was in fact more of a Loyola than a Martin Luther. He carried out his Reformation within the established "church". This was partly because of the mildness of his temperament; but in all fairness to him the question must still be asked: could a new "church", or a new madhab, come into being in the Islam of the nineteenth century? All religion, Christian as well as Moslem, had lost its great medieval hold on the mind of modern man, and Islam's last hour attempt to reform and rejuvenate itself was in some ways similar to whipping a dead horse. But in spite of all this, a mild Reformation, with its own characteristics, as well as a not very profound Renaissance, had taken place, and these were to be followed in the Arab world, as in the West, by the emergence of the secular state.

(14) The Earl of Cromer, Modern Egypt, (London, 1908), Vol. II, p. 299.

The Secular State

Historically the secular state came to Islam when the successor states of the Ottoman Empire - the Republic of Turkey, and the Kingdoms of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt - declared in their constitutions that the people were the source of sovereignty and legislation. "Since God is Himself the sole legislator, there can be no room in Islamic political theory for legislation or legislative powers, whether enjoyed by a temporal ruler or by any kind of assembly. There can be no 'sovereign state', in the sense that the state has the right of enacting its own law". (15)

The first and the most forceful theoretical apologia for the secular state in modern Arab political thought was Ali Abdul Razik's book Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm, (Islam and the Principles of Government), published in 1925. In it Ali Abdul Razik argued that "there is nothing in religion to prevent Moslems . . . from tearing down that ancient order under which they have been humiliated, and from building up the rules of their state and the order of the government upon the most recent conclusions of the human mind and the most secure results which the experiments of nations have shown to be the best principles of government". (16) Ali Abdul Razik was first to tear down the Caliphate. He argued that neither the Koran nor the sunna necessitated that Moslems be ruled by a Caliphate.

(15) H.A.R. Gibb, "Constitutional Organization", in Law in the Middle East, ed. by Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Libesney, (Washington, 1955), Vol. I, p. 3.

(16) Ali Abdul Razik, Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm, (Cairo, 1925), p. 103.

Movements of rebellion in Islamic history, from that of the fourth Caliph Ali down to that of the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkey, proved that the third source of Islamic law, ijma, the consensus of Moslem public opinion, has not supported the institution of the Caliphate. There was a need for government to regulate the civil and the religious affairs of Moslems, but this government, he argued, could be an absolute or a limited one, a democratic, socialist, or a bolshevist government. (17) "We have" he declared, "no need of the Caliphate, neither for the affairs of our religion, nor those of civil life. The Caliphate has always been and continues to be a disaster to Islam and to the Moslems, and the source of evil and corruption." (18)

Ali Abdul Razik's views on the Caliphate were contrary to the general body of classical political theory. There were, however, some precedents for his ideas among the Kharajidets and Abu Bakr al-Asanm who maintained that Moslems had no need of setting up the immamate. But these views, as the verdict of the Azhar court that tried Ali Abdul Razik and dismissed him from among the ulama and his sharia judiciary office correctly observed, were held only by a minority and considered an innovation by the majority of Moslems. (19) The views that the Caliphate had caused Moslems humiliation was a new idea, but that it had been a source of strife and violence had been

(17) ibid., p. 35.

(18) ibid., p. 36.

(19) Hukum Hayet Kibar al-Ulama fi Kitab al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukum, (Cairo, 1925), p. 29.

earlier recognized. Thus al-Sharhastani (d. 1153) had written "Never was there an Islamic issue which brought about more bloodshed than the Caliphate". We might here observe, that when Kawakebi, the precursor of the Arab Revolt against the Turks, was making the transfer of the Caliphate to the Arabs a starting point of his doctrine of Arab nationalism, he was not only establishing the validity of Shahrastani's observation, but also linking up in a way modern Arab history and political theory with their classical antecedents.

But Ali Abdul Razik does not only pull down the classical institution of the Caliphate, he also challenges the whole concept of Islamic sharia, divine law, and in the last analysis the novelty and the boldness of his thought lies in this challenge. The Prophet's message, according to Ali Abdul Razik, was merely spiritual and not secular. The political changes that were effected in the Prophet's society were only an incidental outcome of this spiritual message. "All that Islam laid down," he writes "as legislation, and all that the Prophet imposed upon Moslems, as regulations, rules, and moral principles, had nothing at all to do with methods of political rule, nor with the regulations of a civil state... all that Islam brought forth ... is a religious code, dedicated entirely to the service of God Almighty, and concerned with the religious welfare of mankind, nothing else". (20)

(20) Al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm, pp. 84-85.

Thus Ali Abdul Razik's views on the nature of Islam and sharia were in effect a justification of the modern secular state in which religion is a purely private matter, regulating man's relations with God, but not with his fellowmen and with the state. From the theoretical point of view, Ali Abdul Razik was justified in asserting that Islam does not prescribe categorically the form of political organization that the Moslem community must assume - it can be a caliphate, a monarchy, or a republic; but whatever its political form, the Islamic state is duty bound to obey and enforce the Islamic sharia, which embraces man's secular affairs as well as the religious. The Islamic state, in fact, exists, as Professor Gibb observes "for the sole purpose of maintaining and enforcing the Law".

We must now turn to the secularization of the law itself. Islamic law, in theory, is all-embracing, and because of its divine origin, is absolutely immutable. In practice, it had, like any other law, to respond to the ever changing patterns of social, political, and economic life. This was done in the domain of public and administrative law by the issuing of independent legal regulations, called kanun and sometimes also called siyasa, and by establishing administrative courts of law, like Diwan al-Mazalim, the Court of Complaints. In the domain of personal relations some of the rules of sharia were qualified or evaded by means of the so-called hiyal, fictitious legal expedencies. But until the coming of the nineteenth century, the formal all-embracing supremacy of sharia was not challenged, and it remained, on

the whole, a static and moribund system of law. The Islamic reformist movement in the nineteenth century adopted two attitudes towards law, both of which are clearly illustrated in Tahtawi's writings. At his very first contact with the West, Tahtawi noted, as we have seen, that the laws of the French are their sharia, and that these laws are not of divine origin. He had, furthermore, admired some of them and could thus praise the constitution of Louis XVIII "although most of it is not in the Koran of Allah and the Tradition of His Messenger". To meet the exigencies of modern life and to cover all fields of activity concerning which there is very little, or no, guidance in the sharia, the Ottoman sultans started to promulgate secular laws derived from Western models, and entrusted their application to secular courts. The same process took place in Egypt. (21) However the state maintained that the secular laws it enacted were in no way contrary to sharia. Similarly, the state maintained the secular courts, charged with the application of these laws, alongside the sharia courts. The sharia remained supreme in matters of personal and family law and was applied by the sharia courts.

But the reformist movement also carried out modernization

(21) For an excellent account of the process of modernization of law in different Islamic countries, see J.N.D. Anderson, Islamic Law in the Modern World, (New York, 1959).

inside the sharia itself, with the purpose of harmonizing its regulations concerning personal status with the new social patterns that had arisen in the Moslem world. Here again, the attitude it adopted and the method of modernization it employed can be seen in Tahtawi's writings. Tahtawi had admired the French system of taxation, and had advocated its adoption by Moslems, and although himself a follower of the Shafii school of law, he had observed that a justification of this system could be found in the Hanafi school of law. (22) In Manaahij Tahtawi explicitly advocated the modernization of Islamic legislation by basing it on all the four orthodox schools of law and on some unorthodox authorities, such as Imam al-Awzai. Kawakebi advocated the same eclectic method for the modernization of Islamic law. Khaireddin al-Tunisi argued forcefully for the adaptation of sharia to the changed patterns of life, and appealed to the ulama not to obstruct the efforts of statesmen to carry out this adaptation. Mohammed Abdu, the greatest alim of his day, was in fact to aid this movement of modernization by some of his fetwas, legal opinions, and more particularly with his famous "Report on the Reform of Sharia Courts", 1900, in which he advocated that the sharia courts in Egypt apply the rules of all orthodox schools of law, without restricting themselves to those of the official Hanafi

(22) It is interesting to note in this connection that Tahtawi's pupil, the celebrated Egyptian jurist Mohammed Kadri Pasha (d. 1888) carried out a modern codification of family, property, inheritance, and waqf law, on the basis of the Hanafi doctrine.

school. We might however assume that the eclectic method of the application of Islamic sharia went beyond what Abdu envisaged, because from 1920 onwards, the modernist movement in Islamic legislation in Egypt and other Arab countries adopted the method of unrestricted eclecticism, in which the legislator found juristic justification not only in the four Sunni schools of law, but often in extinct schools, or opinions attributed to early jurists or held at any time in the past. Also, from 1920 onwards the scope of sharia jurisdiction progressively narrowed down, until it became restricted, in its modernized form, to personal and family law alone. In 1926 the Turkish Republic substituted the Swiss Code even in the domain of family law, and in 1956 the Egyptian Republic abolished the sharia courts and centralized the administration of all law in the hands of the national courts, and in 1958 the Tunisian Republic followed suit.

Let us now trace roughly and very briefly the ideological process by which the secularization of the Islamic state came to be. Tahtawi had discovered the Western secular state and had greatly admired its secular laws and institutions. Kawakebi, in effect, divorced politics from religion, for he took away from his Caliph all temporal power and left him only religious authority. In asserting the individual's freedom in matters of faith, Mohammed Abdu challenged and took away from the Caliph this religious authority. Abdu categorically declared: "Islam has not given to the Caliph

or to the qadi or to the mufti or to the Shaikh al-Islam the slightest religious authority in the matter of doctrines and the formulation of rules. Whatever authority is held by any one of these is a civil authority defined by the Islamic sharia, and it is inadmissible that any one of them should claim the right of control over the faith or worship of the individual or should dispute him his way of thought". (23) The Caliphate that Ali Abdul Razik came to deal with had already lost ideologically all temporal and religious authority, so he could easily declare: "We have no need of the Caliphate, neither for the affairs of our religion, nor those of our civil life", and carry thus Kawakebi's and Abdu's views to their logical end. In some ways he duplicated Abdu's views. He wrote, for instance: "The Caliphate is not a religious office, neither are the offices of the qadi and other posts of the state. All these are merely administrative offices with which religion is not connected". (24) Thus both Abdu and Abdul Razik made the whole religious institution exist on sufferance of the state. What the state gives, the state can take away; and actually the state did finally take away. When the Egyptian Republic abolished the sharia courts and all communal courts in Egypt, it declared in an explanatory memorandum: "The government cannot suffer the existence on the national territory of judiciary autonomies which impose their

(23) Mohammed Abdu, al-Islam wa al-Nasraniyyah ma al-Ilm wa al-Madaniyyah, p. 126.

(24) Ali Abdul Razik, al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm, p. 103.

will upon it, oppose its policy of reform, or finally choose their own way of reform". (25) It is true that the national courts of the United Arab Republic today still **apply the sharia** in matters of personal and family relations; but as J.N.D. Anderson correctly observes: "Such courts ... will approach its application from an increasingly secular standpoint". (26) A committee is at present engaged in a new codification of personal law in the U.A.R. in accordance with "the spirit of the Islamic religion, and with observance of the traditions and the customs of the nation, and its modern social evolution". (27) The modern nation-state can no more accept the existence of two codes of law on its national territory, than it can suffer the existence of two systems of courts for the administration of justice.

Historically, the transition from Islamic theocracy to the modern secular state was effected without any resistance on the part of the masses of the people in the Arab world. The most obvious explanation of this phenomenon is the fact that the Islamic Renaissance and Reformation, such as they were, had shaken, like their counterparts in the West, the Arab man's whole weltsuschauung and the hold of religion and the religious institution on his mind. The sudden onslaught of Western ideas and Western science has caused a clearly

(25) Al-Ahram, 22nd September, 1956.

(26) J.N.D. Anderson, Islamic Law in the Modern World, p. 95.

(27) Al-Akhbar, 23rd April, 1962.

observable religious dislocation in the minds of people. Al-Jabarti had watched with great bewilderment the scientific experiments performed in front of him at the Institut d'Egypte, and had freely admitted that their results "minds like ours cannot comprehend". But later, generations of Western educated Arabs came to take part themselves in such scientific experiments, and their result was the loss or the weakening of religious faith in their minds. Some people tried to reconcile modern science and technology with religion. We have seen Kawakebi's attempt to read into the Koran Darwin's theory of evolution, the steam engine, and photography. In this Kawakebi was not alone, Mohammed Abdu claimed in his famous tafsir, interpretation, of the Koran that the jinn who are mentioned in the Koran are microbes. These attempts to reconcile religion with modern science were no more successful in the Arab world than similar attempts in the West. In many ways, the religious dislocation in the Arab mind was much greater than that in the Western mind, for modern science did not come gradually to it, neither did it grow from inside of it. The centuries of scholastic hold had petrified the whole process of religious thinking. The Arab mind came to take the Koranic sura "We have not neglected anything in the Book" literally, and hence its great shock when it suddenly discovered all the things that were not in the Book. Al-Jabarti could not believe in the existence of an airship, but airships were later to force themselves increasingly into the Arab world,

causing profound ideological upheavals in the Arab mind. It is reported that when a tribe of the lower Euphrates in Iraq had risen against the central government, the government sent its planes to bomb them. A few bombs made the tribesmen give up immediately the rebellion, and break into a housa, a tribal chant, in which they addressed God thus: "O You who are pleased to have created the camel, come and have a look at the aeroplane" - referring with this to the Koranic sura that states: "See they not the camels, how they are created?" Historically, this story, like Marie Antoinette's "let them eat cake", might be completely apocryphal; but to the historian of ideas apocryphal stories are as significant as authenticated historical facts, for they show a state of mind and reveal the climate of opinion that exists in a certain period of time. The airship, whose existence al-Jabarti at first doubted, has destroyed, as this story illustrates, the people's traditional beliefs. The airship has also established the modern state in the Arab world. It is a historical fact that when the uprisings of the lower Euphrates in the thirties occurred, it was the last time in which the authority of the central government in Iraq was to be challenged by the tribes; henceforth the state was to reign supreme within its national territory. Iraqi legislation was however slow to recognize this fact, for it applied to the tribes, until 1958, a special code of law, different from that of the settled population. The July Revolution of 1958 abolished the

tribal code and unified the national law, which today follows the sharia only in personal matters. The abolition of the tribal law by the revolutionary regime in Iraq is in effect another step in the direction of establishing the modern nation-state, sovereign, supreme, brooking on its national territory no autonomous organization or law besides its own.

There is, however, still some need in the Arab world for religious justification of the phenomena of modern life. Thus after Gagarin's successful ascent into space the shaikh of the Azhar declared that the conquest of outer-space is in no way contrary to the teachings of Islam and the Islamic sharia. (28) In the realm of politics the persistence of this religious demand explains the success that some religio-political movements, such as the Moslem Brotherhood, have had, and the fact that some of the tracts put out in different Arab countries still discuss politics in religious terms. But one can very safely hazard the guess that the divorce of politics from religion has come to stay in the Arab world, and that indeed it is to gain strength with the spread of secular education in Arab countries. The government of the United Arab Republic enacted last year Law No. 103 for the reorganization of al-Azhar. Henceforth, al-Azhar University is to contain colleges of medicine, engineering and industry, public administration, and agriculture. The College of Public Administration has already been opened, and the others will start

(28) Akhbar al-Yom, 15th April, 1961.

teaching within the coming three years. (29) The teaching of modern sciences and secular subjects in the Azhar has been one of the demands of almost all reformers in the nineteenth century, from Tahtawi down to Mohammed Abdu. The realization of their wish means in effect that secular education has come to invade even the greatest bastion of purely religious teaching in the Arab world.

Nationalism and Western Impact

The entry of modern political concepts into the Arab world as a result of the impact of the West, was not as simple and as direct a process as it is sometimes made out to be. The picture of Napoleon's gallant troops marching down the streets of Cairo, joyfully singing the Marseillaise, and preaching to the grateful local population nationalism and the other doctrines of the French Revolution, might be one dear to the hearts of some romantic believers in France's mission civilisatrice, but does not correspond to historical reality. Western culture was initially received in the Arab world with incomprehension, suspicion, and hostility; and this attitude has been generally retained by the Arab mind, and has influenced modern Arab political thought. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the nature of Arab reactions to Western culture; and here again we must go back to al-Jabarti.

On September 22nd, 1798, the French celebrated in Cairo,

(29) Al-Ahram, 11th and 13th November, 1961.

with the greatest pomp and pagentry, the seventh anniversary of the foundation of the French Republic. Their aim was to impress the Egyptians and to associate them in their revolutionary rejoicings, so a triumphal arch was erected on one side of the Ezbekiah square in Cairo and a portico on the other side with the Arabic inscription: "There is no god but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet". In the middle of the square they set up a great obelisk on which was inscribed in French and Arabic: "To the French Republic, year VII" and "To the expulsion of the Mamluks, year VI". The obelisk also stood for the famous symbolic Liberty Tree of the Revolution. Napoleon, his generals, and the local dignitaries all attended a spectacular military parade, and a proclamation of Napoleon to his troops was read out by General Boyer. Al-Jabarti watched the proceedings with curiosity but great indifference. It is also significant that he mistook General Boyer for a priest and the Napoleonic proclamation that was read for a religious sermon. (30) French contemporary accounts also support the impassiveness of the crowds that attended the grandiose festivities of that day. (31) The same celebration in the Ezbekiah square was attended by a certain Nakoula el-Turk, a Christian Lebanese, of French leanings. He reports in his

(30) Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, 'Ajaib al Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar, Vol. III, pp.18-19; Abd al-Rahman al-Rafi, Tarikh al-Haraka al-Qawmiyyah, (Cairo, 1948), pp. 223, 365.

(31) F. Charles-Roux, Bonaparte, Governor of Egypt, p. 86.

memoirs that: "The french used to say that this column (the obelisk) is the tree of liberty, but the Egyptians said that this is the stake, khazook, on which they impaled us and the symbol of the conquest of our country. They left this column for some ten months and when they took it down the Egyptians were full of joy". (32) Trees of liberty can not be transplanted by force into alien soil; they immediately become then symbols of humiliation, and therefore, of hatred and of resistance. The French in fact had to post soldiers to protect their tree of liberty from being defiled by the Egyptians, and only a month after its erection the population of Cairo rose against them.

Professor Toynbee, and some sociologists, have pointed out the fact that in any encounter between two different cultures, the material and technological elements of one culture are more easily transferred to the other, than its non-material, ideological, elements. We must here observe that the encounter between the Arab world and Western culture was not a peaceful, but a violent one, in which the Arabs were subjected to foreign rule and greatly humiliated; and as a consequence of the particular nature of this encounter, the adoption of the simplest material elements of Western culture were to be generally resisted by the majority of Arabs. Upon their occupation of Egypt, the French, fired with revolutionary

(32) Nakoula el-Turk, Histoire de L'Expedition des Francais en Egypt, (Paris, 1839), p. 52; p.45 of the original Arabic printed in the same volume.

enthusiasm, were to decree that the Egyptian population were to wear on their breasts the revolutionary tricolor cockade. Al-Jabarti describes carefully the unfamiliar cockade: "Consisting of three round bits of cloth or silk, like a coin; one is blue, one red, and the third white, cut in such a way that all three colours are seen", then he informs us of the distress that this measure caused the people. (33) The French also devised a tricolour sash to be conferred on distinguished people, who were entitled by its possession to full military honours from French troops. (34) But both the cockade and the tricolour sash met with great disapproval and resistance on the part of the Egyptians. Napoleon put with his own hands a sash on Shaikh Sharkawi, the president of the Diwan that the French had established, but Shaikh Sharkawi, according to Jabarti's account, tore off the sash and threw it on the floor in the presence of Napoleon, who was displeased with this act. Another shaikh, who seems to have been more diplomatic, wore his sash in the presence of Napoleon, but took it off upon leaving him. The majority of the people refused to wear the cockade, while some notables put it on when they called on the French authorities for some official matter or other, but took it off upon departing. (35) Napoleon finally, very wisely,

(33) Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, Ajaib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar, Vol. III, p. 3.

(34) F. Charles-Roux, Bonaparte: Gouverner of Egypt, p. 30.

(35) Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, Ajaib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar, Vol. III, p. 17.

of course, decided to disregard the application of the decree. (36) In 1900, Mohammed Abdu issued a fetwa that allowed the Moslems to wear Western headdress, but in the twenties and the thirties of this century Egyptians were still debating whether to adopt the hat or no. In the course of this debate the hat became to a minority "the symbol of civilization", (37) but the majority in actual fact never came to adopt it. The explanation of popular resistance to the adoption of this very simple material element in Western culture, is not hard to find. The cockade and the tricolour sash, as we know from Jabarti, offended the people's religious feelings; the hat, later on, was obviously offending the people's religious-political feelings. It had become a symbol of hated foreign domination. In a popular Egyptian patriotic song of today, called Dhikriat, Memories, the singer recalls modern Egyptian history. In it occur these two lines:

I saw the British flag -

A sight that humiliated me and made me cry.

Now, the British flag had as a matter of fact flown from the Citadel of Cairo and the Barracks of Kasr al-Nil - the target of countless nationalist demonstrations, for three quarters of a century, and had humiliated and enraged successive generations of Egyptians. It was the alien army of occupation, wearing Western caps, and Lord Cromer and his successors, in their top hats, that had kept the hated flag flying in the

(36) F. Charles-Roux, Bonaparte: Governor of Egypt, p. 66.

(37) Salam Mussa, al-Yom wa al-Ghad, (Cairo, 1927), pp. 254-255.

very heart of Cairo for all this period. The hat had naturally come to be the mark of the beast for the Egyptian. An Ataturk could force the Western cap on the Anatolian peasant after he had driven away from Anatolia the aliens who wore it and humiliated them thoroughly; one wonders if he could have forced the hat on the Turks before. In the Arab world the adoption of the most superficial features of Western material culture was to be resisted.

The resistance to the introduction of Western political ideas was also great. There was some outright rejection of Western political concepts in toto. This is best illustrated in the writings of the Moslem Brotherhood, whose leader had written: "The teachings and injunctions of Islam are comprehensive, governing the affairs of men in this world and in the next, and that those who think that these teachings deal only with spiritual and ritualistic aspects are mistaken in this assumption, for Islam is: doctrine, worship, homeland, nationality, religion, spirituality, the Koran, and the sword.(38) Such a doctrine, obviously, rejects all modern Western concepts: the separation of church and state, the secularization of the law, nationalism, and the nation-state. But the views of the Moslem Brotherhood have never been representative of the general body of modern Arab political thought. This thought, from the nineteenth century to the present, has been hostile to all forms of Western political domination, but has

(38) Quoted by Ishak Musa Husaini, The Moslem Brethren, (Beirut, n.d.). pp. 25-26.

generally accepted the political ideas of modern Western culture.

The relationship between Western political concepts and the emergence of modern Arab nationalism is not a very simple and direct one. Some feeling of nationality, it has been shown, of belonging to the same stock, of having the same religion or language, of pride in and love of one's natural habitude, of suspicions and hostility felt towards strangers, have existed long before modern nationalism, into whose composition they go. (39) These emotions have always been felt very strongly by the Arabs - a fact which is born out by a reading of Arabic literature. Professor Giorgio Levi Della Vida observes that "the feeling of belonging to a common stock was very strong among (pre-Islamic) Arabians. To call it nationalism would be an illegitimate intrusion of a foreign concept; still this term would define a feeling which was not unknown to Arabia". (40) Professor Grunebaum aptly warns that "the misconception that the Arab national self-consciousness is an outgrowth of the nineteenth century must be guarded against with great care. The nineteenth century saw its revival, its quickening into a political force, and, of course, a substantial enlargement of scope and territory, but the sentiment dates back mutatis mutandis to the

(39) Hans Kohen, The Idea of Nationalism, pp. 4-6.

(40) Giorgi Levi Della Vida, "Pre-Islamic Arabia," in the Arab Heritage, ed. Nabih Amin Faris, (New Jersey, 1944), p. 50.

days of paganism". (41) Islam, as we have shown, strengthened and sharpened the nationalism of the Arabs. So the intrusion of the West into the Arab world in the nineteenth century was in effect arousing emotions that have always been felt very strongly by the Arabs. Aristotle writes in his Politics, long before the coming of modern nationalism: "Another cause of revolution is the difference of races ... the reception of strangers in colonies, either at the time of their foundation or afterwards, has generally produced revolutions". It was obviously this reception of the French strangers into their midst, and not the ideas of the French Revolution, that made the people of Cairo rise against Napoleon's army of occupation.

The more direct influences of Western political concepts are to be found in the ideas of modern Arab political thought concerning the state, its organization, and the social and political values that it is supposed to uphold and safeguard; and to these we now turn.

The Political Reformation

The Arab intelligentsia that came in contact with the West in the nineteenth century was profoundly impressed by the power, prosperity, and progress of the West, and compared them with the weakness, poverty, and backwardness of its own society. The weakness of the Arab world vis a vis the West

(41) G.E. Von Grunebaum, Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition, (London, 1961), p. 64.

was the easiest defect of their society to recognize, but the most painful to bear, for power is one of the basic values of the whole Islamic weltanschauung. The motive-force behind all Arab political thought, from that moment of painful recognition until the present, has been the quest to regain power, or to borrow the sub-title of a popular American biography of President Nasser, "the search for dignity". This, of course, is not true of the Arab intelligentsia alone, but of all Moslem intelligentsias since the 19th century, and of the intelligentsias of the now emerging Afro-Asian nations, as well as of the pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia of the past.

Because of Islam and the Arab's special relationship to it, we might presume that the Arabs' urgency to find the "secret" of Western supremacy was greater than that of other peoples'. The three reformers with whom this study deals, found this "secret" of Western power, and its attendant prosperity and progress, in Western sciences and Western rationalism, and not in the religio-philosophic system of the West. All three reformers, who are as we have pointed out at the beginning of this study representative of the whole of modern Arab political thought, exhort their people to pursue modern knowledge, and they all endeavour to reconcile this modern knowledge, and the rationalism which they correctly recognize to be its mainspring, with their religion, Islam. They are all great believers in progress and enlightenment through education,

hence their great interest in it. All three devote long pages to the discussion of education; Tahtawi and Khaireddin take active part in the educational activities of their societies.

Further, all three reformers are impressed by the patriotism of the West. Tahtawi finds that this patriotism is a major factor in the strength of Western people and of Western states. He is also aware that, besides being a means for strength, patriotism is also a value around which group cohesion is built. The love of Moslems for their religion, he remarks, is equivalent to the love of watan, the patrie, in the West. By means of patriotism and a just government, these three reformers attempt to bridge the great gap of indifference, mistrust, and hostility that existed in the Arab world, under Ottoman rule, between the ruled and their rulers, the subjects and the state. (42) Under just governments free man, according to Kawakebi, is a complete master of himself and is completely owned by his nation, and when a nation reaches such a degree of progress that every individual will be ready to sacrifice his life and possessions for it, then that nation will be able to dispense with the individual's life and possessions. The subjects and the state have mutual rights and duties towards each other, according to Tahtawi, and the subjects have to learn that their private interests

(42) For this gap, see H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, Vol. I, Part I.

cannot be achieved except by realizing the public interest, which is the interest of the state, and which in turn is the interest of the watan, la patrie.

The ideas of our three reformers concerning the state are highly derivative. They can be easily traced back to the writings of Western political thinkers of the 18th century, particularly to Montesquieu. They all stress, like Montesquieu, the idea of the liberty of the individual in the state, and they all believe that this can be realized, again like Montesquieu, by the correct organization of the state, through the separation of powers. The actual organization of the European states in the nineteenth century, which generally adhered to Montesquieu's ideas, has obviously been another source of their ideas.

The individuality of our three reformers and the distinctive character of their thought is to be found in the way they all attempt to reconcile their borrowed ideas with traditional Arab political theory and practice, and with the circumstances of their times. Such an idea as the rule of law in society they reconcile without difficulty with the traditional theory according to which supreme authority in Islamic society resides in the Islamic law, the sharia. They contend, on this point, that the sharia correctly interpreted and applied, in the light of the changed circumstances of their times, can meet the exigencies of these times; not one of them rejects the rule of sharia in the state. However, to reconcile

traditional thought with modern Western political practice and such ideas as the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances, they are forced to carry out a radical reinterpretation of traditional political theory and practice. Thus to justify the idea of government by consultation and representation, they reinterpret the traditional theory of the Caliphate. They contend that the Caliph, in accordance with the Koranic injunction to the Prophet on consultation, is obliged to consult his subjects. From the purely theoretical point of view the wording of the sura "and consult them in matters, but when thou hast determined, put thy trust in God", supports their contention on the obligation of the ruler to take counsel, but it obviously leaves him thereupon free to determine whatever course of action he may deem fit. In practice, the ruler's obligation to consult, such as it is, was never institutionalized, but both Khaireddin and Kawakebi hold that the Caliph had carried his consultation with ahl al-hall wa al-akd; Kawakebi going as far as to claim that ahl al-hall wa al-akd in fact dominated both the Umayyad and early Abbasid states. Ahl al-hall wa al-akd, in traditional theory, were an ill-defined and impermanent body of men, whose sole function was to elect and depose the Caliph. The traditional principle of the election of the Caliph, through bayya, is identified by Khaireddin and Kawakebi with the Western process of election. In making this identification, Khaireddin and Kawakebi disregard traditional theory and practice, for although

orthodox theory insists that the Caliph must be elected, it never fixes the amount of the electors that are required to validate his election, and the appointment of a Caliph by one elector or by his predecessor is also acceptable to this theory. Bayya, in effect, was the proclamation and the formal recognition of this "election". Only in the case of the first and third Caliph in Islam can there be said that an election of sorts had taken place among different candidates to the office; for the rest, the pre-Islamic principle of election by seniority and the possession of actual power decided the issue.

Although the ruler, according to traditional theory, is subject, like the ruled, to divine law, sharia, and his powers are therefore limited, the absence of any apparatus or social body to check and counterbalance him, renders him, in effect, absolute. Khaireddin and Kawakebi are aware of this dilemma, and they try to solve it by recourse to the traditional doctrine of hisba, based on the Koranic injunction to Moslems to order their fellowmen to do good and to deter them from reprehensible and wrong action. Notwithstanding the fact that the religio-ethnic aspect of this doctrine was emphasized in traditional theory, rather than its political implications, and that the doctrine itself came to be institutionalized in the minor office of the muhtasib, both Khaireddin and Kawakebi make hisba a major concept in their thought, shifting their emphasis to its political implications, and

setting it up as a check on the executive power. Otherwise Khaireddin and Kawakebi differ in their reinterpretation, demonstrating thus how our reformers reinterpret traditional doctrines to suit the reformist views of the day. Khaireddin does not find that every Moslem is bound by the obligation of hisba; to him, the bidding to good and the forbidding of evil, is a fard al-kifaya, a duty that only a sufficient number of Moslems should fulfill, and as such he entrusts it to ahl al-hall wa al-akd. To Kawakebi, on the other hand, hisba is a fard al-ain, an obligation which must be discharged by every individual Moslem. According to him hisba was made into a fard al-kifaya only by men of religion who support despotism - a view which is difficult to reconcile with the respect he pays to Khaireddin as one of the few modern Arab thinkers who had made a contribution to political thought. Neither Khaireddin nor Kawakebi is really interested in what was the real theory and practice of hisba; neither offers his readers a study of the actual history of hisba, nor goes back to the original sources of the Koran and the sunna in a serious attempt to evolve from them a fresh, individual theory of hisba.

The difference between Khaireddin's and Kawakebi's ideas on the obligation to hisba stems from a change in the prevalent political ideas between the middle of the nineteenth century and its end. Coming from a society that suffered from extortion, administrative oppression, corruption of justice,

conflicting and overlapping jurisdictions, and the arbitrary action of the state's agents, (43) the early Arab intelligentsia of the nineteenth century was impressed most of all by justice and equity in Western political life. The fact that the confessed killer of General Kleber is tried before being punished arouses the admiration of Jabarti, while Tahtawi is greatly impressed by the trial given to Polignac and three of his fellow-ministers. Justice and equity for Tahtawi are the cardinal values of a happy and a civilized society; Khaireddin finds that justice and liberty are the key to Western political organization; while Kawakebi believes that the ideal life can be lived only under just governments. For Tahtawi and Khaireddin justice and liberty mean equality before the law and the obligation of the ruler to rule benevolently and according to law. What the French call "liberty", remarks Tahtawi, is the very same thing "that we call justice and equity, because rule by liberty is the establishment of equality before the law". The Constitution of Louis XVIII, he admires for establishing justice by "coming to the aid of the oppressed, and conciliating the poor in that they are as the mighty, in view of the execution of the laws". Justice and liberty, for Tahtawi, as well as for Khaireddin, mean the subject's equality before the law and his security in the state, rather than any right of his to direct participation in the political process. Khaireddin distinguishes between individual and

(43) See H.A.R. Gibb, and Harold Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, Vol. I, Part II, (London, 1962).

political liberty, the first entailing the individual's security and equality before the law, the second his sharing in the discussion and conduct of politics. However, he does not demand for the subject the second kind of liberty, nor does he support the call for an elected parliament in the period of the Tanzimat. Thus the obligation to command his fellowmen to do good and forbid them doing the evil, Khaireddin does not entrust to every member of society, but to the special body of ahl al-hall wa al-akd, to whom the executive must be responsible. Nowhere does he state, or imply, that this body must be formed by means of general elections in the Western sense of the word. For Tahtawi and Khaireddin liberty entails the securing of justice and equity to the individual by the government, rather than obtaining for him the privilege of sharing in it; and we might indeed say that in this they are representative of Arab political thought as a whole until the second half of the nineteenth century. (44) It was by the turn of the twentieth century and a little later on that the liberty of the individual came to be definitely correlated and identified with universal suffrage and the parliamentary form of government, as in the writings of Mustapha Kamel and Lutfi al-Sayyid. Thus, for Kawakebi, writing around 1900, the obligation to hisba was binding on all members of society; and he defined the despotic government as the opposite of a

(44) This seems to be also true of Turkish political thought of the period, see Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, p. 130.

just, responsible, limited, and constitutional government; and even a constitutional government could be despotic, according to him, when the executive power was not accountable to the legislature, and when the legislature was not in turn accountable to the people. With the failure of the parliamentary form of government in the Arab world between the two world wars and the rise of the revolutionary regimes after the second world war, general emphasis has shifted back to the original idea of securing justice and equity for the individual in society rather than the vote. The rationale of this shift can already be found in Kawakebi's demand for economic justice and socialism in society.

It is clear, from the above, that our reformers' re-interpretation of Arab political theory and practice has been arbitrary and free. They have clearly twisted traditional theory and practice with the purpose of accomodating their ideas to them. They are not concerned with describing traditional theory and practice as they really were, nor in evolving theories of their own by means of a fresh speculation on the original sources of traditional theory, such as the Khawarij and the Shia had done in the past. They are not political philosophers, and their work lacks the formality and consistency of philosophic systems. They are also not builders of Utopias; not one of them is a Farabi. In many ways, they are not thinkers at all, in the strictest sense of the word, but men of action, who are concerned, above all, with the reformation

of their society; and hence their work is presented to their readers explicitly in the form of a programme for reform. Tahtawi's most important work is called Manaahij al-Albab al-Masriyyah, Programmes for Egyptian Minds, and it contains, besides his political ideas, his technical recommendations for the reform of Egyptian agriculture and irrigation. The French translation of Muqadamat Kitab Akwam al-Masalik, that was supervised and carried out under Khaireddin's personal direction, is entitled: Reformes necessaires aux Etats Musulmans. Our reformers have also the man of action's disregard for strict intellectual consistency; and thus the anti-militarist Kawakebi tells his friend Ibrahim Salim al-Nejjar that he would have overthrown Abdul Hamid's government in 24 hours had he controlled an army, (45) and Khaireddin the great advocate of government by consultation does not recall the suppressed Grand Tunisian Assembly when he becomes a prime-minister, pragmatically justifying his action. (46)

The Three reformers with whom we deal had to overcome, above all, the intense traditionalism and conservatism of the Arab mind. The nature of this traditionalism and conservatism has been penetratingly analyzed by Professor Joseph Schacht in a passage which we shall now quote in full: "At an early period the ancient Arabian idea of sunna, of precedent or tradition, reasserted itself in Islam. The Arabs were, and

(45) al-Hadith, (1951), p. 118.

(46) Ahmed Amin, Zuama al-Islah fi al-Asr al-Hadith, p. 176.

are, bound by tradition and precedent. Whatever was customary was right and proper; whatever the forefathers had done deserved to be imitated. This was the golden rule of the Arabs whose existence on a narrow unpropitious environment did not leave them much room for experiments and innovations which might upset the balance of their lives. In this idea of precedent or sunna the whole conservatism of the Arabs found expression. The idea of sunna presented a formidable obstacle to every innovation, and in order to discredit anything it was, and still is, enough to call it an innovation. Islam, the greatest innovation that Arabia saw, had to overcome this opposition, and a hard fight it was. But once Islam prevailed, even among one single group of Arabs, the old conservatism reasserted itself; what had been an innovation, now became the thing to do, a thing hallowed by precedent and tradition, a sunna. This ancient Arab concept of sunna became one of the central concepts of Islamic law". (47)

It is because of this traditionalism with which Islam had to contend, that the theme of a people refusing to change its ways and adopt a new faith because it has been unknown to its fathers has been one of the most recurrent themes in the Koran. And perhaps in no literature has the traditionalists' attitude of resistance to change has been depicted so forcefully and so economically, as in the following suras from

(47) Joseph Schacht, "Pre-Islamic Background and Early Development of Jurisprudence," in Law in the Middle East, edited by Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Libesney, (Washington, 1955), Vol. I, pp. 34-35.

the Koran:-

"Nay, they say: We found our fathers on a course, and surely we are guided by their footsteps.

And thus, We sent not before thee a warner in a town, but those of it who lived in comfort said: Surely we found our fathers following a faith, and we follow in their footsteps.

(The warner) said: And even if I bring you a better guide than that you found your fathers following? They said: We surely disbelieve in that with which you are sent."

al-Zukhruf

To understand the thought of our reformers we must place it against such a background of conservative resistance to all innovation, and against such well-known hadiths attributed to the Prophet as: "He who imitates a people, becomes one of them" and "The worst things are those that are novelties, every novelty is an innovation, every innovation is an error, and every error leads to hell-fire". Our reformers are convinced of the superiority of Western political institutions and practices and have come to believe that their society can be reformed and rejuvenated only by adopting them. "It is right that the right be followed" remarks Tahtawi, while Khaireddin observes that "what is right is not known by the men who

practise it, but men are known by the right they practise". However, like the warner in the Koran, they are faced with a people whose resistance to the adoption of what has not been known to its fathers they cannot overcome by simply telling them that what they advocate is better than that which their fathers knew, or at least more suitable to their present needs and circumstances. They are therefore forced to take the only road left open to them and try to convince the people that the institutions and practices they advocate have been known to its fathers, that they indeed have originated with its fathers and then taken on by the others. Khaireddin appeals to his coreligionists "to retrieve what has been taken from our hands". The attempt to read back into traditional theory and practice of such Western doctrines as the separation of powers and socialism can be best understood in this light. However, we must not do our reformers the injustice of regarding them as mere men of action, whose sole concern was to make the reforms they advocated palatable to their society; they were also, particularly Tahtawi and Kawakebi, devout Moslems, who must have tried in all sincerity to reconcile, for themselves as well as for their society, their inherited traditional beliefs with Western political concepts and practices that they came to admire.

The wilful reinterpretation of traditional theory, so as to serve the particular demands of their time, is thus, the most outstanding feature of the thought of our modern

reformers; and paradoxically it is that which links their thought intimately with the whole of traditional Arab political theory. Professor Gibb, who analyzed in two brief and brilliant articles, Mawardi's al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya which indeed is "the most authoritative exposition of the Sunni Islamic theory", and the theory itself as a whole, has shown us that the main concern of the traditional theorists has not been the elucidation of the theory itself as much as its reinterpretation to serve their ends. (48) Of Mawardi's al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya, Professor Gibb writes: "So far from being an objective exposition of an established theory, it is in reality an apologia or adoption inspired and shaped by the circumstances of his times"; and he observes that the Sunii political theory as a whole demonstrates that "Between the real content of Muslim thought and its juristic expression there is a certain dislocation, so that it is seldom possible to infer reality from the outer form. Only when both are known can the relation between them be discerned; and the formula is then seen to be an attempt, not so much to express the inner principle as it is, as to compress it within a rigid mould in order to serve a legal argument and a partial end". All this clearly is true of the works of our three reformers. Mawardi's objective had been, as Professor Gibb shows us, to

(48) H.A.R. Gibb, "Al-Mawardi's Theory of the Khilafa," Islamic Culture, (1937), pp.291-302, and "Some Considerations of the Sunii Theory of the Caliphate," Archives d'Histoire du Droit Oriental, (1947), pp. 401-410.

serve the cause of the Abbasid Caliphate against the Buwahid emirs; our reformers' objective was to serve the cause of reform, as they conceived it, against the conservatism and rigidity of their society; otherwise they used the same formula that had been used by Mawardi and other traditional theorists. Plus ca change, plus ca la meme chose.

There is one final remark to make. We have used the term "traditional Arab political thought" for what is usually called "Islamic political thought". This is because of our contention that the civilization of what is generally known as the Islamic Caliphate had been basically and primarily Arab, a contention that is supported by such authorities as Professor Bernard Lewis who writes: "The rich and diverse civilization of the Caliphate, produced by men of many nations and faiths, was Arabic in language and to large extent also in tone. The use of the adjective Arab to describe the various facets of this civilization has often been challenged on the grounds that the contribution to 'Arab medicine', 'Arab philosophy', etc. of those who were of Arab descent was relatively small The authentically Arab characteristics of the civilization of the Caliphate are, however, greater than the mere examination of the racial origins of its individual creators would suggest, and the use of the term is justified provided a clear distinction is drawn between its

cultural and ethnic connotation". (49) And furthermore, there is probably no facet of the civilization of the Caliphate which is as Arab as its political theory. The Caliphate is the focal point, the centre of gravity, and the root of this theory; there is indeed no political theory without the Caliphate, which is the common point of reference to all traditional writing on politics and constitutional law. As we know, the institution of the Caliphate, or the leadership of the Islamic community, was based on pre-Islamic Arab practice. To this practice, the concept of a hereditary kingship, such as that of the Persians or the Byzantines, was foreign and unacceptable. Succession to the Arab chiefdom or shaikhdum was not based on the principle of primogeniture, but on choice and election determined largely by the principle of seniority in age and personal qualifications. Islam adopted this pre-Islamic Arab practice of election to the leadership of the community in toto, down to its formalistic rituals and terminology, and sunki political theory stubbornly insisted on it, even when actual practice was at variance with it. The Arab idea of succession was in fact so deeply rooted in the traditions of the people that it overcame again and again the natural zeal of a father to hand down rule to the son, and

(49) Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History, p. 14. Professor G.E. Grunebaum writes: "Nor does the heavy debt owed by Islam to non-Arab adherents displace the Arabs from their leading position, particularly since the non-Arabs - for the most part Persians and Turks - made their contribution in Arabic and only rarely stressed their national background". Islam, Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition, p. 59.

prevented the establishment of hereditary monarchy, thus keeping historical practice in conformity to political theory that refused to recognize the principle of hereditary succession. Of the fourteen Umayyad Caliphs, whose reign covers almost a century, only four were immediately succeeded by a son; and of the first twenty-four Abbasid Caliphs, whose reign covers almost two centuries and a half, only six were immediately succeeded by a son. Thus when we contrast the orthodox theory of the Caliphate, as well as its actual historical practice among the Arabs, with the theory and practice of other Islamic people, such as the Persians, we feel more than justified in terming as "Arab political theory" what is usually known as "Islamic political theory".

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