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**The Reaction of Reformation Scholars in the  
Islamic-Arab Culture to the Effects of European  
Thought.**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
OF PHILOSOPHY**

**BY**

**KHODR MOHAMMED AMINE ETER**

**GLASGOW UNIVERSITY. 1991**

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SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

A. Consonants

| Transliteration                      | Arabic |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Not shown initially;<br>otherwise: ʾ | ء      |
| b                                    | ب      |
| t                                    | ت      |
| th                                   | ث      |
| j                                    | ج      |
| h                                    | ح      |
| kh                                   | خ      |
| d                                    | د      |
| dh                                   | ذ      |
| r                                    | ر      |
| z                                    | ز      |
| s                                    | س      |
| sh                                   | ش      |
| ṣ                                    | ص      |
| ḍ                                    | ض      |
| ṭ                                    | ط      |
| ẓ                                    | ظ      |
| ʿ                                    | ع      |
| gh                                   | غ      |
| f                                    | ف      |
| q                                    | ق      |
| k                                    | ك      |
| l                                    | ل      |
| m                                    | م      |
| n                                    | ن      |
| h                                    | ه      |
| w                                    | و      |
| y                                    | ي      |
| h                                    | هـ     |
| in <u>idāfah</u> : t                 |        |

B. Vowels

Transliteration

Arabic

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

**I wish to acknowledge the assistance this work has received from Professor John. N. Mattock under whose direction this study was carried out as a Ph. D. dissertation. His numerous suggestions concerning the clarity of the work were valuable.**

## **DEDICATION**

**To the memory of my brother,  
the martyrdom of Kamal Junblat, and  
the heroism of Michel 'Oun, for  
preserving the eternity of Lebanon in  
the face of the plague of locusts on the  
Eastern horizon.**

**ABSTRACT**

This thesis represents an attempt to examine, through selected materials, the reactions of Arab scholars to the problem of Western modernity upon the Arabic-speaking world. This impact was, of course, not uniform in every area of this world, or in every sphere of its activities. This thesis is concerned primarily with political reactions and only secondarily with others, religious, social or cultural.

From the first half of the nineteenth century, Arab scholars were faced with a situation similar to that faced by their predecessors in the period from the ninth to the twelfth centuries. At that time the cultural influences that they confronted were diffuse, from Greece, from Persia and from India, and they arrived in a comparatively leisurely manner. Now they were concentrated, and the means by which they arrived were abrupt; confrontation was direct, with Westerners who appeared in the name of military intervention, or missionary or commercial activity.

From that time onwards, there was hardly a thinker of note, in any field of intellectual activity, who had not received a Western-orientated education. Without the influence of Western culture, which brought with it a distaste for traditional institutions, it is difficult for the historian to see from what quarter the impetus for the revival of intellectual inquiry, and consequent desire for political reform, might have come.



This scarcely requires substantiation, when we take into consideration the fact that these countries were for the most part subject to the stultifying rule of the Ottoman Empire. In what way should the tide of this Western influence be responded to? This was the question that constituted the basis of the theories formulated by the scholars.

The thesis is divided into an Introduction and seven chapters, as follows:

- Introduction: The Study and its Method.
- Chapter One: Europe and the Beginning of the Arab Awakening.
- Chapter Two: The Dawn of the Reformation in Modern Arab Thought.  
(Rifā'ah al-Ṭaṭṭawī).
- Chapter Three: The End of an Era or a Crisis of Empire.  
(Kheyr al-Dīn al-Tūnisī).
- Chapter Four: Earlier Lebanese Intellectuals. (al-Shidyāq, al-Bustānī,  
(al-Khayyāt, and Nawfal Nawfal al-Ṭarābulusī).
- Chapter Five: The Theologian's Last Defence and the Secularist's  
Illusion. (Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, 'Abduh, Anṭūn,  
Ya 'qūb Ṣannū').
- Chapter Six: From Ottomanism to Arabism. (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-  
Kawākibī).
- Chapter Seven: Later Lebanese Intellectuals. (al-Shumayyil and  
'Azūrī).

Throughout the thesis, an attempt has been made to arrive at a correct estimate of the achievements of the scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They have had a profound and lasting effect on the recent history of the region.

1. Introduction and its history.

2. The geographical location.

3. Climate and soil.

4. The geographical position of the region and its importance.

5. The population and its growth.

6. The economic and social conditions of the region.

7. The history of the region.

8. The political and administrative changes in the region.

9. The role of the state in the development of the region.

10. The future of the region.

11. The role of the state in the development of the region.

12. The role of the state in the development of the region.

13. The role of the state in the development of the region.

14. The role of the state in the development of the region.

15. The role of the state in the development of the region.

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## Introduction

### The Study and its Method

One may wonder about the advantages to be derived from a study of the philosophical works of Arab scholars of the nineteenth century, when the contemporary scene abounds with others who may be more relevant to us. It would be less than accurate to say that because of their period, the Arab scholars under discussion should hold our interest solely on historical grounds. On the contrary, although many of their ideas have become obsolete or no longer pertinent to the present day, they, nevertheless, collectively represent the basis of all modern Arab thought. Indeed, it was the work of these scholars that changed the character of Arab thinking and led their countrymen into the modern world. The work of these pioneers is still read today in the Arab world, just as in the West Descartes, Kant, Machiavelli, Rousseau and Hegel still form the backbone of the Western philosophical tradition.

Thus, this period stands out in the perspective of Arab history as a period of transition from the regional isolation of the pre-1798 era to the assimilation of European values that began in the nineteenth century. A reassessment the corpus of the work of these scholars may well prove significant for some of the problems of our present time which affect both Arabs and Westerners.

The principal reason for the importance of this period in the history of both East and West was the great politico-social transition brought about primarily as a result of the French Revolution. The rate at which this transition occurred differed widely in the various societies, largely

because of their divergent historical experiences.

The Arab scholars of the nineteenth century were quick to appreciate the significance for their countries of events of the last years of the previous century. They realized that, although one of the principal results of European involvement in the Near East was to be a commercial disadvantage to them, this might, nevertheless, be accompanied by both social and political change which could prove advantageous. Of the ideas that entered the Arab world, at this time, the most important in terms of philosophical and political influence was Constitutionalism, which was alien to the prevailing Islamic ideology of the day. But as Constitutionalism developed in the Arab world, it assumed characteristics quite different from its original Western form.

It quickly becomes apparent that, throughout the nineteenth-century, Constitutionalism was the subject that produced the most conflicting interpretations and the bitterest of polemics among the representatives of the various trends of Arab thought. This study will endeavour to explore the reaction of reformist scholars in the Islamic-Arab culture exposed to the impact of European thought on this and associated topics.

Western impact on Arab culture was not in fact a new phenomenon at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Exchanges between the West and the Arab world had taken place through various channels of communication from earlier times.<sup>1</sup> As early as the fifth century, Nestorius, the Monophysite Patriarch of Constantinople, with most of his followers, fled to Syria and settled in that country, beyond the reach of Orthodox ecclesiastical oppression; there they founded their own schools.<sup>2</sup> Not only were theological texts translated from Greek into Syriac by these Monophysites, but also important works on philosophy

and logic.<sup>3</sup> Their interest in the works of Plato, Aristotle and others lay primarily in utilizing the Greek classical tradition in order to enhance their own theological stance, by developing classical techniques of discourse and the associated discipline of logic. In many instances, these Christian scholars viewed some of the classical works, particularly those of Plato and Aristotle, as being divinely inspired, representing the thoughts of the precursors of Christ. In addition, the newly acquired knowledge and discipline of the classical philosophical tradition strengthened the hand of these migrant scholars in their many disputations against their religious opponents and also broadened their own philosophical horizon.

A certain dramatic event took place in 529 A.D. the consequences of which were not to be fully felt until the tenth century. The secular teaching of the philosophers of Athens so offended the Christian ethics of the Emperor Justinian that he closed their school and forced them to seek refuge in Syria and Mesopotamia.<sup>4</sup> These migrant Greek philosophers living in Syria and Mesopotamia along with their Christian Syriac speaking counterparts were allowed total freedom in expressing their ideas, although these ideas were often in conflict with the indigenous religions.

So, it came about that the seeds of Western thought began to influence Arab culture.<sup>5</sup> Syriac speaking Christian scholars - most of them Nestorians - were brought to the court of the Caliph in Baghdad to translate into Arabic the works of the Greek doctors and philosophers, most importantly Plato, Aristotle and his commentators, Hippocrates and Galen.<sup>6</sup> In addition, they performed the ~~linguistic~~ linguistic feat of translating into Arabic various important works of the great Indian mathematicians and astronomers.<sup>7</sup>



The Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun, a notable patron of scholarship and research ruling between 813 and 337, is remembered for having supported the doctrines of the Mu'tazilah and having established *bait al-hikmah* in Baghdad, in 822. This institution played a fundamental role in disseminating the cultures of Greece, Rome, India, and Persia throughout the Arab world.<sup>8</sup>

The preservation of this Greek legacy in Arabic manuscripts with their accompanying valuable Arabic critical commentaries and observations, proved, later, to be the basis of inspiration for such great European thinkers as Roger Bacon (1214-1292) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).<sup>9</sup> The acquaintance of these eminent European thinkers with the heritage of Greece was essentially made by reading Latin translations of the Arabic versions of the classical works which had come to Europe through the Moorish conquest of Spain.<sup>10</sup>

A peak of intellectual and cultural exchange between Arabs and Europeans was to take place during the reign of Alphonso VII (1104-1157) known as Alfonso The Emperor, king of Leon and Castile between 1126 and 1157. He proclaimed himself "King of the two Faiths" and Christian scholars flocked to Spain to benefit from the knowledge of the East. Among these were Gerard of Cremona (1114-87), Robert the Englishman and Michael the Scot (1175-1235).<sup>11</sup>

From the outset, classical Greek thought presented no difficulties to the Arab mind. Indeed, the Arab scholars welcomed this valued and enriching source, and gradually assimilated its ideas and incorporated them within the framework of their own culture. The primary result of the spread of classical Greek culture through the Syriac language into the Arab world produced a new dimension which led to the growth of a native Arab School of Philosophers, from the tenth century.

The first of these was al-Kindi (796-873), a native of al-Basra.

Besides being known as the "Philosopher of the Arabs" he was the first to assimilate Aristotelian and Neoplatonist thought into Arabic culture and to write on astronomy and music. He was followed by al-Farabi (d.950), of Turkish origin, known to the medieval scholastics as Avennasar or Alfarabius, who gained a high reputation as "The Second Teacher", Aristotle being "The First Teacher". al-Fārābī's theory of prophethood provided the first chapter in the history of Islamic-Arab secular thought. It seems that there is no room within this theory for miracles and, more importantly, religion itself is placed in a position inferior to philosophy.

Perhaps the best known Arab philosophers were Ibn Sīna, known to the West as Avicenna (980-1037), who produced two encyclopaedias: *Kitāb al-shifā'* (Book of Recovery), a philosophical compendium, and *al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb* (Canon of Medicine), a work that dominated European medical thought from the late 12th to the 17th century,<sup>12</sup> and Ibn Rusūd (Averroes),<sup>13</sup> born in Cordoba, of a family of prominent *qadis*. He was known for his philosophical commentaries on Aristotelian writings, which had an important influence on medieval Christian scholasticism and became a major source for understanding the work of the Greek philosopher during the 13th and 14th centuries. Reaction to Averroes' view seems to be so apparent that it did not take his critics long to point out its radical implication, although their arguments bear evidences of Averroism. Averroes "is more important in Christian than in Muhammedan philosophy. In the latter he was a dead end; in the former, a beginning."<sup>14</sup> Albert the Great: "who was the leading Aristotelian among the philosophers of the time"<sup>15</sup> published a treatise "Contra Averroistas" and Aquinas wrote in 1269 a "Tractatus de Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas". Furthermore, Averroes composed a

medical book entitled *al-Kulliyāt fī al-ṭibb* (Compendium of Medicine), which was an exposition of Greek medical writing and of the works of Avicenna. In addition to these major works he also gave the well known reply to the philosopher al-Ghazālī's attack on such matters as the pretensions of rationalism in matters of divine law, the theory of causality and the eternity of the world: "The Incoherence of The Philosophers"; Averroes' response is entitled *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* (The Incoherence of the Incoherence), in which he aimed at affirming the adequacy of natural reason in all domains of intellectual investigation, emphasizing that the denial of causality, which is implied in al-Ghazali's writings, leads to the denial of mind itself, which, in Averroes' opinion, the existence of God Himself can be proved.

It was a tragedy is that the Arabs themselves had lost sight of their cultural heritage: they had forgotten that many liberal concepts existed in Arab philosophy prior to the writings of Khayr al-Din, al-Bustani and others. The reading of the works of Avicenna, al-Farabi, Averroes and other great thinkers of the past gradually ceased altogether in the Arab world, due to conservative sultans, who considered such works as secular and blasphemous. The great creative period of Arab culture and philosophy had disappeared completely with the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, which kept the greater part of the Arabs in isolation, to a degree that varied from province to province and from period to period, from the fifteenth century until 1921. In 1453 both Baghdad and Damascus had ceased to be seen as the capital cities of the Islamic world and were replaced by Constantinople. By the middle of the fifteenth century, the Arabs, who had previously lost their military power<sup>16</sup> to the Persians and the Seljuq Turks, now found themselves devoid of any political power under the Ottomans.

The beginning of the nineteenth century, however, saw the end of the total isolation of the Ottoman empire. European military, political and trading activities brought the Arabs once more into contact with Western culture. Inevitably, this state of affairs led to a natural conflict in the Arab mind as to whether it was possible to adopt some Western ideas, yet still retain traditional Islamic values. This dilemma resulted in a crisis unprecedented in Arab history. The conventional Arab ideology and the accepted structure of the social hierarchy began to be challenged by political ideas of democracy, liberty, and the concepts of equal civil rights, the pursuit of which was the common preoccupation of Western political thought. This was at first principally due to the effects of the French Expedition to Egypt and the Levant and later on to that of the influence of Christian missionary work and of the travels of many Arab thinkers to the West.

In the history of Arab political thought, it is not always possible to make a distinction between one period and another. All "historic compartmentalisation" may be considered to be imperfect. However, to the student of Arab culture, the employment of "compartmentalisation" is essential as a tool for a proper comprehension of the subject and allows at least an attempt at such distinctions to be made.

In order to approach our study of this aspect of Islamic-Arab culture in the nineteenth century, it is important, first of all, to give a critical appraisal of the Ottoman administration and its policies. In the late nineteenth century the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II, for purely political reasons, recreated the title of Caliph, which had been suppressed under his predecessors, and appropriated this office for himself.

This study will focus on the socio-historical and political life in

Arab countries during the period in which the Arab community came into contact (and frequently into conflict) with the European world, which was different in nature from its own and had developed along quite different lines. It is extremely difficult for any modern scholar to make a relevant observation on the development of any significant theories of political reform during the period prior to the "Arab Awakening" *al-Yaqzah*. This is due to the lack of material and research relating to this period.

The retardation of the philosophical and cultural expression of the subjugated Arab provinces of the Ottoman empire (which had already experienced the restrictions of the Mamlūk rule) is clear to any scholar of the present or previous generations. However, this obvious barrier to the development of native Arab thought was, ironically, hardly touched upon by even the most eminent of the Arab thinkers discussed in this thesis. To some extent their failure is excusable, as any critical observation of the sultanate would have constituted an attack on their own faith which was bound up, however conventionally, with the Caliphate. Obviously, it would also have been imprudent for these Arab scholars openly to oppose the Ottomans, as many of them were courtiers of the sultans. The court scholars or their provincial counterparts would have jeopardised their lives had they spoken out.

Nevertheless, interest in political reform can be occasionally found as scattered references in the writings of scholars prior to the "Arab Awakening". The reformer al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (1801-73) seems to have been the first thinker to utilise Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah*<sup>17</sup> on the advice of the French Orientalist Sylvestre de Sacy, as a starting-point for his own ideas on reform.

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's reason for choosing Ibn Khaldūn's principles was simply the fact that this fourteenth century Tunisian statesman,

historian, and jurist, was the first thinker in Arab culture to make a rational and philosophical critique of authority and to show how it was essentially associated with the social structure of particular communities.

It is convenient to begin with a mention of Ibn Khaldūn's theory of *al-wāzi'* (constraint), because this is a fundamental concept for our study. Ibn Khaldūn showed that the authority of a ruler, even one from a basic tribal society, depended entirely on the social order and structure of his community/society to maintain his continuance in power.

This "arrangement" between ruler and tribes or subjects, was essentially an expression of the consent by even the most primitive of tribal groups to some kind of social order. Ibn Khaldūn demonstrated that these essential social structures of "basic" government evolved prior to the influence of Islamic religious principles.

In this respect, and in others, some modern Eastern scholars consider Ibn Khaldūn to be a precursor of Auguste Comte, the founder of sociology. Ibn Khaldūn showed that the Caliphs had failed to apply certain aspects of the Islamic code with regard to the structure of society. That is to say, the Prophet Muḥammad was strongly against "tribalism", but the caliphs, according to Ibn Khaldūn, made no attempt whatsoever to stamp it out. Tribalism, in effect, suited their purpose and allowed them to manipulate the various tribes in order to obtain and retain the caliphate.

Accepting the situation as it is, he proceeds to demonstrate that the failure of the caliphs to knit the tribes together and maintain the teaching of the Prophet had resulted in a break-up of social order, and the gradual disintegration of consultative rule saw the formation and emergence of different Islamic sects. Thus, by many nineteenth century

Arab scholars who embraced the teachings of Ibn Khaldun, the Ottoman rule was regarded not as part of any 'natural' social arrangement dependent upon and involving the consent of the tribe/state but as an alien imposition dissociated from the continuing tradition of Arab society.

This thesis will attempt to present a basic analysis of the work of the Arab reformers of the nineteenth century and the way in which their writings, influenced by European thought, affected the development of their own culture.

It is also proposed to raise the question as to whether the theories propounded by the "Reformers" are relevant to the Arabs of today and whether such theories could be developed and utilized to provide a basis on which to build new concepts that might prove beneficial to the non-Arab world as well.

It may be pointed out that most classic Arab scholars did not concern themselves with political questions in quite the same way as their nineteenth-century counterparts, with the exception of Ibn Khaldūn<sup>18</sup> and to some degree, of al-Māwardī (d.1058).<sup>19</sup> The work of these two scholars indicates a turn in the tide of the thinking concerning the relationship between rulers and their subject peoples.

Although their writings contained certain views and concepts that were inappropriate in different historical contexts, the teachings of these two thinkers were adopted by nineteenth-century Arab intellectuals as the foundation of their own political theory. While Ibn Khaldūn, who viewed matters in terms of tribal politics, emphasized that political power was derived directly from ties of blood and family and that usually the strongest family or clan dominated, al-Māwardī, on the other hand, regarded the deposing of a caliph as theoretically

justifiable, provided that the new leader applied Islamic law to his new regime. In fact, like al-Ghazālī, al-Māwardī states that he is describing not what ought to be done but what offers the best chance of maintaining the Islamic *Sharī'ah*.

The nineteenth-century political thinkers with whose theories I deal are: al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, al-Shidyāq, Khayr al-Dīn al Tūnisī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, Shiblī al-Shumayyil, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī, because, if not all in the first rank, they were the most influential in the sphere of practice. They illustrate the different trends of political thought: Conservative, Liberal and even Socialist. In addition, this thesis includes an appreciation of the edicts and reforms (known collectively as *Tanzīmāt*) issued by some of the Ottoman Sultans and their major ministers such as the Grand Vizier Muṣṭafā Rashid Pasha, which aimed to improve, to a certain extent,<sup>20</sup> the general condition of their subjects such as the Jewish and Christian communities which, during Turkish rule, were called "Millet".

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, Khayr al-Dīn, and al-Shidyāq all held official governmental positions, and it was partly through this practical experience that each acquired a sound understanding of the realities of the position of the Arabs in the world of their day. They shared another factor, which they had in common also with 'Abduh and al-Shumayyil. Their work was greatly influenced by the knowledge and new perspectives that they gained as a result of their European travels, and they all employed these in an attempt to improve Arab society.

Most of the Arab thinkers were fully conscious of the difficult task they had in hand in achieving three common principal objectives:

1-To liberate Islamic thinking from its worst dogmatic features and to rediscover the Arab cultural identity as the key that would open the door to political freedom and social justice for the Arab people;



2-To revive the tradition of the Golden Age of Islam and put an end to the traditional inertia, induced by religious dogmatism;

3-To outline in their writing an approach appropriate to the complex demands of modernization.

Such were the various issues which occupied the minds of the nineteenth-century Arab political and social thinkers. In subsequent chapters, an analysis is proposed of the ways in which they approached the achievement of their objectives; this analysis will endeavour to trace certain specific problems which confronted them and the valuable contributions that they made.

A choice of scholars and concepts had to be made, and this choice was bound to be arbitrary in some respects. I have not included in the scope of this thesis, for reasons which will become obvious, any discussion of other nineteenth-century scholars who, from some points of view, are important in their own right, whereas ideas have been discussed at some length which from other points of view, might not have deserved such complete treatment.

It should be noted that Ottoman reform of the military, in fact, opened up the way for the West (notably Western Europe) ultimately to incorporate the Arab territories into their colonial empires or spheres of influence. Western intervention, during the initial stages,<sup>21</sup> was limited to commercial agreements and political concessions yielded by the Ottomans; it was later to spread throughout the Empire and reach a climax with Napoleon's Expedition to Egypt, in the summer of 1798. The French Expedition is usually regarded as being the most significant event for the subsequent emergence of reformist movements within Arab culture. One of the principal factors in the attraction that Western political philosophy had for many educated Arabs was the fact that the

Turks had failed to instil in their heterogeneous subjects a sense of adherence to Ottomanism itself.

Quite rapidly after the Arabs' first exposure to these influences, two schools of Arab thought were to emerge: 'Traditionalism' and "Modernism". It is not entirely correct to refer to this as a divergence of views into two completely opposite schools of thought. There is evidence to show that both schools evolved from the same social and historical background, and at no period were they totally divorced. Major political and social writers from both schools showed in their writing both tendencies, although to varying degrees. Obviously, this corresponded to differences of temperament and individual inclinations. The paramount impetus behind both these schools was the belief in the concept of personal freedom and social justice, which had reached its highest point in Western thought at that time. However, on the whole, the writers of the 'Traditional School' adapted the new intellectual framework to the expression of orthodox Islamic thought, maintaining the authority of the Qur'an against the erosive influence of the West. Their work, was primarily religious and apologetic rather than philosophical.

The second group, who had either resided in Europe or studied in missionary schools or colleges, abandoned the strict beliefs of their predecessors and progressed beyond the premises of religious principles. Whereas Traditionalism was a movement with much support, as might be expected, among the majority of the population, Modernism was confined to a very few intellectuals. They began gradually to incorporate Western ideas into what was to become the Modernist School of Arab thought. According to them, the principles laid down by Islam did not conflict with the liberal culture of the West. A fundamental institution of

Islamic government was that of *ahl al-ḥall wa-al-‘aqq*, an intellectual elite, who represented the views of the people and whom, in theory, the Caliph consulted in matters of government. The Modernists were apt to claim that *ahl al-ḥall wa-al-‘aqq* were the equivalent of a nineteenth-century European parliament. However, it was, in fact, not a representative body of people, but simply an advisory group for the ruler. It may also be said that the activities and rivalries of 'Modernists' and 'Traditionalists' led naturally to lively debates as to the best method of reforming Arab society. One example of this is the polemic between ‘Abduh (1849-1905) of the Traditionalist School and Farah Anṭūn (1874-1922) of the Modernist School.

No particular attitude to either school has been adopted in this thesis, but more attention has been given to the Modernist than to the Traditionalist. The primary sources for this study have been, as far as possible, the actual writings of the figures concerned; however, the secondary literature on the subject has also been of great importance. The following three objectives have been pursued in this thesis:

1- To examine the background of the Arab Awakening, during the period of the decline of central Ottoman control of the Arab provinces, the growth of nationalism among the inhabitants of these provinces, and the conflicts that arose between this nationalism and Western influences.

2-To analyse the influence of the earlier writers of the Arab Awakening upon the formulation of later thinking. This analysis will involve an attempt to discover, where possible, the relations between their ideas and the extent to which they were influenced by Western ideas.

3-To estimate how effective these various writers were in altering



Notes to Introduction

1. See: Lewis, Bernard. The Middle East and the West. London, 1964.
2. see: Benz, Earnest. "The Islamic Culture as Mediator of the Greek Philosophy to Europe". Islamic Culture, 34-35, (1960-1), pp. 147-165;  
Hitti, Philip K. History of Syria. London, 1951, pp. 548-556.
3. see: Walzer, Richard. Greek into Arabic. Oxford, 1962.
4. See: Cameron, Alan. "The End of the Ancient Universities", Journal of World History, 10 (1966-7), pp. 653-73.
5. See: Walzer, Richard "Greek into Arabic ..." pp. 6-11.
6. See: Hippocrates. Kitāb Buḡrat fi'l-amrad al-biladiyya. (On endemic diseases-air, waters, and places). Edited and translated by: J.N Mattock and M.C.Lyons. Cambridge, 1969; Walzer, Richard. Galen on Medical Experience. London, 1947.
7. see: Peters, F.E. Aristotle and the Arabs. New York University, 1968, pp. 35-41; Qadir, C.A. Philosophy and Science in the Islamic World. London, New York, 1988, pp. 31-37.
8. See: Jolivet, Jean. Islam, Philosophy and Science. Four public lectures organised by Unesco, Paris, 1981, pp. 39-43.
9. See : O'Connor, D. J. A Critical History of Western Philosophy. New York and London, 1964, pp. 54, 101.
10. See: Atiyah, Edward. The Arabs. Edinburgh, 1955, pp. 66-8 ; Millas Vallcross, J.M. "Arab and Hebrew Contributions to Spanish Culture", J.W.H. 6 (1960-1).
11. Singer, Charles. A Short History of Scientific Ideas to 1900. Oxford, 1977, pp. 163-4.
12. See : Siraisi, Nancy G. Avicenna in Renaissance Italy. Princeton,

- 1987; Fackenheim, Emil. L. "Ibn Sina: The Man and his Work", Middle Eastern Affairs, 3 (1952), pp. 265-71.
13. see: De Boer, T. J. The History of Philosophy in Islam. London, 1903.
14. Russell B. History of Western Philosophy. London, 1961, p. 419.
15. Ibid., p. 444.
16. See: Osborn, Robert Durie. Islam under the Khalifs of Baghdad. London, 1876.
17. See: Ibn Khaldūn. The *Muqaddimah* an Introduction to History. (tr. F. Rosenthal). London, 1958.
18. See: Gibb. Studies on the Civilization of Islam. pp. 166-175; Hitti, Philip. K. Islam: a Way of Life. p. 176.
19. See : Gibb. Studies, pp. 151-165; Ostorrog, Le Comte Leon. *El-Ahkam Es-Soulthaniya*. Paris, 1901-6; Arabic Text, Bonnae 1853, ed. Maximilliani Engert; Gibb, H.A.R. "al-Mawardi' Theory of the Khilafah", Islamic Culture, 11 (1937); Akhtar, Qazi Ahmad Mian "al-Mawardi: a Sketch of his Life and Works", Islamic Culture, 18 (1944).
20. See: Ma' oz, Moshe. Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861 The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society. Oxford, 1968; Hourani A. "The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the xviii<sup>th</sup> Century." Studia Islamica, 8 (1957).
21. See : Mardin, Serif. "The influence of the French Revolution on the Ottoman Empire." International Social Science Journal, 41 (1989).

## Chapter One

### EUROPE AND THE BEGINNING OF THE ARAB AWAKENING.

A considerable amount has been written about the effect of the invasion of Egypt, which took place at the close of the eighteenth century (1798-1801), by a French expeditionary force. This brief military intrusion, which marked the first large-scale attack by a European country on an Arab province of the Ottoman Empire, marks a turning point in the modern diplomatic history of the Arab world.<sup>1</sup>

With the exceptions of Morocco, which remained a separate Sultanate, and Nejd in the Arabian Peninsula, which retained a form of independence under its own Amirs, the whole Arab world had been, in effect, incorporated into the Ottoman Empire.

The "Expedition" disclosed to the Arabs, for the first time, the military weakness and political incompetence of the Ottoman Empire, although this weakness had already been demonstrated in Austria with the concessions of January 26, 1699 at Karlowitz<sup>2</sup> and on July 12, 1700 at Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> These traits were later to be summed up by Czar Nicholas, in the well known remark that Turkey was the sick man of Europe.<sup>4</sup>

The French invasion was the first important external stimulus to shake the cultural structure of the Arab provinces, since the Ottoman conquest of Syria by Sultan Selīm I, at the beginning of the sixteenth century (1516).<sup>5</sup> The Expedition ended the centuries of isolation of Egypt and drew it inexorably into the arena of world power politics.

### New Interests in Arab Thought.

Prior to the nineteenth century there had been more than one channel for the dissemination of Western culture, largely through the information provided by Arab travellers, and the interaction between European Christian pilgrims and diplomats, and the Arabs. Nevertheless, such influences tended to be sporadic and of limited effect, and it cannot be said that this initial contact was responsible for The Arab Awakening. Arab authorities agree that it was the period 1798-1801 that first demonstrated to the Arab peoples the European capacity for political expansion and their ability to influence other countries culturally and politically.

The shock of the total defeat of the Mamlūk army<sup>6</sup> by the French<sup>7</sup> was all the more painful because both moderate and extremist Arab thinkers alike had, for centuries, regarded themselves as the makers of history and the most superior of nations. These conceptions were explicitly drawn from the Qur'ān: "Ye are the best of people, evolved for mankind".<sup>8</sup> Arab thinkers throughout the medieval time often allude to this ideal view of the Arab world. By doing so, they, to some extent, unwittingly aided the Ottomans in the continued isolation of their Arab readers from the various developments taking place in the West.<sup>9</sup>

It may be said, however, that Islamic politics was too much concerned with expounding religiously-based ideal concepts and rarely attempted to provide any answers to the many problems of government that regularly arose.<sup>10</sup> Islamic law was not very specific about the relationship between a ruler and his subjects; it did, however, speak about a form of "Mutual Consultation" between the ruler and representatives of his subjects known as *ahl al-hall wa-al-'aqq*. The only qualification of these representatives is their piety, which is, of



course, highly subjective.

Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111),<sup>11</sup> who is the supreme authority for most Muslim theologians, and who in his writings, combined Aristotelian logic with Orthodoxy, together with a strong vein of mysticism, took advantage of the flexibility of Islamic law to develop his own political theory which largely endorsed the concepts of the Qur'an, but still supported the concept of power and authority as traditionally held by the rulers. al-Ghazālī then set about the task of reforming the old order and making the relationship between the ruler and subject a focal point of discussion in order to create a better understanding by the people of their own basic rights as contained in the *sharī'ah*.

It may be said that although al-Ghazālī had taken a considerable step for his time, with regard to the idea of some kind of reform in the relationship between ruler and subject, he was, nevertheless, a victim of his own constricted cultural background and failed to provide an adequate answer to the particular problem of achieving a more democratic system of government.<sup>12</sup>

It has been urged against al-Ghazālī that he obstructed the progress of Arab thought by his teachings. For eight hundred years the general outline of political ideology as set forth by him remained the Orthodox view. The result was that despotic rulers, with the assistance of most of the *'ulamā'*, continued to hold power.

Thus, the traditional system continued to prevail until the period after the seizure of power in Egypt by Napoleon, when the form of government began to alter and Western culture gradually began to seep into Egyptian society.

The Napoleonic Expedition and its After-Effects on the Arab world:

After having been defeated by Napoleon in the Battle of the Pyramids, the feudal Mamlūk Beys fled to Upper Egypt. Napoleon busied himself in devising various means of organizing the administration of his newly occupied territory. In carrying out this task, he received assistance from various distinguished scholars and men of science who had accompanied the Expedition and who established the "Institute Of Egypt" on 22 August 1798. Of these the best remembered is Champollion (1790-1832), who deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone.<sup>13</sup>

During Napoleon's occupation of Egypt, Cairo was governed by "council" officials chosen by Napoleon, and thus, for the first time, it experienced a modest and limited taste of democracy:

Sixteen military districts were organized, each with a general as military governor. Every governor was supposed to be assisted by a council or divan of seven and to have a company of Janissaries for police duties. A Coptic tax collector and French financial agent completed his civil staff. In Cairo itself there was a divan of nine religious dignitaries under the presidency of Shaikh Sharqawy. This council was assisted by three French secretaries drawn from the French merchant community of Cairo who had the necessary command of Arabic, as well as by the representative of the Commander in Chief. Its duties included the organization of supplies, the supervision of markets and the functions of the police, but all initiative and control remained in French hands.<sup>14</sup>

For centuries, politics in the Arab world had been bound up with Islamic religious teachings, which influenced all aspects of secular life.

Napoleon tried to exploit this, in order to change the medieval system of feudal government used by the Mamlūks, by giving out that he had become a Muslim and claiming the authority of the Ottoman Sultan. This, of course, was not accepted by Sultan Selīm III who issued a *ferman* in Arabic, which was distributed in Syria, Egypt and Arabia, denouncing Napoleon's claims.<sup>15</sup> Such events made the Egyptians gradually aware of their great and ancient past and of their own cultural heritage, which, in turn, contributed to the awakening of the spirit of embryonic nationalism within the minds of the educated.

Practically every aspect of Napoleon's brief rule of Egypt was recorded and analysed in great detail by three eminent scholars and historians. The first was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (d.1822),<sup>16</sup> a native of Cairo, whose record is entitled ‘*Ajā’ib al-āthār fī al-tarājim wa al-akhbār*, which is still popular. The second was Niqūlā al-Turk (1763-1828),<sup>17</sup> a native of Lebanon, who was resident in Cairo during the entire period and recorded its events in his *Dhikr tamalluk jumhūr al-Faransāwiyyah ‘alā al-aqtār al-Miṣriyyah wa-al-bilād al-Shāmiyyah*. The third chronicler was the Lebanese writer Ḥaydar al-Shihābī (d.1835),<sup>18</sup> whose work provides a graphic insight into the background and events of the French expedition. These writings are interesting because they are the most important source for our knowledge of the reaction of early modern Arab scholars. In his discussion of the first French proclamation to the Egyptian people, al-Jabartī comments:

their statement ‘On behalf of the French Republic, etc.’ that is, this proclamation is sent from their Republic, that means their body politic, because they have no chief or sultan with whom they all agree, like others, whose function is to speak on their behalf. For

when they rebelled against their sultan six years ago and killed him, the people agreed unanimously that there was not to be a single ruler but that their state, territories, laws, and administration of their affairs, should be in the hands of the intelligent and wise men among them. They appointed persons chosen by them and made them heads of the army, and below them generals and commanders of thousands, two hundreds, and tens, administrators and advisers, on condition that they were all to be equal and none superior to any other in view of the equality of creation and nature. They made this the foundation and basis of their system. This is the meaning of their statement 'based upon the foundation of liberty and equality'. Their term 'liberty' means that they are not slaves like the Mamluks.<sup>19</sup>

Whereas European influences passed into the Arab provinces principally through Egypt, this was not the only channel for their reception. At about the same time, or slightly later, in Lebanon and Tunisia, channels opened up for contact with the West through the employment of European expert advisers. In Lebanon an influx of Christian missionaries and the development of their schools opened a further door to European cultural contact. They introduced the printing-press for the publication of their books and periodicals in the Arabic language, causing a fresh flow of new concepts which helped the intellectuals of this province to make their appearance and then, for a long time, play a dominant role within the Arabic-speaking world.

Prior to Napoleon's Egyptian Expedition, printing in the Arabic language had been carried out by a group of Lebanese Christians on a very limited scale. Their publications essentially comprised religious books and pamphlets designed to cater for the needs of the Maronite community. The first printing-press in the Ottoman Empire had been set

up in Constantinople by a *ferman* issued in 1727, which ratified a petition submitted by a prominent Turkish scholar (of Hungarian origin), Ibrahim Muteferrika (1705-1745),<sup>20</sup> to the Sultan and *Şadrâzam* (Grand Vizier). The new publishing venture was established in business two years later. It is remembered for having published various books on language, history, geography, and the natural and physical sciences. It was not until some time later that books on religious subjects were permitted. "by 1742, when it was closed, it had printed seventeen books, including a description of France by Turkish ambassador sent there in 1721." (Lewis, p. 33.) Printing on a large scale was introduced to the Arab world by Napoleon during his occupation of Egypt:

The Maronite translators attached to the college were also taken to Egypt for work in the printing department of the army of occupation...The most important names mentioned are Ilyas Fathallah and Yusuf Musabiki.<sup>21</sup>

However, his use of the printing-press was confined solely to administrative purposes, such as the printing of proclamations, issuing of warrants, and the publication of propaganda pamphlets.

It cannot be claimed that the printing-press confiscated by Bonaparte from the College of the Propaganda in Rome and placed under the directorship of J.J. Marcel published anything that could affect Egyptian culture advantageously.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, after the disastrous naval defeat of the French fleet at Aboukir Bay (1798) which left the French army cut off from France, Napoleon was forced to evacuate his forces from Egypt. On their departure, the French took with them all their equipment including the

printing presses.

The Influence of the West on the Concept of Democracy in the Arabic Speaking World:

The French occupation of Egypt was not without its influence on the lives of the inhabitants of other countries, i.e Lebanon and Palestine. Before the Napoleonic Expedition, the administration of all the Arab "states" was based upon the *sharīʿah* in which sovereignty was derived from the Qurʿān, and exerted by a ruler chosen by the *ʿulamāʾ* for his ability.

Until the early nineteenth century the idea of nationalism, in the Western sense, had been unknown to the inhabitants of Egypt and the Near East, both Christians and Muslims, who were conditioned mentally to look upon themselves as subjects of the Ottoman Sultan and not as members of a nation which embraced all the Arab people.<sup>23</sup> This is clearly shown by the incident which took place during Nelson's pursuit of the French :

On Sunday, the 19th of the holy month of Ramadan of this year (1213/1798) letters arrived [in Cairo] by the hand of messengers from the seaport of Alexandria. Their content was that on Thursday, the 8th of that month, ten English ships had arrived at the port and had halted offshore within sight of the townspeople, and after a short time fifteen other ships arrived. The people of the port waited to see what they wanted and a small boat came inshore in which were ten persons. They landed and met the notables of the city and the chief (Ra'is) holding authority from the ruler, al-Sayyid Muhammad Karim...They were asked concerning their purpose and they replied that they were Englishmen and that they had come seeking for Frenchmen who had set forth with a very large force bound for an unknown

destination. "We do not know," they said, what is their purpose and we fear that they may attack you and you will be unable to defend yourselves against them and prevent them from landing.

al-Sayyid Muhammad Karim did not accept this statement and suspected that it was a trap. He replied to them harshly. To which the envoys of the English replied: "We shall wait in our ships at sea and watch the port. We shall ask nothing from you but help with water and provisions, for which we shall pay." But this was refused to them with the answer: "These are the lands of the sultan and neither the French nor any other have any business here."<sup>24</sup>

### From Colonies to Statehood.

Even after Napoleon left Egypt and the Levant, there remained sufficient residual influence to affect intellectual life in these countries, not only in a realization that there were other nations which were as civilized as they were and that the *al-Faranj* were clearly not the barbarians that they were supposed to be, but also in an altering attitude towards Ottomanism. However, any changes in the outlook of the intelligentsia were only gradual and far from universal. The more radical naturally met considerable opposition from adherents of the older views, but an idea of a secular culture, liberal principles and sentiments of nationalism began to emerge.

Such developments eventually gave rise to a sense of rebelliousness against the Sublime Porte and its local representatives. Indeed a whole group of scholars came to devote their entire literary output to the exposure and confrontation of the prevailing institutions. Although the Ottoman rule was to continue, in one way or another, for another period, no longer could the minds of their subjects be easily controlled, and a

gradually growing awareness of individual worth and national identity began to form in the hearts of their subjects.

It should be emphasised that the departure of the French in 1801 marked the end of only a brief interruption of a period of four hundred years in which Ottoman dominance had held complete power. The Ottoman Empire, despite the few reforms it introduced such as the crushing of the Janissaries in 1826 and the proclamation of the *Khatti Sharif* (Noble Rescript) of 1839 and the *Khatti Humayun* (Imperial Rescript) of 1856,<sup>25</sup> was in fact, a petrified medieval society in its manner of government. In the eighteenth century a number of Turkish Sultans began to take a passing interest in the idea of reform.<sup>26</sup> An initial attempt was carried out by Selīm III (1789-1807) who was the first to introduce several new liberal decrees. For this early brave attempt to make some efforts towards liberalism, Selīm III paid with his life.<sup>27</sup>

Seven years after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī, an Albanian adventurer, succeeded in becoming Viceroy of Egypt (1805-48). In alliance with the 'ulamā', and in particular 'Umar Mukram,<sup>28</sup> he was able to expel Khorshīd, the Turkish ruler, from Egypt and take his place. The first years of his reign were spent in consolidating his rule and in diplomatic manoeuvres which strengthened his position, and he really did not become the ruler until 1811, when he defeated the Mamlūks. Now he was able to undertake more ambitious projects. He helped the Ottoman Sultan Maḥmūd II (1808-39) to defeat the Wahhābīs (1811-18), and he embarked upon campaigns in the Morea in Greece (1824-27) and in Syria (1831-1840). A report by Palmerston recognises his ambitions:

His real design is to establish an Arabian kingdom,



including all countries of which Arabic is the language. There might be no harm in such a thing in itself; but as it would necessarily imply the dismemberment of Turkey, we could not agree to it. Besides Turkey is as good an occupier of the road to India as an active Arabian sovereign would be.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to his relations with Europe, Muḥammad ʿAlī opened up contacts with several Western countries, to which he sent many Egyptian students of various "races".<sup>30</sup> Thereby, he aimed at conciliating the European Powers, and successfully attracted trade and capital.<sup>31</sup>

A printing press was established in Cairo by both Egyptian and Lebanese experts at the express order of Muḥammad ʿAlī. The development of printing was the most significant contribution that the West made to the Arab world at this time. Literate Arabs now had access to the works of various prominent writers, both Arab and European. The first Arabic newspaper in Egypt was established in 1828. It was entitled *al-Waḳāʾiʿ al-Miṣriyyah* (Egyptian Events)<sup>32</sup> and played an essential role in promoting educational and political ideas.

The growing power of Muḥammad ʿAlī's new Arab state, which signified a surge of nationalism, and the increasing military power of Ibrahim Pasha, his son, began to alarm the European powers. Western hostility began to be felt, raising doubts and fears in the minds of the Arab people. Certain Arab factions, such as the Wahhābi and Mahdīst movements questioned the wisdom of following the new Western orientated style of some Arab rulers.

Within the space of a few years, during the rule of Muḥammad ʿAlī in Egypt, al-Amīr Bashīr al-Shihābi (ruled 1804-1840) in Lebanon, and

Aḥmad Bey III (ruled 1837-1855) in Tūnīsia, Arab intellectuals saw the need to adopt many of new ideas from the West. These they took both from the French and later from other European countries such as Russia and Prussia who were developed interests in the area.

About this time the concept of separate national states within the Arab world was first propounded, by a number of Lebanese Christian thinkers. These Christian thinkers were more ready to accept Western ideas, in particular the concept of the national state, owing to their continuous link with Rome over many years and also because they were victims of a strong sense of inferiority as a minority within the Ottoman Empire. Their Muslim counterparts, on the other hand, were confused, as their religion bound them in allegiance to the political authority.

The ordinary Arab people, and even some scholars of this period, were not always fully aware of the political forces that had, over many years, slowly undermined the caliphate's claim to religious justification for its autocratic alien rule, based on a distortion of Islamic law.

However, nationalism as the political expression of the identity of the Arabs and as a means of emancipation from non-Arab domination, became a prominent phenomenon during the second half of the nineteenth century, as Ottoman power declined. H.A.R. Gibb comments:

Confronted with the penetrating and pervasive power of these Western influences, the Muslim was unable to ignore them ; but to relate them to the bases of his own life and thought called for an effort of comprehension and adjustment which he was not yet ready to undertake. Yet without the effort, the outcome could only be conflict and confusion, both external and internal, and made more confusing by the conflicting ideas and purposes within the Western forces

themselves. To distinguish the effect from the cause, the secondary and superficial from the essential, the instrument from the motive, the false from the true—all this was a task for which even his Western advisers, when he sought their assistance, were too often inadequate and unreliable guides.

On the religious plane, two ways of meeting the challenge of the West presented themselves. One was to start from the basic principles of Islam and to restate themselves in the light of the contemporary situation. The other was to start from a selected Western philosophy and to attempt to integrate Muslim doctrine with it. Both ways have been followed, but out of the great variety of conflicting interpretations and cross-currents only a few of the more outstanding can be dealt with here.<sup>33</sup>

However, Westernization began to be accepted slowly during Muḥammad 'Alī's reign, when reforms were introduced in the Egyptian army with the appointment of French officers who taught Western military techniques, and also in the educational system, where secular subjects partly replaced the traditional ones.<sup>34</sup>

The period known as *al-Yaḳẓah* represents a major turning point in the history of the development of Arab culture and the beginning of a slow progress towards the adoption of a new social perspective and a gradual acceptance of some Western ideas regarding the political structure of the state. This change may be considered as a radical departure by Arab thinkers from the views held by their predecessors, who had hitherto considered all things Western to be essentially anti-Islamic, retrograde and culturally barbaric.

The greater part of the traditional legal and social structure slowly began to deteriorate and its adherents were unable to maintain the old

order.<sup>35</sup> But the new breed of liberal Arab thinkers were as yet unable to devise an effective means of leading the Arab people out of the quagmire of autocracy and into the fertile fields of a new equitable liberal social order.<sup>36</sup>

It cannot be said that any kind of democratic system, as understood today, replaced the old regime. One always has to remember that politics and foreign affairs had been the sole prerogative of the governing Ottoman administration for four hundred years. So the very concept of any direct involvement in government by the citizens of any state, even of those with enlightened rulers such as Muḥammad ʿAlī, was difficult to grasp.

The foreign influences, therefore, raised intellectual and moral problems which were insoluble within the context of the contemporary political situation.<sup>37</sup> These problems were to beset the minds of many great Arab thinkers for generations to come. One of the immediate effect was the creation of a breach between Islamic theology and politics. From that time, it was possible for the Arab thinker to treat politics as a science and a separate, independent subject from that of theology. The jurist-theologians of the traditional school could no longer so easily obstruct the gathering impetus of the reforming movements on the grounds that their ideas were in breach of Islamic law.

Arab society, during the past four centuries, had lacked any effective central power. It was torn apart by rival warring princes, and weakened by the Ottoman administration. The Ottoman officials and feudal princes had no real interest in the welfare of their subjects. Their primary task seemed to be the self-promoting business of collecting inflated taxes, to gain favour with the sultan to whom they

were obliged to pay annual tribute, and the suppression of any protest or revolt against their regime.

Despite the work of such early pioneer thinkers as al-Ṭaṭṭāwī, Khayr al-Dīn, al-Shīdyāq, and al-Bustānī in achieving a certain progress in the fields of education and political enlightenment, the basis of government of all the Arab provinces, nevertheless, remained in reality autocratic rule.

The application of western ideas was, in many ways, also inhibited by the fact that the political roots of many of these Western orientated concepts were initially born out of conditions arising from the context of a particular system of values as a result of the Industrial Revolution which had taken place in Europe. As the economy of Egypt and other Arab countries was based essentially on an agrarian system, actual reform was extremely difficult to implement, even if desired. From various historical notices it appears that the term "reform" had several senses for both Turkish and Arab reformers<sup>38</sup> within the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, as there were some Turkish scholars who had very similar views to their Arab counterparts, this helped to keep the infant reforming movement alive.

The first active nationalist movement within the Ottoman Empire was, paradoxically, to appear in Turkey itself, with the nationalist activities of the Turan Movement, which developed at the outset of the twentieth century into the militant "Young Turks" society, and later changed its name to the Committee of Union and Progress.<sup>39</sup> However, in becoming an established power in the Middle East, this movement became committed to the status quo, thereby losing its reformist image among the other subjects of the Ottoman provinces.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, this movement was, indirectly, to inspire feelings of national identity within the various Arab provinces. A number of Turkish leaders and

reformers like Ibrāhīm Shīnasī (1826-71), who founded in 1860 the first unofficial Turkish newspaper, Namik Kemal (1840-88), and ‘Abd-al-Ḥaqq Hamid,<sup>41</sup> went on to demand reform primarily of the degenerate social and educational system. They also wished to reform and revitalise Turkish military and technological power in an attempt to stem the advance of the negative influences of European ideas which came side by side with European commercial adventurism and military intrusions. The same ideas were also expressed by several Arab scholars.

To the student of modern Arab philosophy, it is interesting to see how Islamic traditionalists attempted to combat these Western influences, and how they tried to reconcile their own beliefs with the foreign influences without compromising the national identity of their people and their own culture.<sup>42</sup>

The reaction to Western influences amongst Arab intellectuals and political leaders took several different forms.<sup>43</sup> But even in the fundamental Islamic form (Wahhābī in the Arabian Peninsula, Mahdist in the Sudan and Sannusiyyah in North Africa) the reaction was directed not only against the West but also against Turkish domination and the local Amirs and Beys, who were only concerned with enlarging their domains and increasing the prestige of their own families. Neither the Turks nor the local potentates provided their subjects with any prospect of leading a reasonably secure and settled life.<sup>44</sup> This was largely due to the fact that the initial attempts to improve the military strength of these provinces and alter their economy had to be subsidized by raising more and more taxes from the peasants who themselves were dependent on a badly administered agrarian system. As a result, the local princes increasingly approached Western banks for loans, leading to the failure of attempted reform and a loss of independence from Western control.

Thus, in the absence of adequate administration, the role of the Turkish governors in all the provinces had been reduced to that of figureheads and they lived in constant fear of a revolt by their own subjects or even their own garrisons. This left the door open for foreign powers to meddle unabated in the local affairs of the Ottoman provinces. An example can be found in the conflicts between the princes of the Druzes and the Maronites in Lebanon in 1855 and 1860, which were instigated by foreign forces rather than by those local figureheads.

The 'ulamā', whose pronouncements had great influence on the people and carried some weight with the rulers, occasionally intervened to have unpopular measures rescinded. However, they did not generally set themselves in direct opposition to the rulers who were often their patrons.

One should always keep in mind that the idea of an independent Pan-Arab nation, free from the domination of both the Ottomans and Europe, ultimately arose from the political and social reaction to Napoleon's Expedition. Thus, it is not surprising that the first signs of this reaction should appear in Egypt with the 'Urabi Revolt of 1881-82.

Even allowing for this supposition to be not entirely valid, it can still be said that the idea of independence resulted as a reaction to the French Expedition. It demonstrated to the Arab people the remarkable European capacity for political expansion and played a prominent role in forming nationalist impulses in the literate sector of the Egyptian people, as also those of the other Arab countries, although on a smaller scale.

Another essential role was played by leading literary and scientific periodicals such as *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Hilal* which were edited by Lebanese intellectuals. From the outset, these periodicals may

be seen as a preliminary attempt to present some aspects of Western culture and to portray a scientific image of the West to the Arab reader in a plain and intelligible style.



Notes to Chapter One.

1. See: Haddad, George A. "A Project for the Independence of Egypt, 1801" J.A.O.S., 90 (1970), pp. 169-183.
2. The first to be "signed by the Ottoman Empire as a defeated power.", Lewis. The Middle East and the West. p. 32.
3. See: Abou-el-Hay, Rifaat A. "The Formal Closure of the Ottoman Frontier In Europe: 1699-1703" J.A.O.S., (89) 1969, pp. 467-475; Jermias Cacavelas, edit. F.H Marshall "The Siege of Vienna by the Turks in 1683", Cambridge, 1925; John Stoge. The Siege of Vienna. London, 1964.
4. Lane-Poole, Stanley. The Story of the Nations, Turkey. London, 1908, p. 253: 'Referring to the decline of the Ottomans" Emperor Nicholas in 1844 said to Sir Hamilton Seymour, "We have on our hands a sick man, a very sick man." For more information, see: L.S. Shavrianos: The Ottoman Empire: was it the Sick Man of Europe ? London, 1966.
5. To understand the declining period of Ottomanism at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is necessary to consider first in brief the history of the Ottoman Empire and the various peoples and cultures which it contained. A further account can be found by reading: Inalcik Halil. The Ottoman Empire the Classic Age, 1300-1600. London, 1973; Kortepeter Carl Max. Ottoman Imperialism during the Reformation Europe and the Caucasus. London, 1973; The Ottoman Power in Europe, its Nature, its Growth, and its Decline. Imprint: Liverpool, 1877; The Ottoman State and its Place in World History. Leiden, 1974.
6. Mamlūk: Slave of Circussian origin who constituted the warrior elite in the Mamlūk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria (1250-1517).
7. Although the continual factional struggles among the Mamlūk princes continued in Egypt until 1811.
8. al-Qur' ān: Sūrat Al 'Imrān, 110; See also: C.A.O Van Nieuwenhuyze.

"*The Ummah: an Analytic Approach.*" Studia Islamica, 10 (1959).

9. See: Lewis, Bernard. *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*. London, 1982.
10. Gibb and Bowen. Islamic Society and the West. Parts i&ii, London, 1950-57.
11. See : Binder, Leonard "al-Ghazālī's Theory of Islamic Government". M. W., 45 (1955), pp. 229-241; MacDonald, Duncan B. Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory. London, 1903, pp. 215-307
12. Kerr, Islamic Reform, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 91-97.
13. See : Marlowe, John. Spoiling the Egyptians. London, 1974, pp. 9-22.
14. Richmond, J.C.B. Egypt 1798-1952. London, 1977, p.19.
15. See : Zolondek, L. "The French Revolution in Arabic Literature of the 19th Century". The Muslim World, 57 (1967), pp. 202-211.
16. al-Jabarti. 'Ajlā' ih al-āthār fī al-tarājim wa-al-akhbār. (Bulaq, 1297 A.H.), 3: 2-3.
17. See : el-Turk, Nakoula. Histoire de L'Expedition des Francais en Egypt. Paris, 1839. See also George M. Haddad. "The Historical Work of Niqula el-Turk 1763-1828", J.A.O.S., 81 (1961), pp. 247-251.
18. al-Shihābī, Ḥayder. Lubnān fī 'Ahd al-ummarā' al-Shihābiyyin. Beirut, 1933.
19. al-Jabarti . Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi Misr. Edited and translated by S. Moreh, Leiden, 1975, pp. 42-43.
20. Furthermore, Muteferrika is remembered for having taken part in negotiations with several European countries. In 1731 he wrote a study in which he examined the causes of the Ottoman decline and in which he suggested some administrative reforms. Nevertheless it should be said that some enlightened sultans had attempted to introduce reforms. For his works see: Watson, William. J. "Ibrahim Muteferrika Aand Turkish

Incunabula" J.A.O.S. Vol. 88, pp. 435-441. For Further information see : B. Lewis "The Muslim Discovery pp. 49 -50, 168-169; The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, Vol.6, p. 227.

21. Heyworth-Dunne. Introduction. p. 99, footnote 1.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

23. See : Ahmed, Jamal Mohammed. The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism. Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 3-4.

24. al-Jabarti. 'Ajā'ib al-Āthār . iii. 2. ff. Quoted from Hourani: Arabic Thought. p. 49.

25. For these *Fermans* see: J.C. Hurewitz: Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: a Documentary Record: 1535-1914. *Khatti Sharif* (Noble Rescript) of 1839: pp. 113-116; the *Khatti Humayun* (Imperial Rescript) of 1856: pp. 149-153.

26. See: Shaw, Stanford J. Between Old and New :the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807. Harvard University Press, 1971.

27. See : Naff, Thomas "Reform And The Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789-1807", J.A.O.S.,83, 1963, pp. 295-315.

28. Ahmed, Jamal Mohammed. The Intellectual... p. 8, ff.

29. Bulwer, "The Life of Palmerston",II, pp. 144-5. Quoted from Henry Dodwell: The Founder of Modern Egypt a study of Muhammad Ali. Cambridge,1931, p. 123.

30. See : Heyworth-Dunne, J. An Introduction ..., pp. 159-164.

31. On this see, for example: Issawi C. Egypt in Revolution: an economic analysis. Oxford, pp. 18-31; Egypt: an Economic and Social Analysis. Oxford, 1946, pp. 12-22.

32. See: Hartmann, Martin. The Arabic Press of Egypt. London, 1899, p. 2.

33. Gibb, H.A.R. Islam. Oxford University Press, 1978, p.119.

34. See, G.E. Von Grunebaum. "Nationalism and Cultural Trends in the Arab Near East." S.I., 14 (1961).

- 35-36. A portrayal of such subjects can be found in Sharabi's Arab Intellectuals and the West. Baltimore and London, 1970.
37. Von Grunebaum, G.E. Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962; A number of articles by various authors, edited by R.N. Frye: Islam and the West. The Hague 1957.
38. See, for instance, Dawn's From Ottomanism to Arabism; Abu-lughod's Arab rediscover; Loroui, Abdalla. L'Ideologie Arab Contemporaine. Paris, 1982.
39. See: Kohn, Hans. "Nationalism." In Jackh, Earnest, Background of the Middle East. Edit. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1952, pp. 145-156; Feroz Ahmad. The Young Turks. Oxford, 1969 ; Gokalp, Ziya. Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization. London, 1959 ; Bernard Lewis. Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire. Norman, 1963, by the same author. The Emergence of Modern Turkey. London, 1961; Luke, Harry. The Making of Modern Turkey. London, 1936; Lewis, Geoffrey. Modern Turkey. London, 1974.
40. See, for example: Kedourie. Arabic Political Memoirs. pp. 124-161, 243-262.
41. See : Brockelmann. History of the Islamic Peoples. pp. 389-396; Kohn, Hans. "Nationalism" ... In "Background.." , pp.147-8; Berkes, Niyazi. Literary Developments in Modern Turkey. In "The Islamic Near East". Edit. by Douglas Grant, University of Toronto Press, pp. 227-8.
42. See: Brockelmann, Carl. History of the Islamic Peoples. London, 1949, pp. 344-5.
43. Gibb. Studies. (edit. Shaw & Polk.) pp. 320-335.
44. See, for example: Gibb & Bowen. Islamic Society and the West.

## CHAPTER TWO

The Dawn of the Reformation in Modern Arab Thought.Rifā'ah al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (1801-73)<sup>1</sup>

The pioneering work of the Arab thinker, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, has been highly regarded throughout the Arab world from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards. In his influential book *Takhliṣ al-ibrīz fī talkhīṣ Bārīs* (The Extraction of Gold from a Review of Paris), al-Ṭaḥṭāwī as one of the first students in Paris, and as an Islamic theologian, regarded himself as the theoretician of a new kind of scholarship:

Especially, since from early times to the present, there has not appeared in the Arabic language, to my knowledge, any work about either the history of Paris, the throne of the French kingdom, or a mention of its conditions and the circumstances of its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately for the future of modern political literature in the Arabic-speaking world, he soon induced the first in a chain of reactions. He was much interested in recording several striking features of his experiences in Paris for his fellow-countrymen and presenting them in such a subtle manner as to form an important introduction to the nature of European political institutions and inspire the beginning of intense interest in what one might call "the modernist movement."

As to his place in the intellectual development of his own country, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī reawakened Arab Islamic thought, which had lain dormant to the point where it meant little more than a series of practices to be observed, and:

It is to be doubted whether many of the *kuttāb* masters, called *fīkīs*, could venture to discuss the meaning of the sacred words, the function of the *fīkī* was merely to perform a task handed down to him by tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Also writers on Islamic topics often devoted more attention to form than to content, and:

The Beys...had neither the leisure nor the means to offer patronage to any extent.<sup>4</sup>

Within this context, his discourse, so far as it forms part of the heritage of Arab culture, is that of the first to address the problem of socio-political backwardness. Arab culture, which had produced Ibn Sīna, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Rushd, in medieval times, had become contaminated, in the process of time, and was deprived of a proper interchange of cultural influences. For al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, one of the reasons for the regression is that:

In the time of the caliphs, we were more perfect than the other lands, because the caliphs used to appoint learned men and masters of the arts.<sup>5</sup>

He goes on to present some rather novel arguments to show that there is no rational basis for believing that the institutions that have

been effective in the past will still be so in the future. This belief is a reflection of dated custom. The approach outlined by him as being appropriate, unlike that of the *Wahhābīs*, lay not in a return to the early Islamic society, but in the reconciliation of Islamic values with those Western ones which tend towards humanity and rationality:

To the extent that masses in Egypt and elsewhere, because of their ignorance, criticised him [Muhammad ‘Ali] severely for accepting, welcoming and caring for Europeans. They [The masses] did not realize that he, may God protect him, was doing so because of their [the Europeans] humanity and knowledge, not for being Christians. There was a need for them.<sup>6</sup>

It is true that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's views were not as novel as they have seemed to some modern historians. They neither represented a beginning nor an end of the era of modernism. The edicts and proclamations issued by Napoleon contained elements of the French liberal culture. Indeed, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's views may be regarded as a manifestation of continuing Western influences even after the withdrawal of Napoleon's army. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, however, was perhaps unique in his ability to present new ideas at the opportune time, and his position within the modernist movement is therefore easier to place. There were, in fact, stirrings towards reform within the circles of the Egyptian ruling class. It was with the enlightened reign of Muḥammad ‘Alī and his grandson Khedive Ismā‘īl (1863-79) that a more favorable political climate came to be established which gave these stirrings practical expression and facilitated al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's efforts in teaching and disseminating new ideas

through his translation of Western books and his other activities.

As mentioned above, Muḥammad ʿAlī had arrived in Egypt with the Turkish and British armies to eject the French.<sup>7</sup> On the retreat of the French, by a series of clever manipulations of Egypt's religious leaders and teachers he managed, with the permission of the Sublime Porte, to get himself appointed ruler of Egypt.<sup>8</sup> But this move was mere diplomatic expediency. His real fascination was not with the old Islamic order or with some idealistic scheme for the re-instatement of Ottoman power, he was rather seeking self-aggrandisement through the adoption of the ideas and institutions of the "ejected" French.

It can hardly be said that he based his schemes of reform upon principles of liberalism. To Muḥammad ʿAlī, everything became subordinate to the priority given to building an Egyptian army. In doing so, he put an end to the power of the Mamlūk domination, which would have pushed Egypt back into the thralldom of a continuing tyranny.

It was into this period of politico-historical change in Egypt that al-ṭaḥṭāwī was born. The year of his birth, 1801, coincided with the withdrawal of the French occupation forces from Egypt, so that he had no direct contact with French rule. However, European ideas came to his knowledge through his mentor and friend, al-Shaykh Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār (1766-1833),<sup>9</sup> a courtier of Muḥammad ʿAlī.

al-ṭaḥṭāwī received the traditional type of education of a youth of his social class. He studied the Qur ʿān and then entered al-Azhar in 1817, when only sixteen. There he studied "religious sciences" for eight years and spent the last two years as a teacher in this venerable institution, which at that time was the only school of higher education in Egypt.<sup>10</sup> Of all the teachers of al-ṭaḥṭāwī, the greatest, to whom he



owed much of his early intellectual success, was Shaykh al-‘Attār who was, in 1824, instrumental in providing an opportunity for him to serve Muḥammad ‘Alī’s recently formed army as an *Imām*.

Ḥasan al-‘Attār had originally fled Cairo for Upper Egypt, with the advent of Napoleon’s invasion. However, he was able to establish contact with, and be influenced by, the various scientists who accompanied the French Expedition soon after Napoleon adopted a policy of open dialogue with the shaykhs of Cairo. It was these scientists who showed him around the various departments of the Institut d’Egypte, which they had established. In turn, al-‘Attār gave them lessons in Arabic and provided these uninvited guests<sup>11</sup> with an insight into the culture and customs of his own country. Later he was to write an excellent Arabic grammar *Inshā’ al-‘Attār*, which was to be used in teaching for many years, through many reprints in Cairo and in Bombay. al-‘Attār later visited several other Islamic countries, and taught in various centres of learning.

On his return to Cairo, he was given the post of editor of *al-Naqd* i.e. *al-Misriyyah* and then that of shaykh to the Azhar Mosque. It was through holding this latter important position that al-‘Attār was able to defend the progressive educational policies of Muḥammad ‘Alī against the attacks mounted by reactionary Islamic traditionalists. Amongst his friends was the famous historian, his compatriot al-Jabarti, to whom he provided help to formulate

The grammarian aspects of *Mazhar*, [*Muḥir al-Taqdīs bi-Dhahāb Dawlat al-Faransīs*] for we read in the introduction to *Mazhar* that al-Jabarti incorporates

incorporates al-‘Aṭṭār's prose and poetry into his chronicles, when they fit. In addition, the work *Mazhar*, received its name jointly from the two. The outstanding roll of al-‘Aṭṭār as grammarian is also corroborated by the fact that an early owner of MS *Maz* Cam. emphasized al-Jabarti's expertise in literature and in the arts of astronomy and calendar while Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār is described as the most prominent scholar of philology and grammar in Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

al-‘Aṭṭār, in effect, owes his position in modern Arab history to this association with al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, who was enabled by the help and companionship provided by this liberal reformer and teacher to develop a new outlook on the traditional teaching orthodoxy.

About the time (1824) when al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was appointed *Imām*, a group of European instructors and scholars arrived in Egypt,<sup>13</sup> from whom he gained first-hand knowledge of the West. Amongst these Westerners was Colonel Joseph Sève (1787-1860),<sup>14</sup> who was to adopt Islam and to alter his name to Sulaymān Pāshā.<sup>15</sup> After organizing the new Egyptian army along Western lines, Colonel Sève then led them in conjunction with Ibrāhīm Pāshā in several campaigns against the Ottoman rule in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, having previously supported it in Greece and the Arabian Peninsula.

Another important development that took place in al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's youth was the establishment of the Bulaq Printing Press in 1822. This allowed for the publication of books in Arabic and Turkish on both religious and secular matters. As already mentioned in chapter one, the first Arabic press was introduced into Egypt by Napoleon. However, there had been a Hebrew press as far back as the sixteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī quickly became aware of the importance of the press as a vehicle for popular education, in order to bring the Egyptians into touch with the larger community of active societies.

The post he took up as an *īmām* in the Egyptian army, which was aided by men of another faith and race, left its mark on the young thinker concerning discipline and organization:

Consider the arrangement of the military forces: it is one of the best that His Excellency has achieved, and the best things deserve to be recorded. It is difficult, for those who have not visited European countries or not participated in battle, to realise the significance of this military system.<sup>17</sup>

The crucial stage in the development of his intellectual career, however, may be said to have occurred between 1826 and 1830, when, along with three other *īmāms*,<sup>18</sup> he was chosen by Muḥammad ‘Alī, through the personal recommendation of Shaykh al-‘Aṭṭār, to lead the first mission to France as its spiritual leader. The purpose of this mission was to study European military science, agriculture, engineering, administration and medicine.<sup>19</sup> In spite of the fact that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was sent on the mission with the specific function of performing the duties of *īmām* for this group, such was the nature of his alert and inquiring mind that he became totally enraptured by this new culture. He was later allowed to join the group as a student and take the same lessons as his younger compatriots.

It is fortunate for posterity that his position of *īmām* allowed him sufficient time to write his notable memoirs of his experiences in

France in *Takhlīṣ*. None of the other members of the mission made any particular written observations on their sojourn, which makes al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's work all the more important for the understanding of the feelings of an Arab of that time confronted with an alien culture. This view, however, is opposed by Muṣṭafā in *The Hekekyan Papers*, in which he says that the Armenian Hekekyan's memoirs came first, and that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was not "the only student, sent by Muḥammad 'Alī to Europe, who recorded his years of residence abroad."<sup>20</sup> However, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's memoirs are still highly valued by historians.

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was also fortunate in establishing friendly contact with several French Orientalists and men of letters. The most important of these contacts, after M. Jomard, (Edme Francois Jomard), who acted as master to the Egyptian mission, were Caussin de Perceval (1759-1835) and Sylvestre de Sacy (1758-1838), about whom al-Ṭaḥṭāwī spoke with respect, indicating his importance as a scholar on a number of pages in *al-Takhlīṣ*:

In Paris, I met one of the most famous Frenchmen called Baron Sylvester de Sacy, who knows Oriental languages, especially Arabic and Persian. De Sacy is a member of a number of societies that contain French scientists and others. His translations are widespread in Paris and have become very well known in the Arabic language.<sup>21</sup>

The latter's historical standing largely rests on the fact that he was the first European scholar to translate the writings of the fourteenth-century Arab philosopher, Ibn Khaldūn. Sylvestre de Sacy had been part of the retinue of the French expedition to Egypt, and he mastered the Arabic language and subsequently translated many Arab

works into French. He became a well-known figure among intellectuals in the Arabic-speaking world. His contemporary, al-Khayyāṭ, the Lebanese scholar, describes him as

The best oriental scholar of modern times in Europe; he could not converse for a minute in Arabic, though he understood that language as well as any native Arabian.<sup>22</sup>

The impact of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's stimulating sojourn in France was to convince him that much of the existing body of traditional institutions had little relevance to the new social conditions and problems confronting Egypt. His chief preoccupation, therefore, was to consider what changes needed to be made in Egyptian socio-political assumptions and in prevailing methods of inquiry, in order to implement his newly-acquired views in a manner compatible with Egypt's needs. But he soon realised that before any serious work could be done in this direction, it would be essential to establish a bridge across which the Egyptians might receive the necessary intellectual stimulus for their stagnating institutions, to bring about the process of intellectual growth. There were two ways in which he tried to achieve this end. His first approach was simple indeed: a prolific out-pouring of writings, mostly translated into Arabic from works such as those of Depping: Moeurs et Usage des Nations and Malte-Brun: Précis de la Géographie Universelle. This activity to occupy him up to the last years of his life.

The second was how to overcome the inevitable reaction among his own countrymen to the adoption of views which advocated the integration of many Western institutions, and how to invite them to

examine their socio-political institutions, as a necessary process toward rationality and freedom. However, the purpose of both ways was designed not only to transform Western institutions, as it would seem at first glance, but to go beyond this so as to provide his Arab readership with an image of the West based upon modern realities, in place of the stereotypes derived from the Frankish crusades of the 12th and 13th centuries.

In general, France permits freedom of worship to all religions, so that there is nothing to prevent a Muslim from building a mosque or a Jew from building a synagogue.<sup>23</sup>

To find a positive basis for political reform was for al-Ṭaḥṭāwī a task not of playful utterances, but of rigorous intellectual concern in practical problems which could not be resolved within traditional institutions. His powers of explanation and justification of the process of reform were exceptional in this respect. No man of his society was better fitted to remould his fellow-men's thinking and enlighten their minds so as to enable them to cope with a competitive future.

The experience of cultural shock in France was such that he had to review his entire outlook on life. He had left behind him a closed Islamic world, to a large extent unaware of the development and progress of the West. Recounting his early reaction to French culture, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī confessed that his experience was not one of entering a world of barbarism, but rather one of being exposed to a democratic and progressive society in the process of development. At the outset, he deemed, as he himself put it, that there was nothing that the West could

give to the Arab world and nothing "to be learned outside *al-Azhar*".<sup>24</sup> In other words, he left behind him an oriental feudal despotism to see for the first time a country with a constitution which was reasonably democratic and liberal. He realized that the principle of equality before the law which he saw in "non-Muslim" France, was

One of the clearest proofs of the attainment of a high degree of justice among them and of their advancement in the civilized arts. That which they call freedom and strive to attain, is the same as that which we call justice and equity, and this is because the meaning of the rule of freedom is the establishment of equality before the law.<sup>25</sup>

As a Muslim, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī held that the concept of such freedom was enshrined within the basic tenets of Islam. He was aware, however, that this freedom had been gradually eroded, first by the Mamlūks then, later, by the Ottoman rulers:

It seemed to me after reflecting on French culture and their political life that they are more similar to Arabs than Turks and other races. The French are like Arabs with respect to their ideas of honour, liberty, and pride.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, the absence of this concept, for al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, must not be taken to mean the absence of any democracy in the legacy of Islamic-Arabic civilization, but:

What they call *al-ḥurriyah* and desire thereof is the

very same thing called by us *al-‘adl wa-al-insāf* (justice) because the meaning of *al-ḥukm bi al-ḥurriyah* is the establishing of equality before the law so that the judge does not wrong anyone ; rather, it is the laws which judge.<sup>27</sup>

The impact on his wondering mind of the experience of French culture, which embodied such freedoms within its very constitution, resulted in a full realization of exactly to what extent basic freedom within *al-sharī‘ah* had been lost under the autocratic rulers of the last several centuries.<sup>28</sup> His primary response to this French experience was a growing awareness of the political difficulties confronting the Arab world at the time. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s interests soon became fixed in the area of social and political philosophy. As a matter of fact, he is not primarily concerned with making an independent contribution to political theory but rather with attempting to come to a better understanding of how Western political institutions worked in their society. Much insight into this is to be found in various passages of his works, which reflect not the logical detachment of a philosopher, but the passion of a rebellious theologian. In French politics he saw the culminating work of the modern era, the final political statement and the end of the long quest for democracy. Many passages in *al-Manāhij* and *al-Murshid* seem to lend themselves to this view. For example :

In all fairness one cannot deny that the countries of Europe are now at the peak of proficiency in the philosophical sciences and the practice of them. Such countries as England, France and Austria have produced philosophers who have surpassed such predecessors as Aristotle, Plato, Hippocrates and the like and have achieved absolute mastery of mathematics, physics,



theology and metaphysics.<sup>29</sup>

He explicitly states that in his works he is solely interested in those problems and issues which are potentially useful for arriving at a better understanding of how reform of political institutions may be initiated. Indeed, his sympathies lay with political and social reform, which decade after decade widened the disparity between him and the conservative sector of the ‘*Ulamā*’, but he chose to avoid any particular political stance, and while suggesting political solutions, a suspension of judgment on them was the only prudent attitude to adopt.

The French are one of those groups whose approval or disapproval is governed by reason. What I mean is that they deny the supernatural, and they consider that there is no possibility of violating the natural processes, and that religions came into being only in order to guide man towards good and away from its opposite. They also believe that the progress of a country and the advance of people in culture and humanity may substitute for religious beliefs and that in civilized kingdoms political matters operate like religious-legal matters. Among the adverse beliefs of the French is that the intellects of their philosophers and naturalists are greater and keener than those of the prophets.<sup>30</sup>

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī’s writing itself gives several clues to his reading and interests. He can move with ease from the achievements of the Pharaohs to the traditions of Islamic thought; from Mu‘tazilite polemics to Ibn Rushd’s rationality; from Ibn Khaldūn’s political and social

concepts to Montesquieu's constitutionalism; the latter he considers as the Ibn Khaldūn of Europe. He can bring to his Egyptian audience such concepts as will serve best his political purpose. The appearance of *al-Takhlīṣ* indicates that the incursion of European thought into Arab culture was accomplished not in a purely external fashion, but out of an internal need. In fact, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī regards European political institutions as a necessary instrument with which to restore the cultural, moral, and religious values which in his opinion are missing from the legacy of the last centuries of Arab history. Accordingly, his object is to get society to turn round and face in the future a new scientific age of critical challenge and opportunity.

*al-Takhlīṣ* has a great deal to say about political issues and other related subjects: "In Egypt, these sciences are either on the wane or completely lost".<sup>31</sup> This idea recurs in many different forms. But he does not take any of these political issues as his point of departure. Despite its being an important work, it does not require a profound inspection to find out that it is more of a narrative than a systematic analysis. There is major attention given to the description of institutions and customs of the French. Although the work is full of somewhat tedious digressions and diversions, it provides us with a lively description of French life in the nineteenth century. For example:

One of the characteristics of the French is their avid curiosity for everything that is new and their love of change and variety in all things and especially in the matter of dress. This is never fixed with them and no fashion or adornment has remained with them until now. This does not mean that they change their dress entirely; it means that they vary it. Thus, for example,

they would not stop wearing a hat and replace it by a turban, but they sometimes wear a hat of one kind and then after a while replace it with a hat of another kind, either in shape, color or the like.<sup>32</sup>

The principal importance, however, of *al-Takhlīṣ*, was as a source on which he drew for a more significant work, *Manāhij al-albāb al-Miṣriyyah fī mabāhiḥ al-ādāb al-‘aṣriyyah* (The Paths of Egyptian Hearts in the Joys of the Contemporary Arts), which he wrote towards the end of his life (1869) and thirty-five years after *al-Takhlīṣ*. But although *al-Manāhij* is al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's main work, which marked his forward journey from a simple approach to a highly individualistic exposition of modernist inclination, and as such, more concerned with explaining and justifying than *al-Takhlīṣ*, the political implications of the two books are almost exactly the same. There are other writings in which al-Ṭaḥṭāwī develops special themes, but this study will be principally confined to these two books. In considering *al-Takhlīṣ*, it is worthwhile referring to some pertinent quotations touching on the structure of the state and the freedom of its people. He particularly attributes France's progress to the establishment of constitutional institutions and the ideas inherited from liberal nineteenth-century France. In the course of his numerous explorations of these institutions, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī discusses the elements of which constitutionalism is composed:

We have stated that Paris is the Capital of the French; there the French monarch and his family reside. The French monarch is of the Bourbon family since he cannot be from any other family. The French monarchy

is an hereditary one. The place where the monarch lives is called the Tuileries [pronunciation given] and generally the French refer to their *Diwan* [Cabinet] as the Tuileries Cabinet ... that is, the Diwan of the monarch. The real seat of power in the direction of French affairs is the king, but secondary power resides in the Upper House, which is the *Diwan al-Bir* [Chambre des Pairs]...and the Chamber of Deputies (63) ...The duty of the Upper House is the renewal of laws which have expired and the maintenance of the existing laws ...This assembly is convened by the king for a specified period during the year, to correspond with the session of the Chamber of Deputies ...The duty of the chamber of the Deputies is the examination of laws, policies and orders of the government and its management of the country's affairs. It also discusses the budget of the state, its revenues and expenditures, and opposes measures which it does not deem wise. It also defends the rights of the people, so that no injustice or transgression can take place. This assembly is composed of many men who are elected to office by the people. There are 428 deputies... From this it is apparent that the French monarch is not an absolute ruler who can do what he wishes. French policy is written law so that the ruler can remain king only if he acts in accordance with what is prescribed in the laws which have met with the acceptance of the members of the various assemblies.<sup>33</sup>

In this particular passage, which al-Ṭaḥṭāwī evidently considers to be the most important and original in the book, a comprehensive model for political reform is described. He is at pains to point out that the laws of France assure the citizen the right to freedom of thought without fear of political repercussions. To inspire the Arab world to

follow a similar democratic path, he painstakingly translated the entire French constitution into Arabic.

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was proud and egocentric, aware of the power of his skills as an original thinker. He boasted in *al-Takhlīṣ* of his importance as a scholar, and of his contribution to Arab culture in translating the French constitution and describing European society, as opening a window to reveal a culture different from his own.

Nevertheless, he became a victim of his own social position because, as a government official, he had to suppress some of the criticisms and conclusions he would otherwise have published, limiting his full development as a radical thinker. In *al-Takhlīṣ* his description of French freedom, political tolerance and the liveliness of French thought had the obvious aim of attacking the Egyptian system by holding up the French model as an ideal to be followed:

Most of the theoretical sciences are well known to them [the French] but they have some philosophical beliefs which are, according to other people, outside the law of the intellect. An instance of this is the science of astronomy, in which they are the best qualified people, due to their knowledge of its secrets and methods, which were invented a long time ago. However, they misrepresent these beliefs and reinforce them, so that one might think that they were true and authentic. It is known that the knowledge of the secrets of machines is a strong factor for manufacturing. However, in the field of philosophy, they are misled in different ways which are in opposition to all the divine Books and are supported by proofs not easy to refute.<sup>34</sup>

However, he was a cautious character, who had no wish to shock his

readers. He sensed correctly, in my view, that to hold up the French as a model would merely antagonize the Egyptian reader, and offend his patron, whose position was grounded in an authoritarian system. It would not have been surprising if al-Ṭaḥṭāwī had exaggerated the merits and virtues of France in order to further his interest in political reform in the Egyptian community. "If Islam had not been succoured by the decree of God ... then nothing would have compared to their [The French] power, numbers, wealth, and excellence".<sup>35</sup> Despite their achievements, they "have not been guided to the straight path, and they have not followed the course of salvation at all."<sup>36</sup>

He was also wise enough to moderate his adulation of European society by including certain ironical references to the quirks of the French:

Parisian women enjoy luxuriating in their wealth and beauty while men are their slaves and they sacrifice their luxury to their beloved ones.<sup>37</sup>

The most general characteristic of its [Paris] people is the smile that is offered to foreigners and the respect that is shown to them, even if of a different religion. This is because the majority of the inhabitants of this city are Christian only in name; they do not follow their religion and are not defensive about it.<sup>38</sup>

It may be said that his observations on the character of the French are not altogether accurate. His statement that the French people were not religious was contradicted by Sylvestre de Sacy, who, as a Christian, defended his faith against what he perceived as upstart Muslims, in a

letter to him. In this letter he points out that most of the French are devout Christians,<sup>39</sup> and that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's experiences were limited because his entire visit was spent in Paris.

It appears that Sylvestre de Sacy here failed to read between the lines and did not see the significance of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's strategy. Such a view was not an integral part of his discourse; it was a concession to his Muslim readership. In fact, his intention in criticising the faith of the French is deliberate subterfuge on his part, to show, as in various passages in his work, that his defence of new institutions does not necessarily mean that he supports the propagation of Christianity. His socio-political objective is to make available certain French institutions to the Egyptian audience. In his effort to achieve this goal, he was forced of necessity to make a concession to the Muslim reader and gain his favourable attention by implicit criticism of the rationalist tendencies of the French.

Certain features of French society of that time were indeed recorded with considerable accuracy by al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. In particular, he noted that the French people, once they reached maturity, adopted a political attitude, and adhered to it fervently.<sup>40</sup> This consistency was due to the fact that the French, having made their political choice, did not feel in any way threatened by the elected government of the day. In *al-Takhliṣ*, he is never tired of demonstrating the superiority of the West in the spheres of politics and administration. And here it is important to appreciate his commentary, which he wrote, as a theologian, on this sensitive topic:

It may be said that if the taxes were managed in Islamic lands as is the case in these lands, then the situation

would be better... During my stay in Paris I did not hear anyone complain of being affected by these taxes because they are taken in such a way that they do not harm the individual, and at the same time they benefit their treasury; in particular, the possessors of money are protected from persecution and corruption.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's most important contribution to the reform of Arab culture lay in his ability to draw comparisons and make analogies between traditional Arab values and contemporary European institutions. Prior to his writing, there was no distinction commonly made between the word *‘ālim* used to refer to scientists and men of secular learning and *‘ālim* used to mean 'religious scholar'. He gave Arab culture a new and fruitful start by dealing with these definitions in terms of rationality:

Do not be under the illusion that the French *‘ulamā’* are priests, for priests are the *‘ulamā’* of religion only. There may be some priests who are scientists as well as *‘ulamā’* (in the first sense). But those to whom the appellation of *‘ulamā’* is applied (there) are those who possess expertise in the intellectual disciplines. The expertise of the *‘ulamā’* in the various branches of the Christian *sharī‘ah* is negligible; if anyone is described in France as being an *‘ālim*, this does not imply that he is expert in his religion, but rather that he is an expert in some other discipline. You will (soon) discover what a superiority these Christians possess in such disciplines over all others, and you will thus understand why our country is devoid of many of them.<sup>42</sup>



al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was able to see the political fortunes of Egypt as part of a wider movement of change. So he was able to envisage his involvement in the theatre, public spectacles, the salon, and other typically urban cultural institutions which had no counterpart in the Arabic speaking countries, as part of the general dissolution of the medieval structures of thought and society, a dissolution of which his own work was a symptom. In doing so, he felt an affinity with a novel concept which Montesquieu had introduced in his book Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence, that the fundamental changes in the character of a nation and its law-making and fortunes can be explained by geographical factors like climate and soil. It was this concept in Montesquieu's work that incited him to translate it. The implication that a community derives its sense of identity from factors imposed on it by the geographic limitations of its specific location was seen by al-Ṭaḥṭāwī to have particular relevance to Egypt and its people. Montesquieu's view that the rise of nation states is founded on such intangible elements as the spirit of the nation and love of country also appealed to al-Ṭaḥṭāwī:

The *milla* is in political usage like the *jins*, the community of men who reside in the same land, speak the same language, have the same character and uniform customs, and are generally subject to the same law and the same state. They are called *ahālī*, *rā' iyya*, *jins*, and *abnā' al-waṭan*!... 43

The wisdom of God has required that the inhabitants of a country should always be united in language, in being in the care of the same king, and in

subjection to the same legal code and the same political system. This is something that indicates that God disposed them to cooperate with one another simply for the good of their country, and that their relationship to one another should be that of members of the same family. One community must not split into numerous factions with different views, because of the quarrels, envy and hatred that result from this, and the consequent lack of aspiration for the country. <sup>44</sup>

While it should be recognized that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī is indebted to Montesquieu and Rousseau, it would be incorrect to assume that he directly borrowed from them without revision. It was in this spirit that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī proceeded to reformulate such concepts as *ummaḥ* and *waṭan*; this in turn opened the way to broadening the horizon of these concepts. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī held that such concepts were already existing within Arab consciousness and were in fact, political virtues, which could be utilized. It was, indeed, ironic that it was de Sacy and his circle who introduced al-Ṭaḥṭāwī to his own cultural heritage<sup>45</sup> by making him aware of the discoveries of the first Egyptian archaeological expedition. This exposure to the culture of Ancient Egypt was to delight al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and provide a fresh stimulus for his thinking about the formation of a new national identity for Egypt. This concept is the theme developed in *al-Manāḥij*. This latter work is theoretical in character. Here al-Ṭaḥṭāwī analyses the significance of his French experience and proves himself an active observer with a remarkable capacity for mastering the essential facts; he also demonstrates an ability to present these in a clear prose style, based on French literary models. *al-Manāḥij* is, in essence, a remarkable attempt to meet what he calls

the needs of Egypt:<sup>46</sup> what is required for national fulfillment. Here he is faced with a difficult task. It is plain in *al-Manāhij* that he was well aware of the concept of nationalism, simply from the radical conclusion in which he differentiated this concept from that of "brotherhood of faith".<sup>47</sup> Similarly, he emphasised the need to create "a public spirit" by teaching good citizenship to both schoolboys and schoolgirls, and the need to foster public opinion as an instrument of pressure against the excesses of rulers, as necessary parts of the solution to political problems. These views are remarkable, not only for the insight he displays in his combining the merits of the traditional and more modern outlooks, but also for the many individual observations they contain.

An aspect of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's insight into Western culture may be illustrated by his attempt to keep Westernism in morals and politics while discarding it for faith. His new appeal to reason was not confined to science but to other matters too. He asserts that the development of political justice towards a complete democratic system owes little or nothing to Christian teaching and was derived entirely from the post-revolutionary constitution. The observation that his compatriot Copts were unclean and unlike urbanized European Christians<sup>48</sup> was made to illustrate the point that European civilization was not founded on the teachings of Christianity, but rather on constitutionalism, namely the development of political systems which demand more accountability on the part of the governors. The superiority of European civilization was more linked to the idea of accountability than the observance of Christian values. Consequently, in his view, the importation of Western institutions would not result in the religious dominance of the Copts or

in the Muslims being converted to Christianity;

Know that Parisians are distinguished from many other Christians by their sharpness of intellect, their acuteness of understanding and their application of their minds to difficult problems. They are quite unlike Christian Copts, who tend by nature towards ignorance and stupidity.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, the argument tries to establish that there can never be adequate rational evidence for condemning the process of importation of certain Western values. There is an implication in *al-Takhlīṣ* that political factors play a more important role in shaping the character of a society than its religious beliefs. He maintained that a society could improve conditions for its citizens only by political means, not by blindly adhering to and depending on comfort derived from religious teachings, whether Islamic or Christian.

The main objection to the study of politics in former times was the persistence of government leaders in their attitude: that politics was one of the secrets of monarchies. It ought not to be studied by other than heads of state and the guardians of government departments. Moreover politics as a term seemed also to signify cunning and deception, as well as manipulative authority, which was unfitted for any but despotic regimes. Nowadays all policies of monarchy are based on justice, integrity and sincerity on which truth is built, as a radiant light. Truth cannot be founded save on sincerity of word and deed, and proper relationships between the shepherd and his flock (...) We know that the king who esteems his subjects favours their advancement in the royal hierarchy, so as to consult

their views.<sup>50</sup>

We cannot doubt that this is really the spirit of modern political philosophy. "Their legal system is not derived from the divine Books but is rather derived from other sources, mostly political, completely different-from the religious laws."<sup>51</sup> It is with this view, together with constitutionalism, that he approached the topic of nationalism. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī is sometimes credited by later scholars as having been the first Arab thinker to become aware of his national identity, and so to merit consideration as the "father of Arab nationalism". Nationalistic is undoubtedly the right term for his general attitude. But it does not, for instance, distinguish him sharply enough from al-Bustānī. It is easy to see how this view of him came to be adopted, if one considers his many *waṭaniyyah* poems, inspired by French models, in which he glorified the Egyptian army and praised the qualities of its soldiers. But the problem is more deeply rooted than has yet been suggested. Some of his writings have been often misunderstood. His own concept of nationalism was never fully developed and the concept of "the fatherland" was not one that embraced all the peoples of the Arabic speaking countries within a single unified political identity. It only aimed at calling the attention of his countrymen to the need for change within Egypt. This is illustrated by his repeated references to the achievements of the Pharaohs.<sup>52</sup> On the particular point of national identity, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī is careful to wrap the clothing of his nationalist sentiment around the body of traditional Islamic teaching. Here he takes his stand; here he sets down what we must call his fundamental value-judgement, from which he never moves. In this manner, he subtly puts forward the theory that

modernization on Western lines should be introduced, where this process of modernization does not conflict with orthodox Islamic teaching.

As a first step, a series of translations of important Western books covering such subjects as history, geography and military matters were made. Most of these were translated from French at the command of Muḥammad ʿAlī, and later through the encouragement of Ismāʿīl, into Arabic and Turkish by al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and his assistants, who translated in all some 2000 books and pamphlets. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī not only translated but interpreted and extensively annotated Arab-Islamic literature and has left many important treatises on the various branches of knowledge. His disciple S. Majdi gives a list of seventeen books, to which the reader may be referred.<sup>53</sup> Among other things, they include his contribution to the development of Egyptian journalism, and his coinage of Arabic terms for many Western political concepts. This was done through his work for the journal *al-Waḡāʾiʿ al-miṣriyyah* and the magazine *Rawḍat al-Madāris* (The Garden of the Schools) established 1870.<sup>54</sup> The purpose of these translations was not only to transmit Western cultural concepts but also to compile a new lucid Arabic terminology. For both of these reasons al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's writing on political institutions has a special appeal to those who wish to know at what point the various political and related terms were coined.

From a literary point of view it should be noted that in passing from al-Jabartī's works to al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's-although they are separated by only thirty years- we step clearly over a threshold from a traditional style of prose, which had its roots in the previous centuries, into the new world of one who had come to realize that such a style was not adequate for his purposes, even though he could never break away

entirely from the restrictions of *al-Saj*<sup>6</sup>. In the same spirit as that which moved al-‘Aṭṭār in his *Inshā’*, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī also was moving towards introducing a new spirit of expression into Arab culture in order to create an audience to whom the language of reform could be addressed. There is little question that his essays helped create an atmosphere of acceptability for the incursion of Western influence; they were written in a lucid style based on the classical language along with the selective employment of elements of the vocabulary of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French institutions, which he had acquired from his extensive reading. It is not an accident that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī has been described by some historians as the first Arab essayist, although there are many historians and authors who consider al-Shidyāq the one who deserves this title. His efforts in educational scholarship were given due recognition when in 1844 he was commended by Muḥammad ‘Alī, who promoted him to the rank of *Qā’ im-maqām* and to that of *Amīr Alay* two years later.

It can be said that he saw that the principal task in the journey towards reform was to sweep away the errors that the Arabs had themselves made in the past and then to seek a gradual assimilation of Western ideas whenever they proved positively beneficial. In particular, "These rational practical sciences" al-Ṭaḥṭāwī wrote "which sound as if they are foreigners, are in fact Islamic sciences translated by foreigners into their languages from Arabic texts."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was never to allow himself to promote "Westernism" to such an extent that it might encourage the idea of revolution as a means of political change. In spite of his knowledge of, and admiration for, the

authors who inspired the French revolution, such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu, and his witnessing the Revolution of 1830, he was still in many ways part of the medieval system.<sup>56</sup>

It may be said that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's admiration for the philosophers of the French Revolution and the concepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity was counterbalanced by a total rejection on his part of the idea of an actual revolution in Egypt. Within this general background it seems that there is room for at least two different interpretations and that with much uncertainty he moves from one to another. This was due largely to his own mental attitude, which was still bound up with the traditional idea of a "dual" structured society: cultural leaders and the masses. The historian of the Egyptian national movement, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi 'i, commented on the modernism of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's ideas

If you ponder these remarks and consider their meaning, remembering that they were written in 1830, that is, a hundred years ago, you will find that they have the stamp of contemporary constitutional principles and that they are in harmony with the spirit of freedom and democracy.<sup>57</sup>

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's major interest lay in the quest for the formation of a just government rather than in any attempt to devise a political solution of his own. It will be recalled that, to the Arab mind of that time, *al-Sharī'ah* was fully adequate as a legal system. Thus, the very idea of including laws which were based upon foreign, non-Islamic models, was seen to be a direct attack on Islam itself. This is why al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, and Khayr al-Dīn, attempted to show that all their ideas, in the final analysis, derived, from the legacy of Islamic-Arabic culture. Hence, they



had to adapt traditional Islamic writings, and, by subtly incorporating aspects of Ibn Khaldūn's and al-Māwardī's political theories, attempted to negotiate the difficult transitional phase from feudal agrarianism to liberal modernism. They had to do so, in such a way as not to be accused of importing alien concepts into Islamic ideology. Such an approach was carried out in the full light of their own newly-gained knowledge of Western philosophical traditions.

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī undertakes a general discussion of the nature of the French constitution and of its applicability to concrete situations and problems. He attaches much importance to a distinction between *al-Malakiyyah* (Absolute Monarchy) and *al-Ḥurriyyah* (Constitutional Monarchy):

Those who incline to the latter do so in the sense that they hold that one should only consider the laws, the king being only the executor of the decisions according to the laws ; thus he is but an instrument.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, it is clear to you that the King of France does not have absolute power, and that the French administration is a constitutional law, whereby the ruler is the King, on condition that he acts in accordance with the provisions of the laws on which the members of the assemblies have agreed.<sup>59</sup>

In two of his books *al-Murshid al-amīn li-al-banāt wa-al-banīn* (1874), and *al-Rasūl al-amīn li-al-banāt wa-al-banīn* (1875),<sup>60</sup> al-Ṭaḥṭāwī maintained that Western-style models should be the essential foundations for the new educational curriculum to be introduced into

Egypt.<sup>61</sup> It would be impossible, he believed, if these recommendations were ignored, for the Egyptian Arab to gain access to the various branches of knowledge readily available to Europeans. He maintained that the Arabs would gradually become intellectually sterile if they did not pursue this course:

Without the astronomy [i.e., science] of the people of Paris, their wisdom, their accomplishments, their good administration, and their concern with the interests of their land, their city would be nothing at all...If Egypt took care, and the tools of civilization were applied copiously there, then it would be the sultan of cities and the chief country of the world.<sup>62</sup>

It was certainly al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's purpose in *al-Takhlīṣ* to find a middle ground between the traditionism of Egypt and the modernism of the West. His efforts in this field must be appreciated against the culture of the period, in which there was little attempt to verify knowledge handed down by tradition.

It is taken for granted amongst us that the palm tree is not found save in Muslim lands. In response it is claimed that when America was discovered, there they found palm trees, which were not transplanted from our countries. Contrast this with the words of the venerable Qazwini in his book "The Wonders of Creation and the Marvels of Phenomena" the gist of which is: The palm: is a blessed miraculous tree; among its marvels that it does not grow outside Islamic countries.<sup>63</sup>

Here in this explanation of the origin of the palm tree we meet a

distinctive feature of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's discussion. It is a clear example of the disparity between the traditional ideology of the Arab prerogative and the realities of the age which brought doubt concerning the validity of this ideology. His apparent success in correlating such phenomena induced him, as a logical consequence of it, to move towards criticising *al-Azhar*. Although the times were far different, *al-Azhar*, in his view, continued to be dominated by methods of a previous era. He criticized its teachers for abandoning the teaching of secular subjects which had once flourished there, and he emphasized that without their re-introduction, it could not act as a suitable institute for teaching the new European- style methods of government and science.<sup>64</sup> He demonstrated that in ancient times Greece and Egypt had exchanged ideas with considerable profit for both, and he claimed that the time was now ripe for Egypt to exchange ideas with European countries. He gives a number of examples to illustrate his idea, citing the historical example of the Pharaoh Psammek I, who brought Greek merchants and scholars to live in Egypt, where their assimilation into Egyptian society was encouraged, under the Pharaoh's direct protection.<sup>65</sup>

As with al-Bustānī, so with al-Ṭaḥṭāwī: the reconciliation of traditional values with Western institutions leads along the path to the eventual emancipation of the Arab woman. Such remarks, taken in isolation, might be thought to imply that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī came suddenly to a radical stance. But this would undoubtedly be a misreading. It is important to relate the remarks that he makes in his last book to the context of the last period of his life.

With the liberal ruler, Khedive Ismāʿīl, on one side and with the enlightened minister, Mubārak, on the other, combined with his own

genius for education and liberation, he could see the way towards a new movement regarding the status of women in Arab society, especially regarding the education of young females: "Girls must be educated as much as boys and on the same footing".<sup>66</sup>

Khedive Ismā'īl's progressive liberalism made the last years of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's life pleasant. He had the opportunity to express his new ideas in a cultural climate that was refreshingly receptive to innovations:

I was verbally authorised by *Dīwān al-madāris* [The Ministry of Education] to write a book on the literature and pedagogy suitable for teaching both males and females...I called this "The trustworthy guide for girls and boys."<sup>67</sup>

al-Ṭaḥṭāwī himself appreciated Ismā'īl's reforms; saying, when the latter established in 1866 the new parliament *Majlis al-nuwwāb*:

If he had achieved nothing else than to have induced the people to elect intelligent representatives for themselves to consult concerning their vital interests, this would have been sufficient however, glory and felicity for him. For he became the ruler of a nation which enjoyed free expression of opinion in consultation regarding administrative matters which required reform for the public good.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, it is not enough to show that the strength of his will to commit himself to such a dramatic suggestion as the education of women is compatible with the possibility that his views had undergone a further development in the last few years of his life. It can be shown

that such views coincided with those of the then ruler who had already taken the dramatic innovative step of establishing two schools for girls—the first of their kind in Egypt, of which the first was opened in 1873,<sup>69</sup> ten years after the establishing of al-Bustānī's *al-Madrasah al-waṭaniyyah* in Beirut. Ismā‘īl's interest in reform had shown itself in the appointment of al-Tahtawi to the committee directing all the various schools that he had recently established. During his career as director, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī gave priority to writing on methods of education. In 1870, he was appointed to the post of chief editor of a bi-monthly review *Rawḍat al-madāris* founded, earlier in that year, by the reformer ‘Alī Mubārak, the Director of the *Dīwān al madāris*. This educational journal was published with the primary purpose of encouraging students to write on a variety of topics of their own choice.<sup>70</sup> The wide range in choice of subject also demonstrates the liberty of this period:

Contrary to much received opinion in the West, Egyptian educationists like Ṭaḥṭāwī and ‘Alī Mubārak were well aware, long before the British occupation, of the need to awaken intelligence and to reduce the place of memory in Egyptian education. It was unfortunate that their efforts to develop a kind of modern education fitted to Egypt's needs were interrupted by the financial stringency of the 1880s and thereafter superseded by Lord Cromer's preference for practical and technical, over literary and speculative studies, as more suitable for subject races.<sup>71</sup>

It is not accurate to call al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's work modernist, as some

historians have done, for even *al-Manāḥij* contains a good number of views which do not fall under the heading of modernism. Moreover, even though the commentaries on patriotism and certain other concepts like the education of women can be called modern concepts, it would be a mistake to suppose that all his writings dealt with modern views. A quick look at the classical subject matter of (*Nihāyat al-ījāz fī sīrat sākīn al-Hijāz*) (The End of summary in the Biography of a Resident of al-Hijaz); and (*al-Kawākib al-nayyirāt fī layālī afrāḥ al-‘Azīz al-muqmirāt*). (The Bright Stars in the Moonlit Nights of the joys of al-‘Aziz.) will illustrate this. In sum, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's importance as a thinker lies in his educational work and particularly in being among the first Arab thinkers to formulate the embryonic concept of the emancipation of the Arab woman. His views on this subject are found clearly delineated in scattered references in *al-Manāḥij* and *al-Murshid*.

As we have already mentioned, while considering the writings of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and other nineteenth century Arab scholars, one must take into account the fact that their writings cannot readily be placed into simple categories like "progressive" and "traditional". All their works contain both progressive elements derived from Western sources and also many of the old concepts which still reflected traditional attitudes associated with Islamic Orthodoxy.

These conflicting elements are to be discovered throughout the work of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and his contemporaries and are also to be found in the writing of subsequent generations of Arab scholars. Therefore, one is not surprised to find whenever al-Ṭaḥṭāwī wrote or published work, that its message was soon echoed among his contemporary Arab thinkers, whether modernist or traditionalist. For example, there is

reference to al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's work *Qalā'id al-mafākhir fī gharīb 'awā'id al-awā'il wa-al-awākhir* (1833) and *Takhlīṣ* in the work of such eminent nineteenth century figures as the Lebanese thinkers, Nawfal<sup>72</sup> and al-Shidyāq.<sup>73</sup>

Modern educational theory does not, in effect, differ substantially from that of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī whose conception of education was centred on the development of the individual rather than on the preservation and continuation of a tradition. The nature of the developmental process may be directed towards a single, educational goal, such as promoting the maintenance of good physical health, or it may be as varied and complex as the nexus of family duties and "love of country". First of all, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that this conception was the beginning of one of the phases in a long fight between the modern Arab intellectual school and its more traditionalist opponents.

The essence of his position on education was the need to instil in the minds of the Egyptian people an ideal vision of the perfect society achieved through the above mentioned concept *ḥubb al-waṭan*, which al-Ṭaḥṭāwī explains as follows:

The love of *waṭan* is part of faith. It is the nature of the freeborn to yearn for their *waṭans* (birthplaces); a man always loves his birthplace; his place of origin is familiar and desirable; that place where you live claims the respect due to a birthplace, just as your mother may claim her due for having sustained you ... Even though Cairo has bestowed her benefits on me and raised me above my peers in knowledge ...and I cherish it greatly, having received its benefits and lived forty years in it, I still yearn for my particular *waṭan*, am always on the lookout for happy news of it, and will not

hold anything equal to Tahta.<sup>74</sup>

Further emphasised by him is the basic right of the people to freedom, which together with love of country constitutes the basis upon which the perfect society should be established. It is true that in many instances this view is an amalgam of some of Ibn Khaldūn's ideas on doctrine of *al-‘aşabiyyah*, but that ought not to blind us to the essential fact that the concept of *ḥubb al-waṭan* is given a completely new meaning. No longer is the individual required passively to accept authority but he is exhorted to perform an active role in building a new civilized society. No longer is the burden of social duty and responsibility placed on the *Ummah* (The Community of Believers) but it is spread over all members of the community, whether Muslim or not.

Patriotism, in its modern form was thus introduced into the minds of Arab readers for the first time. From then onwards, the concept of the mother country became the focus for the various members of the nation, who came to perceive unity through a feeling of national identity. It is through an appeal to this feeling that they were exhorted to perform their duties.

The significance of this will become more apparent when treating al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's theories on the duties of the citizen towards his country. Considering his ideas about the state and society, the exposition of his central concern was not an easy task, owing to the restrictions imposed by his social position. However, he solved that part of this dilemma by putting his finger on the crisis which confronts the despotic ruler, referring to the example of the Prophet and his Companions and by repeating their teaching on political reform within the framework of



Islamic thought.

Again it may be said that despite the Paris experience which moulded his political ideas, he cannot be classified as a typical nineteenth century liberal thinker. Whilst he derives many of his ideas from liberal French culture, his views on the State follow the conventional Islamic form, where the ruler assumes full and absolute authority, but in so doing must always remain within the guidelines of the *Sharīʿah* and have respect for the opinions of the *ʿulamāʾ*: "The heirs of the prophets and the bearers of the *Sharīʿah* whose rank in the *Ummah* is that of the prophets among *Banū Israʾīl*" 75

Through his witnessing of the Revolution of 1830, when the people of France deposed Charles X and chose Louis Philippe, and through his extensive reading and direct experience of France, the concept of a government in the hands of the people was familiar to him. Indeed a lengthy description of this Revolution is given in his work *al-Takhlīs*. 76 It is quite consistent with his ideas to suppose that, to him, the idea of revolution was neither appropriate nor of use in solving the particular problems which beset the Egypt of his time. Examining the result of this revolution, he states that Louis Philippe was called "The King of the French" rather than by the former title "King of France", and in his correspondence, omitted the phrase "by the grace of God", in order to "please the people who claimed that he was made king by the will of the nation rather than because of any special privilege which God bestowed on his family to the exclusion of his subjects' influence." But, for al-Ṭaṭṭāwī the expressions "King of France" and "King of the French" are equal: "For to become king by the choice of his subjects does not contradict the fact that this originated in God's grace." 77

We may put al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's problem and his proposed solution into modern terms by saying that he could see that any attempt at revolution in Egypt under an autocrat, in the absence of effectively oriented political awareness, would be *fitnah* and would be suppressed out of hand. However, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī did not ignore the problem altogether; he gave it only a little consideration. His only hope for instituting any political change would be by first making an effective attempt to persuade the ruling class to utilize its powers to benefit all classes. In other words, he believed the only way to put an end to the state of political backwardness was better achieved from above, namely by the ruling elite. He still hopes that the Egyptian autocratic system might be reformed as a direct function of its own tradition.

*al-ḥurriyah al-madaniyyah* (civil liberty) is the common right of the inhabitants of a city. It is as though the social order, which is made up of the inhabitants of the state, cooperated and shared the responsibility for the realization of their rights; and that every individual guarantees to the rest his help in any action which is not contrary to the law, rebuking those who oppose anyone's exercising his freedom as long as he does not transgress the limits of the law. *al-ḥurriyah al-siyāsiyyah* (political liberty); that is, *al-dawliyyah* (International), is the state's guarantee to every one of its inhabitants for his legal possessions and his exercising his natural freedom without transgressing any part thereof. Thus, it is allowed for everyone to administer his property within the bounds of legal dispositions. It is as though the government therewith ensured a person's happiness as long as he avoided harming his fellow man. <sup>78</sup>

Thus, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī acquiesces in the accepted view of authority as being vested in the ruler. However, he often avoids explicit statements that would classify him as belonging to one school or another. What he does is to bring these traditional elements together, and to adapt them to meet the needs of a particular situation, in such a way that the limitations placed upon a ruler's power can be assimilated by Islamic moral norms.

Nonetheless, it is not quite accurate to say that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's thinking is purely medieval, since his political theories comprise a revision of the works of al-Māwardī as seen in the light of Montesquieu. It was Montesquieu who made the distinction between the "three powers" of a constitutional monarchy and their use as a constraint upon the monarch's exercise of absolute power. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī took over some of the emphases on these powers as his own. Thus, by emphasizing the importance of the *Sharī'ah*, he was advocating the use of its authority in order to place a similar constraint upon the power of Egypt's rulers.

The use of fiction as a literary form in medieval political writings was a common one to avoid the wrath of a despotic ruler, for example, Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Kalila wa Dimnah*.<sup>79</sup> This method, although within a different historical framework, was applied by al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, in his translation of Fenelon's novel "Les Aventures de Telemaque" under the title *Mawāqif al-afṭāk fī waqā'if al-Talīmāk*, (1867) during his four year stay in the Sudan.<sup>80</sup> This stay was seen as an interruption of his enjoyment of the patronage of the family of Muḥammad 'Alī. It was alleged by some of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's biographers that he translated this work in order to serve the purpose of expressing his views on political

reform without having to provoke his ruler, ‘Abbās I (ruled between 1848 and 1854). Indeed there is a good deal of obscurity about his stay in the Sudan, and he seems to have been forced to depart, or at least forbidden to work in Cairo. We know no details of the disputes in which he became involved. However, we are told by P.J. Vatikiotis that ‘Abbas I

was generally reactionary and despotic. He had no interest, or desire, to continue the reform and other works of his illustrious predecessor, as he was suspicious of not only the many Europeans already in the service of his grandfather, but also the few Egyptians in government service who had been trained in the modern schools opened by Muḥammad ‘Ali, and in the educational missions to Europe. His policy amounted to a deliberate arrest of the process of modern change.<sup>81</sup>

When we read the reminiscences of his Sudanese experience, the reader's immediate impression is that it was an unhappy one compared with his French experience. Here, as he expressed it, is nothing that deserves adoption, and the tone of his writing during this period is depressive, as of one lamenting over his misfortune as if to pay the price for a political situation:

Although the period of my stay in that country was designed to deprive the country of my services, Divine dispensation ordained that my absence should not be in vain, because during my stay there, I occupied my mind with the translation of Les Aventures de Telemaque, which was destined to be later published in Beirut.<sup>82</sup>

However, it seems that the reasons behind al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's Sudanese

stay go beyond individual jealousies, which Amerah believes to be one of the motives behind Mubārak's attitude towards him. In his book "Ṭāhā Husayn", Cachia, in turn, argues that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's stay was part of a general crisis in Egyptian politics. Cachia presents his viewpoint as follows:

This decline in Muḥammad 'Alī's military fortunes meant his loss of interest in all the reforms which he had introduced for no other purpose than military aggrandisement. Most of his schools were closed down, and the work of retrenchment was continued by his successor 'Abbas I, in whose reign not a single officially commissioned translation was published.<sup>83</sup>

In 1855 when Sa'īd Pāshā ascended the throne, it was natural for this Viceroy, whose "tutors were Europeans and particularly Frenchmen, and he is said to have acquired a great fondness for Europeans in general",<sup>84</sup> to turn to al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and bring him back to Cairo.

Much of the most influential part of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's politics was concerned with arguing against political despotism, and attempting to inculcate a feeling for political reform. His developing concern with politics culminated in his argument for the limitations to be placed on a hypothetical ruler in an ideal society. He conformed to the traditionalists' Islamic idea of the division of society into "orders", each having a particular function and status, so as to provide a more familiar political model to his Arab audience.

However, this distinction could not bear the weight that he sought

to put upon it. He did not absolutely defend the traditional view, but he specifically defended a modified form of it, demanded in the modern era, in both religion and politics. "One of the characteristics of the King, is that he is the Caliph of God on earth and his accountability is only to his God."<sup>85</sup> However, we must not be misled by al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's deference to his ruler-patrons. Fortunately, it does not much affect his main line of argument; it is important to realise that it is incidental to his main concern. His preoccupation is with the nature of political justice. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, in this respect, was not a philosopher but rather a scholar of eclectic culture. Adhering to the traditional view, he enumerated the merits of a social structure around the "four orders". These were: the rulers; scholars and custodians of religion and law and the professional classes; the military forces, and finally, men of agriculture, commerce and industry.<sup>86</sup> Each of the four orders of the society, in al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's view, has its proper function with regard to the structure of government.

Nevertheless, there is sufficient material in his "classification" to make it possible to identify the essentials of his attitude towards political reform.<sup>87</sup> al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's aim here was to show that the Islamic faith rests on a rational foundation and that the adoption of Western political institutions does not necessarily lead to a view of the world which excludes *al-Sharī'ah* either implicitly or explicitly. The Second Order - the *‘ulamā’* -, is given a particularly strong position in his hypothetical ideal state. They, he maintained, should be respected and honoured: "for he who respects them respects God and His messenger".<sup>88</sup> They should be respected especially by the ruler, who is urged to treat them as his legally appointed assistants in the arduous task of

government as a necessary criterion for the legality of the state. As a matter of fact, his theory about the role of the ‘*ulamā*’ in society was a product which derived its inspiration from his French experience, and developed in a Egyptian context. The theory was born of the insight of a man who knew exceptionally well how to use this combination to the best advantage of his country in an age of rapid national expansion. However, it was more with practical than with theoretical progress that he was concerned. The delegation of more power to the Second order is a step towards solving the problem of autocracy, but still leaves the two lower orders out of consideration.

This concept of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī cannot be said to go all the way towards solving between ‘ulama’ and the foreign ruler. Somehow, however, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī misses the fact that there are deeper conflicts than the conflict between the ruler and the needs of his subjects. However, he does not go into the question of foreign intervention as a whole, as Khayr al-Dīn does, although he tells us about the French reaction to their government’s occupation of Algeria.<sup>89</sup> In other words, he was not seeking to destroy directly belief in the prevailing Islamic ideology, or sacrifice activity to an ideal world which would take him away from his fellows’ realization, but rather to show how political justice might be acquired by a new intellectual process. Throughout his discussion of political questions emphasis on the role of ‘*ulamā*’ is maintained. Asserting that more legitimate power should go to the native ‘*ulamā*’ was an attempt to take some of the power out of the hands of the “foreign” rulers of Egypt.

Thus, it was only by cleverly utilizing Islam as the common binding factor and by advocating greater power for the ‘*ulamā*’, that al-Ṭaḥṭāwī

could make oblique allusions to nationalistic sentiment, although he knew that only a few of them honestly represented the views of the people and spoke for them in matters of reform. The fact remains that behind this his intention to reduce the influence of non-Egyptian elements in matters of government.

We cannot go so far as to accuse al-Ṭaḥṭāwī of failing to steer his countrymen towards accepting the concept of involving the populace in the running of their country. He was fully aware that he would be preaching to deaf ears if he even attempted to raise the new political philosophy with the non-political leaders of the various Egyptian institutions. Though these leaders had experienced a certain liberalizing influence under French occupation and Muḥammad ‘Alī, they were, nevertheless, constrained in their thinking and politics. These leaders, being the only representatives of the community at the time, were, in fact, disciples and exponents of autocracy, so he saw no point in travelling the stony path of attempting to preach views which would not be acceptable to them. One always has to consider these restrictive forces, in viewing his work. This may be said to reflect the thinking of one who was primarily pragmatic, and also an ambitious scholar who, first of all, wished to maintain a position of prominence and acceptability in society as a theologian.



Notes to Chapter Two

1. On al-Tahtawi's career see: al-Rafi 'i, 'Abd al-Rahman. Tā'rikh al-harakah al-qawmiyyah wa-tatawwur nizām al-hukm fī Miṣr. Cairo, 1930, vol. 3, pp. 470-514; Brugman, J. An Introduction to the history of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt. Leiden, 1984, pp.18-24.
2. Takhlīs, pp. 10-11.
3. Heyworth-Dunne, p. 2.
4. Ibid., p. 17.
5. Takhlīs, p. 17.
6. Ibid., p. 18.
7. See : Flower, Raymond. Napoleon to Nasser: the Story of Modern Egypt. London, 1976, chapters:4-8.
8. Rafi'i. Tā'rikh, Vol. 2, pp. 347-383, 240-383.
9. See : Badawi, Aḥmad. Rifā'ah al-Tahtāwī Bey. Cairo, 1950, pp. 14-15.
10. Ibid. pp. 14-15 , footnote (2); Hourani, Albert. Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939. Oxford,1962, p. 69.
11. See : Ahmed, Jamal Mohammed. The Intellectual Origins ... pp. 5-6.
12. al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt 15 June-December 1798 Tārīkh muddat al-Faransīs bi-Miṣr. Edited and translated by Moreh, S., Leiden,1975, p. 30.
13. See: Heyworth-Dunne. An Introduction. 1938, pp. 115-117.
14. See : Zaydān, Jurji. Mashāhīr al-Sharq. Cairo,1910, Vol. 1, pp. 165-169; Hilal (Periodical) 6 (1897-8), pp. 122-125; Dodwell, Henry. The Founder of Modern Egypt. Cambridge, 1931, pp. 63-5.
15. To this day, Seve is remmbered by having a street in Cairo named

after him.

16. Holt, P. M. Egypt and the Fertile Crescent 1516-1922. Ithaca, New York, 1966, p. 191.
17. Takhlīs, p. 18.
18. Rafiī. Ta'rikh. p. 476.
19. Ibid., pp. 126-7.
20. Aḥmed Abdel-Raḥīm Muṣṭafā, "The Hekekyan Papers", p. 75, footnot no. 5. in P.M. Holt (Ed.): Political and Social Change in Modern Egypt. London, 1968.
21. Takhlīs, p. 83.
22. Kayat, Assaad. Voice from Lebanon. London, 1847, p. 146.
23. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. Takhlīs. p. 32.
24. Ibid., p. 10.
25. Ibid., p.102.
26. Ibid., p. 256.
27. Ibid., p.102.
28. Ibid., pp. 256- 258.
29. Ibid., p. 32.
30. Ibid., p. 79.
31. Ibid., p. 21.
32. Ibid., p. 76.
33. Ibid., pp. 93-95.
34. Ibid., p. 159.
35. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
36. p. 16.
37. Ibid., p. 80.
38. Ibid., p. 32.

39. Ibid., p. 155-156.
40. Ibid., p. 76.
41. Ibid., p.103.
42. Ibid., p. 161.
43. al-Murshid, p. 437.
44. Ibid., p. 433.
45. See, for example. Melanges de Litterature Orientale. Paris, n.d; Grammaire Arabe. 2 Parties, Paris, 1810; Chrestomathie Arabe. Paris, 1826-7; Exposé de la Religion des Druzes. Paris, 1838.
46. al-Manāhij, p. 250.
47. Ibid., p. 319.
48. Takhlīs, p. 46.
49. Ibid., p. 75.
50. al-Manāhij, p. 518.
51. Takhlīs, p. 106.
52. For example, see al-Manāhij, p. 533.
53. Majdi, Salih. pp. 61-64.
54. al-Rafi'i, pp. 497-498.
55. al-Manahij, p. 534.
56. See, for example: Hourani. Arabic Thought. p. 73.
57. al-Rafi', Abd al-Rahman. Tārīkh al-harakat al-qawmiyyah wa tatawwur nizam al-hikm fī Miṣr. Cairo, 1930, vol. 3, p. 483.).
58. Takhlīs, p. 201.
59. Ibid., 93.
60. There is some uncertainty about the latter book. Sarkis's Dictionary lists al-Murshid in 1873 and al-Rasūl in 1875, whereas Amarah, who collected al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's works, denies the existence of al-Rasūl and

claims that Sarkis has confused it with *al-Murshid*.

61. *al-Manāhij*. pp. 533-536.

62. *Takhlīs*, p. 70-71.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

64. *al-Manāhij*. pp. 533-536.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 393-394.

66. *al-Murshid*. p. 393.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 273.

68. *al-Manāhij*. p. 497.

69. Holt, P.M. "Egypt and the Fertile Crescent ...", p. 205.

70. See: Revue de l'Academie, 51 (1976) pp. 883-894, 895-898.)

71. Richmond, J. C. B. Egypt 1798-1952: Her Advance towards a Modern Identity. London, 1977, p. 115.

72. Nawfal. *Zubdat*, p. 173.

73. al-Shidyāq. *Kashf*. p. 120.

74. Quoted from Badawi: *Rifa'ah*. pp. 7-8.

75. *al-Manāhij*, p. 531.

76. *Takhlīs*. pp. 201-221.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

78. Zolondex, Leon. "al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Political Freedom". The Muslim World, 54 (1964), pp. 90-97.

79. See: Saliba, Djemil: "Philosophical Symbolism and the Use of the Myth among Arab Philosophers." Diogenes, 9-12 (1955).

80. See: Sarkis' Dictionary, pp. 1931-1932.

81. The History of Egypt from Muhammad Ali to Sadat, p. 71.

82. *al-Manāhij*, p. 462.

83. Cachia, Pierre, Taha Husayn. London, 1956, p. 9.

84. P. J. Vatikiotis. Egypt, p. 72.

85. al-Manahij, p. 519.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 515.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 531.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 531.

89. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The End of an Era or a Crisis of Empire.

Khayr al-Dīn al-Tūnisī (1810-1899).

In Tunisia, Khayr al-Dīn<sup>1</sup> was the principal instigator of political reform. His close relationships with a number of Beys of that country allowed him to observe and to gain an insight into their policies and procedures. Politically, he witnessed the beginning and end of the reign of Aḥmad Bey III, (1837-1855), in addition to the reign of Bey al-Ṣādiq (1859-82), which saw the birth of the Tunisian Constitution, in itself the first attempt at constitutional government in any Islamic country. Special consideration must be given to the achievements of Aḥmad Bey III.

As a young man, prior to his being appointed Bey, Aḥmad had been strongly influenced by his tutor the Wazīr Muṣṭafā Ṣāhib al-Tābi<sup>2</sup>, who had generally supervised his education. Muṣṭafā, in turn, had been influenced by the works of Ibn Khaldūn and the essential concepts to be found in the *Muqaddimah*.

The reign of the ambitious Aḥmad Bey may be said to have been one in which reformists were directly encouraged and brought into relation with the liberalism of the West. This judgement requires a word of explanation. Ahmad Bey's administrative work was characterized by an attempt to carry out an active programme of reform designed to establish Tunisia as a really independent country in the new world created by technological developments, not only in government but also in matters cultural and intellectual as well. He limited himself to military and political realities rather than to the superficialities of

power, as the Sublime Port had ceased to be 'the shield of Islam' and seemed to be approaching its end. The success of Ahmad Bey's military reforms, owing to his great abilities and enormous energy, was to give him the confidence and inspiration for a further ambitious scheme, namely, the industrialization of Tunisia. This plan was necessary as a corollary to the continued success of his initial reforms. Although he was already a ruler with almost absolute power, Ahmad Bey understood the necessity of the establishment of an independent state, and therefore gave much attention to the achievement of such a scheme. He reacted in his own way to the influence of the West and his scheme was designed as a series of measures to furnish his newly reorganized army with modern weapons. These attempts show the width of his acquaintance with contemporary politics and his appreciation of its implications. He realized that any state that could not equip its own army would lack an essential element in its structure and would only remain a client state. What is far more important was that if Tunisia was not self-sufficient in its own military supplies it would be a prey to European intervention and political manipulation, with no adequate defence. As a result, various industrial concerns were established during his reign, such as a powder mill, a cannon foundry, a tannery, and clothing factories for making uniforms. Another great advance was made; Ahmad Bey also saw the navy as important, and he constituted a port at Porto Forina and bought twelve vessels from Europe,<sup>2</sup> thus establishing himself as the leading power in North Africa.

But his achievement in establishing a school, The Ecole Polytechnique, in 1838 was of more fundamental and far-reaching importance. The Ecole was placed under the direction of an Italian officer who taught military techniques, engineering and other administrative skills appropriate to

the government's requirements. Aḥmad Bey carefully chose thinkers, scholars, and reformers of liberal persuasion to teach there. Teachers of history, geography, mathematics, and artillery were brought over especially from Italy, Britain, and France.<sup>3</sup> The principal name we meet is the progressive Shaykh Maḥmūd Qabādu,<sup>4</sup> who was at this time appointed professor of Arabic and religious education in this new school. Such was his enthusiasm for Western institutions that Aḥmad Bey in 1842 approached the French government for assistance to modernize his army. A French military mission was duly established in Tunis in 1842. Khayr al-Dīn, for a time, was trained at this mission under its head Lieutenant-Colonel Campenon, who later became Gambetta's minister of war.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Egyptian Aḥmad Amīn in *Zu' amā' al-iṣlāḥ fī al-ʿaṣr al-ḥadīth* (Leaders of Reform in the Modern Era), the liberal Ottoman Sultan Maḥmūd II actively encouraged French influence in Tūnisīa.

All these reforms took place in an era when Tūnisīa was going through a period of political strife. Its inhabitants were, at that time, in considerable fear that the occupation of neighbouring Algeria in 1830 by the French would lead to a direct attack on their own country. Thus, the policy of seeking help from the French meant indirectly to ally Tunisia to a country that could in different circumstances be its enemy.

At this time, the Ottoman Empire itself was in disarray, with riots and plots taking place in Greece, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula. The Ottoman Sultan Maḥmūd II was himself prepared to make changes towards a relatively more liberal system of administration. With full knowledge of the risks involved, he threw the full weight of his personality and powers against inept and intransigent administrators, whose reactionary behavior prevented the development



of a more tolerant and enlightened attitude towards reform and the acceptance of new Western ideas, which were arriving in the wake of colonial expansionism and empire building.

It was in such an atmosphere of change and exposure to European influences that Khayr al-Dīn acquired his interest in liberalism. It may be said that the importance of Aḥmad Bey lies in the fact that without his policy of improving his country and introducing Western ideas and techniques, the work of the reformer Khayr al Dīn would have been impossible.

### FROM IBN KHALDŪN TO KHAYR AL-DIN:

Khayr al-Din started life as a slave in the household of Taḥsīn Bey, *Naqīb al-Ashrāf* and *Kadi-ʿAskar* of Anatolia, in Constantinople between 1825 and 1830, and was purchased by Aḥmad Bey in 1840. However, despite his undistinguished birth and alien origin, his political and social efforts constitute an essential part of the historical and nationalist movement of nineteenth-century Tunisia.<sup>6</sup> Khayr al-Dīn studied at the Bey's palace and at the Ecole Polytechnique, specialising in the study of the Arabic language and Islamic *ʿUlūm* (Religious Sciences), together with modern military sciences. His studies also included the Turkish and French languages. His knowledge of French was so accurate that, at a later date, he himself supervised the translation of his principal book into that language.

Through patronage of the Bey, he was able eventually to achieve the highest rank in the Tūnisian army as *farīq* (general de division) in 1844.<sup>7</sup> The Bey was quick to recognize the talents of the young Khayr al-Din. In 1853 he sent him to Paris to obtain the extradition of the disgraced Tunisian financial minister Maḥmūd b. ʿAyyād the former farmer-general of taxes in Tunis, who had fled to Paris with a fortune

stolen from the Tunisian exchequer. Upon his return to Tunis in 1857, Khayr al-Dīn's public services were given special recognition when he was made Minister of Marine.<sup>8</sup>

At a quite early stage of his intellectual development as a thinker, and as a part of the retinue of the Tunisian government, Khayr al-Dīn was able to perceive an overall view of the danger that was threatening the fabric of the Ottoman Empire, which had become increasingly subject to events rather than the instigator of them:

"The Ottoman dynasty began to decline and show deficiencies when it became negligent in carrying out the royal interests in accordance with requirements of the *sharʿ* and the governmental regulations. The practice of selecting the best officials for the important administrative posts disappeared. Many of the officials conducted themselves according to personal interests and not by considering the interests of the state or its subjects. Eventually there entered into the Janissaries those who corrupted their excellent discipline and disrupted their obedience. Finally the Janissaries began to interfere in affairs of state which were of no concern to them. They upset the peace of the inhabitants with their various kinds of oppression, although previously they had been a model of obedience just as they had been a model of bravery on the field of battle. From the combination of these and similar affairs, unrest grew in the kingdom and governors of distant provinces seized this opportunity to abstain from following the orders of the state. They gave free rein to their own aims and appetites, and many of the *dhimmi*-s resorted to foreign protection, for if man's hope of protection for himself, his honor and his wealth through the laws of his country are cut off, it is natural for him to seek protection from whomever he sees as able to grant it. He may well seek ways making it possible for his protector to dominate the entire country, especially if there exist between him and the dynasty no unity of race or religion. These disadvantages

growing out of the actions of governors bound by neither a religious nor a political restriction made it easy for foreigners to interfere in the empire's affairs and to corrupt its policy in a way suitable to their aims. Eventually civil wars broke out in various parts of the empire with a great loss of life and property, and resulting in the secession of important provinces.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the real task confronting Khayr al-Dīn, was to bring Tūnisīa into the modern world by liberalizing its social and political order by incorporating new Western ideas and a political approach which would make it strong, lead it into its rightful position in the modern world and protect it from the encroachment of the West. For the sake of clarity it will be better if we ignore the exact chronological sequence of events affecting Tunisia and its neighbors and attempt to trace only the main lines along which the various ideas of Khayr al-Din were to develop within the context of the troubled period in which he lived.

Like, his contemporaries, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and al-Shidyāq, but to an even higher degree, Khayr al-Dīn was not only a philosopher but also a statesman who realized that the value of his theories would depend largely upon the extent of their application. His whole official career was devoted to the furtherance of political reform, and the posts which he occupied were for him a kind of platform from which to preach his discourse to the public. His achievement included not only his part in the conduct of diplomacy, but also that in the establishment of *al-Madrasah al-Sādiqiyyah* (the Sadiqi school) where European languages (French, and Italian) as well as Turkish, and modern subjects were taught, along with Arabic language and Islamic education. His reputation continued to grow, as he was also responsible for the reorganization of *Jāmi' al-Zaytūnah*'s system of education, as well as the establishment of the famous *al-Abdaliyyah* Library and the establishment of a public

library on European lines, to which he donated 1,100 books. Some historians stressed that the liberal measures which were introduced during the reigns of Bey Muḥammad (1855-59) and Bey Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq were in fact due to Khayr al-Dīn's influence.

Because of these liberal measures further reforms became possible under the reign of Bey Muḥammad. A form of constitution known as *‘Ahd al-Amān* (pacte fondamental), which was established in 1857, ensured security of the person to all and equality in taxation and before the law.

*‘Ahd al-Amān*, which was an important step forward in the journey towards a complete political reform, has not been given its full significance by Arab historians. It may be considered a precursor to the great social and political reforms of Bey al-Ṣādiq. It was during the reign of the latter that the "Constitution", the first formal constitution in any Muslim country, was granted, in January 1861. This Constitution set up a Grand Council of sixty members and Khayr al-Dīn became its president which had been inspired largely by his own efforts. The Constitution laid down that the Bey and his ministers were responsible to the Grand Council whose approval was necessary for new laws to be enacted, old laws changed or expenditure increased. For some time all went well between the Bey and his prime minister. However, the influence of the partisans of traditional regime proved too strong when Bey al-Ṣādiq tampered with the Council, an act which led to the resignation of Khayr al-Dīn in 1862 "after a disagreement about whether ministers should be responsible to the Bey or Supreme Council."<sup>10</sup>

Khayr al-Dīn was so disappointed with this failure that he found it prudent to withdraw from public life. At this point his personal intervention in Tunisia politics - with a few exceptional missions - ceased. The next seven years spent in many European capitals exposed

him to much new material which in turn resulted in his *Aqwām al-masālik fī maʿrifat aḥwāl al-mamālik* (The Straightest Road for Knowledge of the Conditions of States) (1867).

But politics was so deeply a part of the man that by 1873 he was back to political work firstly in Tunisia and finally in Constantinople.

Although he was convinced that it was too late to come up with what might have been a final answer to the question of the political future of Tunisia and the fate of the Ottoman Empire itself as a political and military force, the search for an answer would not be a search in vain amid the strategic policies of European powers. Khayr al-Dīn viewed the political future as an open question on which views might differ. But, on the other hand, such a search would serve, as he himself might think, to open the eyes of his countrymen to a number of basic questions relating to the fate of their country.

These Europeans are not content with obstructing the implementation of these laws by their own refusal. Some of them even turn the subjects of certain Islamic kingdoms against accepting the *tanzīmāt* which their rulers wish to establish. They proclaim to them, 'These *tanzīmāt* are not appropriate for your situation and it is preferable for you to return to your previous condition,' although such advice is in conflict with the political principles of their own countries. Some say, 'The liberty which has been granted to you from your state will not be sufficient to protect your rights,' whereas the truth is that it is more than has been granted the subjects of their own countries. For this reason we are forced to believe that they have no motive except the aim of perpetuating confusion in the Islamic countries in order to thwart successful reform. In general, the policy of European states in our provinces is contradictory. There are those who show their good will to certain Muslim states by supporting them in making appropriate reorganizations,

and there are those who obstruct these plans in these same provinces while exerting themselves in giving the same type of helpful advice in other Muslim provinces, all according to the differences of their aims.<sup>11</sup>

He was faced, not so much with the problem of absolute rule, but with the administrative machinery that maintained and fostered it, and his own reaction was to identify some aspects of the Islamic-Arabic political heritage and, with some adjustment, weld them to certain Western institutions, so giving them some rationality of form. The introduction of such an approach, however, was not without its problems. This might have been a severe check to the influence and authority of the theocratic establishment, and it is hardly surprising, then, that the approach of Khayr al-Dīn came under condemnation from various theological bodies. Turning to more central issues in political philosophy, he plausibly claims that:

There is no reason to reject or ignore something which is correct and demonstrable simply because it comes from others, especially if we had formerly possessed it and it had been taken from us. On the contrary, there is an obligation to restore it and put it to use. Anyone devoted to his religion should not be deterred from imitating the commendable actions related to worldly interests of one religiously misguided. This is what the French have done. By ceaselessly emulating what they deem good in the work of others they have attained the sound organization of their affairs in this world to be witnessed by all. The discriminating critic must sift out the truth by a probing examination of the thing concerned whether it be word or deed. If he finds it to be correct he should accept and adopt it whether or not its originator be from among the faithful. It is not according to the man that truth is

known. Rather, it is by truth that man is known. Wisdom is the goal of the believer. He is to take it wherever he finds it.<sup>12</sup>

Khayr al-Dīn argues, however, that the *‘ulamā’* would find it difficult to acknowledge this last point for fear of seeming to concede too much to their intellectual opponents.

#### Some Philosophical Implications of Khayr al-Din's Views:

The essential core of his message was that the Arab world must reform and then re-unite under a revitalized and re-organized Ottoman empire. If his new experiences had thus generated in him a sense of Tunisia's external peril, what then were the measures which, in Khayr al-Dīn's view, Tūnisīa needed to take, beyond equipping the army with Western weapons? Before discussing this question, we need, however, to look at the other exigencies to which his pragmatic faculties responded. For Khayr al-Dīn, the question of reform is inseparable from the precondition, that the Arabs must rid themselves of complacent political and social illusions which had proved to be great an obstacle to their acceptance of the new institutions. In his view, these characteristics were leading them to an impending doom, if they were not rejected and assiduously replaced with a new philosophy pertinent to the modern world but still faithful to Islam. What lends Khayr al-Dīn's writings their intellectual power is his persistent attack upon a limited number of problems that occupied him throughout his intellectual career. He realised that the process of political reform was itself in crisis, a process which had begun in Tūnisīa long before him, a history of challenges, emergencies, and attempted fresh starts. As time went on, it became increasingly evident that the crisis affected not this

or that social aspect but the process of reform itself. The premise of his principal argument is that there was nothing to be gained by ignoring the military superiority of Europe and that the right attitude was that, if the Arabs wished to escape from this position, they must have the courage to pass through it. The precondition of sound work in this direction was the ability and readiness to discover what assumptions this attitude involved:

I have heard a certain leading European say, in substance, "The torrent of European civilization is overflowing the world. Nothing can face it without being destroyed by the strength of its unceasing current. Therefore kingdoms neighboring Europe are in danger from this current unless they imitate it and follow the same course of secular *tanzimat*. This can save them from drowning." 13

Khayr al-Dīn suggested that any difficulty in accepting this proposition would be more a failure of political immaturity rather than one of understanding the specific terms of the proposition. Even those who were politically aware cultural conditioning had made slow to accept the innovative ideas that were necessary for coping with the political future.

Khayr al-Dīn, although a great admirer of the West, did not wish it to be overvalued. Thus, the situation with which he was faced in his effort to apply political reform was a complex one. In fact, he was here caught between two tendencies, which ought to have been complementary, whereas they were actually opposed to one another. Islamic traditional ideology on the one hand, and European political institutions on the other, represent rival ways of thinking. Khayr al-Dīn was, nevertheless,



prophetically aware of the impending clash of cultures that would take place, with the imminent danger of Western colonialization, which was born directly out of an imperialist need for ever expanding trade and a desire for greater power. In reaching this conclusion, he followed Ibn Khaldūn's thesis that it was beneficial to society that political activities should be regulated by political laws rather than religious tradition. Furthermore, he added: "secular organization is a firm foundation for supporting the religious system."<sup>14</sup> Perhaps no name recurs more frequently in Khayr al-Dīn's writings than that of Ibn Khaldūn. The achievements for which Khayr al-Dīn is principally remembered is that he developed Ibn Khaldūn's concept maintaining that, now that the age of the Prophet was past, as was the age of Revelation, to constrain a ruler, therefore, it was necessary to create secular and political laws.

His entire political theory hinged upon this particular important revolutionary concept, in the full knowledge that it was only through the acceptance of constitutionalism that all other reforming concepts could be gradually introduced into the Islamic-Arab culture. He maintained that if this did not take place, Arab society would revert to disorder and tyranny and even the practice of religion would be at risk. All these varied interests found a place in Khayr al-Dīn's prolific mind and were the basis of his small but excellent book entitled *Aqwam*, in the hope that such written proof of his experience and capacity would induce those in power to give him public employment. As it was, this book guaranteed his position in the front rank of the Tunisian nationalist movement.<sup>15</sup>

This work, in the Arabic original, or in the French<sup>16</sup> and Turkish translations,<sup>17</sup> particularly the introduction,<sup>17</sup> is worthy of closer attention. It is true to say that it met with some success inside Tunisia

and abroad, but also met with much opposition.

Although Khayr al-Dīn did not write much, he anticipated many of the concepts that were later to become the focus of future political literature. The importance of his writings lies not only in the subject matter, which is probably the most important work in its field to have appeared during that period, but also in the fact that it laid down the shape of a theory of political reform for many later Arab thinkers. These writings cover a broad range of issues concerning the relations between the ruler and the ruled, taking into account the fact that:

...Just as the administration of *sharīʿah* rulings depends on knowledge of the texts, it depends also upon knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the revelation of these texts. <sup>18</sup>

With Khayr al-Dīn we return to the mainstream of Arabic cultural tradition in political philosophy. In fact, Khayr al-Dīn is a true successor of Averroes whose political theory, as embodied in *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl wa-taqrīr mā bayn sharīʿah wa-al-ḥikmah min al-ittiṣāl* (The book of the decision (or distinction) of the discourse, and determination of what connection there is between religion and philosophy). This work has been neglected for centuries. A passage of *Aqwam* bears a striking resemblance to the well-known opening pages of *Faṣl al-maqāl*, which states the same principles in the same order. For Averroes:

It is difficult, or impossible, for anyone to determine by himself, initially, all his requirements in intellectual analogy, just as it is difficult for anyone to deduce all his requirements in legal analogy. In fact knowledge of

intellectual analogy is even more difficult. If foreigners have pursued these subjects, it is obvious that we must seek help, for what we intend to do, from what has been said by our precursors in this matter, whether or not those peoples shared our faith. The instrument by means of which we acquire sound instruction is not to be judged for its soundness by whether or not it belonged to one who shared our religion, when it fulfils all the other conditions for soundness.<sup>19</sup>

It is obvious, from reading his work, that Khayr al-Dīn set himself other goals than those that he professed; his entire philosophy was simple and unchanging, designed not only to protect Tunisia but also the Ottoman empire itself at a time when the Empire was becoming a prey to the avaricious expansionist aspirations of military minds in London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna.

Moreover, Khayr al-Dīn was not turned from his rebellious course. His approach was to observe the events around him and study their effect :

If we consider the many ways which have been created in these times to bring men and ideas closer together, we will not hesitate to visualize the world as a single, united country peopled by various nations who surely need each other. The general benefit to be derived from the experience of each nation, even when it is pursuing its own personal interests, suffices to make it sought after by the rest of mankind.<sup>20</sup>

Khayr al-Dīn asserted the importance of a written constitution, which he found in his study of history and its effect on the development of social institutions:

Actually, if we reflect on the situation of those critical

Muslims and the European actions they approve of, we find them refusing to accept *tanzimāt* and its results while not avoiding other things which harm them. We see them vying with each other in clothing, home furnishings and such everyday needs just as in weapons and all military requirements. The truth is that all of these things are European products. There is no hiding the disgrace and the deficiencies in economic development and public policy which overtake the *umma* as a result. The disgrace is our needing outsiders for most necessities, indicating the backwardness of the *umma* in skills. The shortcoming in economic development is the failure to use our country's industries to process the goods we have produced, for this should be a major source of gain. Corroboration of this statement is in seeing, for example, our shepherd, or silk farmer or cotton farmer, defying fatigue for the entire year, sell the produce of his labor to the European for a cheap price, and then in a short time buy it back, after it has been processed, at a price several times higher. <sup>21</sup>

Constitutionalism, in the Western sense of the term, might well form part of this historical process, but since it owed its characteristics to European history, it nevertheless remained in Khayr al-Dīn's pragmatic view, an important framework which might be borrowed and transferred into Ottomanism. In fact, this was peculiar task of the nineteenth century Ottoman world. Khayr al-Dīn did not merely proclaim the value of these *tanzimāt*, but he also put it into a wider context, believing his peculiar mission to be the laying of foundations for this policy :

However, we would add, in condescending to those who are displeased, that the purpose of the *tanzimāt* is not restricted to deciding individual lawsuits in the impartial manner to be hoped for. There are other interests. Among the most important is a general ordering of policy which would restrain the hands of the governors from tyranny.

Now how important is the harm of delay in isolated legal actions compared with the harm coming from these governors having unrestricted freedom of action over persons, their honor and their wealth?<sup>22</sup>

When re-examined in this light, his philosophical system is seen as a framework within which room was found for a great deal of constitutional observations and penetrating interpretation, almost as if, in writing *Aqwam*, he had left certain blank pages on which the twentieth century might set out its political history without disturbing the coherence of his book. Khayr al-Din's professional knowledge of history and his experience of the international political arena undoubtedly provided him with the material on which he based his theories of political reform.

Khayr al-Din believed in the unlimited possibilities of scientific progress, as well as in an historical continuity towards a goal other than and opposed to the "Cyclical Theory" of Ibn Khaldūn. This theory visualised history as something already established as a series of cycles where all things come round to their first beginnings. The divergence by Khayr al-Dīn from certain views held by Ibn Khaldūn, particularly the theory that "aggressiveness and oppression are in the animal nature of man", can be seen to be expressed in his idea that, under a constitutional system of government based on European models, men were not liable to become tyrants but would behave in an orderly and just manner.

In the light of this view Khayr al-Dīn modified his theory of a single ruler holding power who would crush any potential tyrants. As this expression may not convey a very clear idea to the mind of the reader, it will be well to explain it a little. From his own experiences in Europe,

he maintained that the power of a ruler ought to be, as we have already noted, limited and restrained by secular laws.

Khayr al-Dīn pointed out, on several occasions, in his work *Aqwam* that, under the rule of political laws there could be continuous beneficial development and progress for any Arab society which embraced scientific knowledge and social reform. As a statesman who was well read in Western culture, he viewed the world in an entirely different manner from Ibn Khaldūn. He had the ability to put forward the concept of the world "as a single, united country peopled by various nations."<sup>23</sup> In comparison, Ibn Khaldūn who lived in the fourteenth century, considered that the world comprised only seven provinces, each of which had its own characteristics.

Khayr al-Dīn's intentions were more pragmatic than idealistic, in that he based his reasoning on the existing political order, both within the Ottoman Empire and in Europe, rather than in trying to realize an ideal social and political order based on traditional teaching. At no point will the informed reader find himself at a loss for lack of evidence, elucidation or clarity. He was fully aware of his dependence on European non-Islamic sources, and raised questions which ran counter to the prevailing modes of life and thought, but he remained unshaken in his belief that:

It is not to be imagined that Europe's peoples arrived at their present state because of a marked fertility or temperateness of its regions, for similar or even better conditions are found in other parts of the world. Nor is it due to the influence of their Christian religion. Although it does urge the enforcement of justice and equality before the law, Christianity does not interfere in political behavior, because it is founded on the concept of retirement from the world and asceticism.

Even Jesus, upon him be peace, forbade his disciples from opposing the kings of this world in what relates to politics saying that he did not have dominion over this world, for the authority of his holy law was over the spirits and not the bodies. Also, the imperfections existing in the provinces of the Pope, leader of the Christian religion, because of his unwillingness to imitate the political ordering recognized in the rest of the European kingdoms is a clear sign of what we have mentioned.<sup>24</sup>

This kind of political pragmatism has attracted favorable criticism from such modern writers as Carl Brown, Ibrāhīm Abū-Lughod and others. Khayr al-Dīn learned from Ibn Khaldūn "that oppression foreshadows the ruin of civilization"<sup>25</sup>, whatever its previous condition, and also the idea of restricting the power of a ruler by "rational law" <sup>26</sup> as *al-wāzi'*, (Restraint), as a means of preventing tyranny. But any discussion of the relationship between the fourteenth century scholar and the nineteenth century statesman requires a closer analysis.

It would be a mistake to think that this path was the only one along which Khayr al-Dīn tried to progress. The revival of Khaldunic doctrine was no longer possible, as the change in the policy of the Ottoman Empire brought with it new questions and conflicts which crossed the boundary of traditional political theory, with its religious bias, into a kind of political administration. Whenever it was possible to do so, Khayr al-Dīn reinterpreted the traditional political institutions by adding subtle adjustments which steered the reader towards a Western type of democracy. This is the Arab Renaissance aspect of Khayr al-Dīn's thought.

Unlike Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Khayr al-Dīn put more emphasis on political reform than on moral and educational reform. Using linguistic subtleties and attributing his radical ideas to some Western scholar or other, Khayr al-Dīn managed to get his message across to his countrymen under the very eyes of the Ottoman ruler and the fundamentalist scholars who would have brought an early end to his activities if they had known the true significance of his political discourse. He was always ready, therefore, to take infinite pains with what he wrote.

Seen in this context, Khayr al-Dīn made some prudent concessions to the accepted opinions of his time. It is in this light that one can understand his resolutions. Khayr al-Dīn, as we have mentioned, relied heavily on Ibn Khaldun. From him, he borrowed the concept of the need for a special person, an ultimate restrainer known as *al-wāziʿ* who was the important instrument in maintaining social order and the pursuit of justice: A religious appeal without *ʿaṣabiyyah* cannot succeed: "God never sends a prophet except with protectors from among his people" (chapter iii, sec. 6; Rothenthal, p. 322.). So that *al-wāziʿ* was seen to act as the constraint upon excessive power by whoever would speak out to protect the interest of the weak. Ibn Khaldun explained that the ideal type of person to perform the role of *al-wāziʿ* must therefore be one who could dominate men and exercise power and authority over them, so that not one of them would be able to attack another.

Five hundred years later, Khayr al-Dīn had consciously to alter and give the concept a new sense. He argued that political laws might serve as a restraint but they alone would not solve all the difficulties inherent within the political structure of the Ottoman world. Thus, human nature being what it is, we cannot abandon the idea of the *wāziʿ al-wāziʿ* (Counter-Restrainer or Restrainer of the Restrainer), because if the



person exercising this restraint were left to do as he pleased and ruled as he saw fit, *al-wāziʿ* would become equivalent to a tyrant, "for the needs of the community would be neglected". Therefore, it was essential that this restraint should have his restraint in order to check him. This sounds at first like an echo of Ibn Khaldūn's concept, but Khayr al-Dīn's teaching is independent of and very different from Ibn Khaldūn's.

He even went so far as to pretend that this *wāziʿ al-wāziʿ* existed in the West in the parliamentary system. Although the British Parliament indeed acted as a restraining force on the monarch, and various other European parliaments had similar powers, they were far removed from the true nature of *wāziʿ al-wāziʿ*. Why did Khayr al-Dīn cling to this peculiar concept? In his new use of the term, *wāziʿ al-wāziʿ* Khayr al-Dīn several times explained the sense he meant to give the word, and it was not easy to make all his explanations consistent in meaning. However, his re-definition of *wāziʿ al-wāziʿ* was impelled by the need to solve political problems concerning the nature and extent of legitimate political power, which indeed did act as a stimulus for those who dreamt of a democratic future for the Arabic-speaking world.

Although Khayr al-Dīn did not formally believe in the concept that "aggressiveness and oppression are in the animal nature of man", he pretended to accept it so as to emphasize the need for *wāziʿ al-wāziʿ*. The evidence for this restraining force in Arab society would, he hoped, lead eventually to the acceptance of a parliamentary system and the accountability of the ruler to it.

Since the *Sharʿah* is the restraint upon mankind, the concept of *wāziʿ al-wāziʿ* was in effect a limitation of the *Sharʿah* when applied to a politically defined society - the nation state. By relating the *al-wāziʿ* to the concept of parliamentary democracy, Khayr al-Dīn

was able to have this new eclectic concept accepted by traditionalists as well as by secularists. Thus, the presentation of his political discourse as being compatible with - but not subordinate to - Islamic theology lends to Khayr al-Dīn's philosophy a greater practical character, leaving considerable room for manoeuvre.

#### Examination of Khayr al-Dīn's Theory :

Khayr al-Din's originality lay primarily in the way in which he put the Islamic philosophical inheritance to use in his apologetic work. His thinking upon many of the concepts shows care and flexibility in method and leaves the reader with a profound respect for the thinker. To understand this non-radical approach, we must grasp Khayr al-Din's theory of state, which is the most exciting idea he developed. According to him, the state, its rulers, ministers and government must all be subject to *iḥtisāb* (accountability). However, this brought with it a number of other arguments designed to show that the idea of *iḥtisāb* is not an incoherent idea but a truly clear and distinct idea. All these arguments depend on a single premise: the Qura'nic injunction *al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (Commanding good and Forbidding Evil). The ultimate point of Khayr al-Dīn's theory of the *wāzi'* was that *iḥtisāb* should be assigned to *ahl al-ḥall wa-al 'aqq*. That is to say, he believed that these persons must share the power of the ruler, be consulted by ministers of the state and be responsible to them and subject to the laws which they keep in their charge. According to Khayr al-Din, this had been the aim and purpose of all the reformers in the course of Islamic history. All agreed on the ultimate end and purpose, but differed on the means by which it was to be obtained.

In Islamic political theory, these persons had, in the capacity of *ahl al-ḥall wa-al 'aqq*, the power to elect or depose the caliph if he abused

his powers. In practice, however, *ahl al-ḥall-wa-al-‘aqq* were neither elected nor shared power, and they failed to be a directive force on any large scale. All of these concepts (*wāzi‘*, *wāzi‘ al-wāzi‘*, *iḥtisāb*, and *ahl al-ḥall-wa-al-‘aqq*) are explained in various places and then drawn together into a comprehensive view and finally identified with various political institutions operating in the Europe of his day. Furthermore, these concepts served Khayr al-Dīn's polemics and allowed him to raise questions about the nature of Consultative Government. Khayr al-Dīn believed that history supports his contention. His example is the course of the Arab and Western countries. By using purely Islamic terms, Khayr al-Dīn managed to convey the history of the European parliamentary system in his book *Aqwām*. Nothing of importance connected with the subject appears to have escaped his survey, and a similar line of argument is employed in his review of Islamic history. We read that the freedom of the press in Europe was part of the power of *iḥtisāb*, as it exposed corruption, defended the weak and allowed for the expression of public opinion :

The Europeans have established councils and have given freedom to the printing presses. In the Islamic *umma* the kings fear those who resist evil just as the kings of Europe fear the councils and the opinions of the masses that proceed from them and from the freedom of the press. The aim of the two [i.e., European and Muslim] is the same — to demand an accounting from the state in order that its conduct may be upright, even if the roads leading to this end may differ.<sup>27</sup>

For Khayr al-Dīn, the question of constitutional rule is itself a Islamic question, and in many passages in *Aqwām* he faces the question with this view in one hand and his historical knowledge in the other. He insists on

this comparative approach at any price, borrows ideas from *naql* (tradition), and builds up a rational system, while abandoning the orthodox interpretation of some aspects of *al-sharʿah*. Thus, the revered second caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is quoted as uttering the famous epigram, "If I go astray, believers, set me right" and being answered by one of the Muslims: "By God, ʿUmar, we will set you right with the edges of our swords". But it should also be apparent from this study that the reforms that Khayr al-Din advocated were limited in nature because the very pragmatism that enabled the Tunisian statesman to see the need for new politics also prompted him to make compromises with the existing administrative processes which were in the long run inconsistent with his aims. He separated politics from theology, and based political considerations upon observation and experience. But the fundamental weakness of Khayr al-Dīn's philosophical approach is that he sought to eliminate absolute rule and to achieve a reconciliation of ruler and ruled through a theory which on reflection can be seen to be biased in favour of traditional views at the expense of new political concepts. It is true that he assimilated the new concepts into traditional political theory but, at the same time, his theory more often provoked his audience towards adopting the new concepts than persuading them to accept traditional ones.

There seems no real place in his system for the concept of representative government. It is a question which troubled Khayr al-Din himself, as appears from a number of passages of his book. However, the circumstances that Khayr al-Dīn is prepared to describe as constituting the granting of political freedom vary considerably from case to case "This is because the conditions of kingdoms vary according to the aims of their subjects."<sup>28</sup> Thus, his political theory is further strained when he

argues that in granting people unlimited freedom of political expression, disorder would result. This opinion is in conflict with his own admissions, for he himself stated that to defend this point, he would have to argue that some subjects in the Ottoman Empire lacked allegiance to their government. In this respect, he agrees with what has been a dominant tradition in Islamic political theory but in detail the questions which he raises are of a kind hardly faced by scholars in the Arabic speaking world:

This is due to their being constantly subject to corruption by foreigners who plant in their chests the seeds of 'protection' for purposes which cannot be hidden. It is possible that the establishment of liberty in the way demanded above, before giving consideration to those obstacles would merely facilitate these ulterior aims. Among the requisites of this liberty is the equality of subjects in all political rights, and this includes access to the highest state positions. However, among the important preconditions for granting this freedom is the agreement among all of the subjects concerning the interest of the kingdom and the strengthening of the state's authority (...) Moreover, the subjects of the Ottoman state are divided into various races, and they have different religions, languages, and customs. Most of them do not know Turkish which is the state language, and do not even know each other's languages. Thus, negotiations among them would be difficult if an assembly were organized from among all of their various sects. Nor would it be easy to grant liberty to some to the exclusion of others as that would create disorder.<sup>29</sup>

This seems to our mind, to be the weakest link in an impressively long and weighty chain of his reasoning. The Ottoman bias in Khayr al-Dīn's

thinking now comes to the fore. His imperialistic advocacy of Ottomanism as the key element gained him as many foes as friends, both in the Arabic-speaking world and abroad.

He suggested, however, that it was possible to think of improvements to the way things are arranged without criticizing the existing condition:

Any activity for this purpose so that conditions are improved and a great victory achieved in the domain of progress is contingent upon the unity and organization of a group from within the *umma* who are in harmony - those learned in the shari'a and those knowledgeable in politics and the interests of the *umma* and well-informed both in domestic and foreign affairs and in the origins both of harms and benefits. This group would cooperate to the benefit of *ummā*' by furthering its interests and warding off its corruptions so that all would act as a single person (...) Thus, the politicians discern the public interest and the sources of harm while the '*ulamā*' assure that the action taken in accordance with the public interest is in agreement with the principles of the *sharī'a* (...) If one of the '*ulamā*' chooses seclusion and keeping his distance from the political leaders, he closes upon himself the doors leading to knowledge of these circumstances and he opens the doors to the oppression of governors.<sup>30</sup>

He is criticized by many later thinkers for having taken a weak stance on this aspect of freedom. However, he did not misunderstand his sources, but in view of his purpose to connect Western institutions with selective traditional matters he allowed himself to be somewhat tendentious in pursuing this purpose. For instance, the Qur'anic injunction of ordering the good and forbidding the evil, was generally

held to be a *fard kifāya* (an obligation that only a sufficient number of Muslims can fulfil) rather than a *fard ‘ayn* (personal obligation). Khayr al-Din may be criticized further in that his ideas concerning the sharing of power and accountability to the law are, in the long run, not compatible with traditional Islamic theory and practice. He argues, however, that if Islamic-Arabic political theory has no corresponding word for Chamber of Deputies, the absence of this word must not be taken to mean the absence of the essence of democracy in the Islamic-Arabic legal system:

Since the granting of liberty in this sense to all the people is most likely to cause a divergence of views and result in confusion, the people instead elect from among those possessing knowledge and virtue a group called by the Europeans the Chamber of General Deputies. We call them those qualified to loosen and bind, even though this group is not elected by the people. This is because the avoidance of the reprehensible in our shari'a is in the category of those responsibilities which can be delegated. If some members of the community assume the responsibility then the obligation is removed from the rest of the community. When such a group is so designated this responsibility becomes a strictly prescribed obligation upon them.<sup>31</sup>

It must be obvious to any one familiar with this kind of reasoning that these terms are capable of a great variety of interpretations and may be easily interchanged with one another by a careless thinker.

The belief in the necessity of *Mashwarah* (The Taking of Counsel) was constantly hovering before him as one of the most important rules of the Qur'an. The concept of *Shūrā* was based on the Qur'anic injunction to the Prophet to take counsel with his followers. Guided by this concept,

Khayr al-Din proceeds to justify the need for restricting the power of the ruler. Using rationalist arguments, he supports his belief in this important aspect of Islamic law. His merit in the history of political literature lies in his method for classification of problems; he placed them in their proper order, one subordinate to another, in modern language. He argued that:

It is never permissible that the affairs of the kingdom should be given over to a single man with both her happiness and difficulties in his hands, even if he be the most perfect of men, the most balanced in intelligence, the widest in knowledge.<sup>32</sup>

Khayr al-Din, with his immense knowledge, has a multitude of illustrations at his finger tips at every turn of his argument. Thus, demonstrating that *mashwara* was made a *sunnah* (A Prophetic Custom) by God, which bound all rulers to follow this *sunnah*, even the infallible Prophet Muhammad himself, he goes on to draw a number of corollaries from the implications of this *sunnah*. He thus went very far towards solving one of the most difficult of political tasks. He assumed that consultation with the monarch, and the sharing of general policies and conduct with him, was recommended in the Qur'an. He takes this concept one stage further in accepting the fact that conceivably, certain monarchs could justly rule using the aid of a wise minister and without *ahl al-hall wa-al-'aqq*:

Nor do we deny the possibility of finding among kings one who conducts himself properly in the kingdom without consulting those qualified to loosen and bind and is moved by the love of justice to seek the aid of an informed loyal minister to advise him in complicated



matters of public interest.<sup>33</sup>

This, of course, Khayr al-Dīn considered as a rarity because there is no guarantee that a monarch is right all the time. He then proceeded to expose nature of monarchs and classified them into three different types, from which he tried to distance his own theory, by saying that a monarch is just in so far as he submits to *ihtisāb*. Ministers of state according to Khayr al-Dīn also fit into this classification.

In the first type of monarch "A king might possess complete knowledge, love what would benefit the country, and be capable of implementing the public interests through discriminating supervision." This, however, does not settle the matter. The second type "might possess complete knowledge but have personal aims or appetites that would prevent him from carrying out the general public interests." This answer is still not decisive. In the third category "he might be both lacking in knowledge and deficient in executive ability."<sup>34</sup> In the case of the latter Khayr al-Dīn broadens his argument, quoting the words of the philosopher John Stuart Mill to support his case: "the English nation reached its highest peak during the reign of George III who was mad". This flowering of the English culture was due largely to the fact that his power was shared by "those qualified to loosen and bind, to whom the ministers were responsible."<sup>35</sup>

This Khayr al-Dīn used as an example of *ahl al-ḥall wa-al 'aqq*. The sharing of power, Khayr al-Dīn goes on to show, does not, in any way, diminish the power of the ruler. Quoting al-Māwardī on the subject:

This is an illusion which can be dispelled by reading al-Mawardi's *Ordinances of Government*. He has said in explaining the delegate vizierate, "This occurs when the *imam* chooses a vizier to whom he delegates authority

to administer affairs as he sees fit and to implement them in accordance with his own independent judgment. The authority of this type of vizierate is not restricted, for God all-High has related the speech of His prophet Moses upon him be peace, 'Appoint for me a helper [wazīr] from among my people, my brother Aaron. Increase my strength with him and cause him to share my task.'<sup>36</sup>

Again using al-Māwardī as his source, he maintains that if the precedent of consultation had been established in prophecy, then "it is even more permissible for the *imāmate*." <sup>37</sup> He condemns as disastrous error the belief that by sharing power with the *wazīr al-tafwīḍ* the authority of the ruler would in any way be diminished: "it would be better to share power with *ahl al-ḥall wa-al-'aqq*" because "a plurality of opinions is closer to the seat of verity". The writings and sayings of the the mystic *ibn al-Arabi*, are used by him to justify and support his case. Imām Alī, the cousin of the Prophet and the fourth caliph, the theologian al-Ghazzālī, and Mu'āwiyā, the first of the Umayyyad Caliphs, are also used as examples in the exposition and clarification of his argument. Such analysis and quotations provide an indication that Khayr al-Dīn was more than a statesman, and there is indeed much in his book to show that he was well versed in the legacy of Islam. It is clear that there is a large element of artificiality in this argument.

In fact, these quotations were an attempt to bolster up his discourse. From the foregoing, it is abundantly clear, that Khayr al-Dīn's main concern was to discover an equivalent to Western political institutions within the framework of traditional Islamic political theory. Thus, his theory provides a daring stimulus to philosophical inquiry. However, he makes no attempt to present an account of the duties of *ahl al-ḥall wa-al-'aqq* which will represent them as more capable of fulfilling the role

he assigns to them.

Khayr al-Din's attempt to persuade his coreligionists to adopt European models in the formation of new political institutions was primarily an attempt to release Islamic society from a political state of backwardness. Many of his views were expressed with such lucidity that when they are read today they seem to be so alive and pertinent to our own time that they could have been uttered by a contemporary statesman or philosopher. Through his writings, and his important administrative work at the military school of Ahmed Bey and also as the minister of Marine in 1856, president of the Grand Council in 1860, minister of finance in 1873, and finally when appointed by Sultan 'Abdul Hamid as the *Şadrâzam* (Prime Minister of the Empire) in Constantinople in 1878-9, he subtly introduced many reforms based on the influence of the West gained from his own direct experience.

Like the works of his contemporaries, Khayr al-Din's book *Aqwam* often contains references to the political concepts of *al-waṭan* (country), *maṣlaḥat al-waṭan* (the country's interest) and *maḥabbat al-waṭan* (love of country), which were strong motive powers in the stagnant conditions of the time. Nevertheless, Khayr al-Din's own views on government, rulers and holders of political power were ambivalent. The reason behind his hesitation has to be seen within the framework of the historical context of the Tunisia of his time.

The combination of selectivity and vagueness to be found in his writing presents an obstacle to the modern reader who is attempting to acquire a thorough comprehension of his work and of his true attitude towards Western institutions. Khayr al-Din knew well that if his theory concerning constitutionalism was adopted, the consequence would be a radical change in Arab thinking, which, in turn, would result in a desire

to be rid of absolute rule.

As a modern thinker of his time, Khayr al-Din was an enthusiastic follower of *tanzīmāt*, the policy for reform, which was introduced, during

the period when Sultan Suleyman ibn Sultan Selim at the beginning of tenth century [1495-1591 A.D.] established his beneficial *qānūn* in order to extirpate the means by which defects befall kingdoms. In doing this he sought the help of the active *'ulamā'* and the wisest statesmen (...) Sultan Maḥmūd substituted the Nizami army for the Janissaries and suppressed the provincial princes, the so-called *derebey*-s, thus stopping the oppressions created by these two groups. In 1255[1839 A.D.] Sultan 'Abd al-Majid gave precision to governance based on the *shari'a* by means of the *Tanzīmāt al-khayriyya* which with the assistance of the statesmen and the active *'ulamā'* remain the basis of the state's administration.<sup>38</sup>

This passage, like many others, shows the pragmatic tendency of some parts of his philosophy. Khayr al-Dīn fought almost single-handed against the conservatism of nineteenth century Tunisia in particular, and the Ottoman Empire in general. Hence it was not till our time that his works would be commonly read with a sympathetic understanding. As we read his works, we find that he had the whole of Islamic political history in his mind. There is no doubt that he contributed a whole new chapter to the history of early Arab modern political philosophy. This can be seen in *Aqwām*, "A Mes Enfants: Memoires de ma Vie Privee et Politique" which he wrote in French, between 1885 and 1886, and "Mon Programme", which is the French version of a memorandum that he presented to Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd on November 30, 1882.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. For an account of this remarkable man, see: Amin, Ahmad. Zu'ama' al-islāh fī al-'asr al-hādith Cairo, 1948, pp. 146-183; Hourani. Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939, Oxford, 1962, pp. 84-95 ; Khayr al-Din al-Tūnisī "A Mes Enfants: Memoires de Ma Vie Privee et Politique", Revue Tunisienne, (1934), pp. 177-225; 347-396; Ganiage, Jean. Les Origines du Protectorat Francais en Tunisie (1861-1881), Paris, 1959, p. 81, Footnote 23; The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, Leiden 1978. pp.1153-4.
2. The introduction of the translator of Aqwam , p. 24.
3. See : Ibn 'Ashūr, Muḥammad al-Fadil. al-Harakah al-adabiyah wa-al fikriyyah fi Tunis , p. 29; Hanna, Sami A. "Some Aspects of Modern Literary History of Tunisia". Islamic Culture, 45 No. 1. (January 1970), pp. 181-192; 1971, pp. 44-45; Brown. The Surest...pp. 7-8.
4. Ibn 'Ashūr. al-Harakah . p. 29, 30-33.
5. See : Amin, Ahmad. Zu'ama' ... , p. 152.
6. "The Surest Path ..." 29-30.
7. Ibid., p. 30.
8. Ibid., p. 30.
9. Ibid., p. 113-114.
10. Hourani. Arab Thought, p. 85; Ibn Ashur. al-Harakah . pp. 37-41.
11. The Surest, p. 122.
12. Ibid., p. 74-75.
13. Ibid., p. 136.
14. Ibid., p. 72.
15. See, for example: Ibn Ashur. al-Harakah . p. 29, 30-33; I-Husry, Khaldun S. Three Reformers, a study in Modern Arab Political Thought. Beirut, 1966.

16. Reformes Necessaire aux Etats Musulmans. Paris, 1868.
17. Two editions of *Aqnam*... were published in Turkey: the first was in Istanbul in 1876, in Arabic, the second in 1878, in Turkish.
18. The Surest, p. 124.
19. Averroes. *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl wa-tagrīr ma bayn ash-shari'ah wa-al-hikmah min al-ittiṣāl*. Leiden, 1959, pp. 8-9.
20. The Surest, p.71-2.
21. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
22. Ibid., p. 132.
23. Ibid., p. 72.
24. Ibid., p. 80-81.
25. Ibid., p. 81-2.
26. Husry, "Three, p. 46.
27. The Surest, p. 84
28. Ibid., p. 126.
29. Ibid., pp. 117-118.
30. Ibid., p. 123-124.
31. Ibid., p. 161.
32. Ibid., p. 94.
33. Ibid., p. 85.
34. Ibid., p. 86.
35. Ibid., p. 86.
36. Ibid., pp, 88-89.
37. Ibid., p. 89.
38. Ibid., pp. 112-114f.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Earlier Lebanese Intellectuals.

The most important intellectuals to emerge from the multi-cultural society of nineteenth century Lebanon were Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1801-87)<sup>1</sup>, the writer, satirist and political journalist, and Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1819-83)<sup>2</sup>, the eminent lexicographer, savant and journalist. The philosophical approach of both these thinkers represents a personal search for a spiritual and intellectual understanding of their own lives and that of their fellow Arabs within the context of the troubled divisions of their own homeland and the growing political and military involvement of certain Western Powers.

It will be shown that their philosophical conclusions were inspired by the liberal ideas of Western thought as a direct result of Western involvement in the Lebanon. This, however, does not explain the rise of a cosmopolitan culture centred in Beirut, even taking into account the political and educational influence of American and European missionaries. But I must again remind the reader that the dynamic activism of these early scholars may perhaps be better accounted for in terms of the necessities imposed upon them by their own divided environment than by their Western orientation.

In the case of al-Shidyāq, his extensive travels resulted in his producing the majority of his work outside his native country. The Western influence is seen also in the life and work of Buṭrus al-Bustānī, who for most of his life was connected with the American Christian Missions.

Before any discussion of the life and work of these important

Lebanese philosophers, it is pertinent to digress somewhat and examine, in brief, the historical background of the Lebanon and the various historical events which formed the character and culture of the people themselves.

## THE BACKGROUND TO CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEBANON.

One fact is generally accepted, that the Lebanon had an open and reasonably tolerant society which developed the ability to cope with various changing circumstances. This capacity for adaptation to change constitutes a fundamental characteristic inherent in the cultural development of the Lebanon. Diversity, based on a number of differing sects and faiths has given it characteristics not shared with other countries in the Middle East. Because of the diverse nature of its society, it has valued the principles of liberalism and tolerance as perhaps the only way of maintaining its integrity and social cohesion. It is said that the crusaders received, during the 12th and 13th centuries, support from the Maronites, and there were revolts against the Mamluks during their period of domination in the following two centuries. We could point out that the motive dictating their actions was, in the last analysis, the need to maintain their independence. Even under the Ottomans, who invaded in 1516-17 and held nominal control until 1918, local families, such as the Ma'n and Shihab, succeeded in keeping considerable autonomy.

In a more recent historical context, during the first decades of the nineteenth century in 1831, Lebanon, as an Ottoman province, had to face a military invasion. This time it was that of the army of Ibrāhīm Pāshā, the eldest son of Muḥammad 'Alī of Egypt. The army of Ibrāhīm



Pāshā was able to penetrate into the very heart of Lebanon and to hold all the main strategic points, as far south as Palestine. He was assisted in this expedition by a redoubtable ally, the Amīr Bashīr Shihābī, who as reward, for his brave endeavors, was allowed to remain in Lebanon as the titular ruler over the areas which had been seized.

This invasion may be seen as an attempt by Ibrāhīm Pasha's father to compensate for his recent naval losses in Greece and also as the price for assisting the Ottoman Sultan in the suppression of the Wahhabi Movement in Arabia.<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad 'Alī had strong economic reasons for going into Lebanon and Syria. He needed wood for his naval dockyard and hoped to find coal for his industrial schemes.

Muḥammad 'Alī had started meddling in Lebanese politics when he intervened in 1822 to secure the Sultan's pardon for 'Abd allah Pāshā of Sidon and the Amīr Bashīr of Mount Lebanon who had been involved in fighting with the Pashas of Aleppo and Damascus.

In Egypt, fifteen years prior to these events, Muḥammad 'Alī had carried out a similar policy of subjugation and seizure of the wealth of the state, with considerable success. However, the attempt by his son to repeat this policy in the Lebanon met with a different outcome.

During his nine years governorship, Ibrāhīm Pāshā attempted to adopt a policy identical with that which his father had carried out in Egypt, by exploiting the resources of the country. This he did by raising taxes to about three times their existing level and monopolizing trade in silk and soap, which comprised the main commercial wealth of Lebanon. The economic burden of these levies was borne with fortitude by the Lebanese people. But when Ibrāhīm Pāshā attempted the forced disarmament of the Drūze<sup>4</sup> and the imposition of general military conscription throughout Lebanon and Syria, the Drūze revolted violently.

In comparison with the social structure of the Lebanon, Egyptian

society may be considered to have been at that time relatively homogeneous. The majority of the people of Egypt were Sunni Muslim whilst the remainder comprised Coptic Christians and Jews. Whereas, in the Lebanon, the mutual misunderstanding and the ambivalent attitudes among its different groups, among other things as a result of European intervention, were the main factors that served to undermine the internal unity of the country, allowing Ibrahim Pasha's invasion to meet with no serious resistance except by semi-regular soldiers which composed the Ottoman garrison.

The region which had, previously, constituted Turkish Lebanon was then further politically divided by the policies of France and Britain who had, in the meantime, intervened under different pretexts. Britain, on the one hand, supported the Druze in their fierce resistance against Ibrāhīm Pāshā, whilst France on the other intervened in order to protect the Maronite Christians and allied themselves with Ibrahim Pasha without any reference to Lebanese interests. The Russians also continued to favor the Greek Orthodox.

Ibrāhīm Pāshā who, for the nine year period of occupation, was in Hitti's phrase, a thorn in the side of the Ottoman Empire, had, indirectly, caused a political situation which in the long term, had a far greater effect on the future history of the Lebanon than his own military incursion. It may be said that the European involvement really began at this time. This period in Lebanese history has been the subject of much published research.<sup>5</sup> There is no need at this point to elaborate further on the subject.

Such then were the tensions with their far-reaching implications which led to the eventual expulsion of Ibrāhīm Pāshā from Lebanon. Unwittingly, by invading the Lebanon, he had stirred up a hornet's nest and had aroused the wrath of the Great Powers, and what had seemed to him to be an easy way of securing power and wealth proved in the

end to be a disaster for his army. In order to prevent what was, in effect, the establishment of an Egyptian colony for Muḥammad 'Alī with the consequent threat to European interests, an allied fleet arrived at Beirut on August 14th 1840. In addition to the British fleet of 21 vessels there were 6 Austrian ships and 24 Turkish transports.

The withdrawal of Ibrāhīm Pāshā's Egyptian army left a power vacuum into which was drawn the militancy and aggression of the Drūzes who, in 1860, committed a series of outrages in which a large numbers of Christian Maronites were massacred.

These events led to the armed intervention by the five principal European Powers, chiefly by France, in an attempt to restore order. These Great Powers, who for different reasons, were watching the situation as it developed, exercised diplomatic pressure on the Ottoman administration to form an agreement called the Organic Regulation, which established an autonomous government in Mount Lebanon in 1861, even though the Ottoman government had already restored order.

This "autonomous regime" was administered by a Maronite Christian, who had been approved by the Five Powers and held the post of *Mutaṣarrif* (Governor) directly responsible to the Sublime Porte and assisted by an elected administrative council representing the various religious communities, and gendarmerie recruited locally. This meant the removal of the former Turkish ruler, who had been approved by the Sublime Porte.<sup>6</sup>

This established an equilibrium between the interests of the notable Druze and Maronite families, as an attempt to smooth over the varying conflicting interests of these feudal families which had radically altered after the departure of the Egyptians. Among other important provisions of the Organic Regulation were the declaration of equality before the law and the formal abolition of feudal

privileges.<sup>7</sup> This, in turn, created a balance in which all the factors concerning the political stability of Lebanon were dependent on the involvement of the interested European Powers.

Contrary to a view widely held, Lebanon in the nineteenth century did not enjoy a position of political isolation from Great Power interference, but was subject to a process of fragmentation by international rivalry. Any change in Lebanese politics, therefore, could not be brought about by the will of her own people, as they were not in a position to be masters of their own destiny and had not yet developed the concept of nationalism, a concept which was not properly to establish itself until the end of nineteenth century. Being a small country it was, and still is, dependent upon and influenced by both international and regional political events and power shifts.

In Lebanese history, the best known statesman was al-Amīr Fakhr al-Dīn al-Maḥī II, who was prince of Lebanon, during Ottoman rule, and reigned, between 1590 and 1635,<sup>8</sup> over an area from Antioch in Syria to Safad in Palestine. Fakhr al-Dīn almost succeeded in creating an independent state, organizing a regular army and establishing close relations with the Medici Dukes of Tuscany. It seems that his relationship with these Dukes was combined with a secret military agreement against the Ottomans. In 1613 the Port compelled him to take refuge in Florence in the court of his ally Cosimo II.

Fakhr al-Dīn benefited from the experience of having lived in Italy for five years between 1613 and 1618,<sup>9</sup> when he was eventually able to return. However, he was defeated and deposed in 1635 by the Ottomans, who executed him. His reign was prosperous, and to some extent, encouraged good relations with European countries (Florence, Venice, and France) in the area of trade which flourished at Beirut and Sidon. Agriculture was also encouraged, in particular the culture of olives and silk, and he promoted the adoption of certain Western

ideas in relation to education and social change through:

Invited engineers, architects, irrigation and agricultural experts from Tuscany...of more enduring value was the permitting of European Catholic missions to settle in the land and carry on their educational and religious work.<sup>10</sup>

al-Amīr Bāshīr al-Shihābī II (ruled 1804-1840) (Zaydan, *Mashāhīr*, pp. 58-70.) an ally of Ibrāhīm Pāshā is also remembered, as having brought about some positive beneficial changes to Lebanon. He encouraged good relations with several European countries and promoted trade with them. He also, through this European influence, introduced some minor social improvements and promoted European education. He also encouraged medical sciences by sending a number of Lebanese students in 1837 to the first medical school in the modern Arab world, *al-Qaṣr al-ʿayni* founded in Cairo by Bashīr's friend, Muḥammad ʿAlī (Bashīr's exile in Egypt was between 1821-1822), a school run on Western lines.<sup>11</sup>

In an attempt to appease the Maronites, al-Amīr Bashīr adopted Christianity. Owing to his patronage and his religious toleration, many scholars and men of letters were encouraged to pursue their intellectual interests. The most distinguished was the famous Lebanese scholar Shaykh Nāṣīf al-Yāziǧī (1800-1871),<sup>12</sup> renowned for his book *Majmaʿ al-baḥrayn* (Confluence of the Two Seas). al-Yāziǧī promoted a remarkable renaissance in the field of literature.

Under Ibrāhīm Pāshā's rule, French Jesuits were allowed to return to Beirut in 1831 and encouraged to establish several schools in the Lebanon. When the Jesuits landed in Lebanon in 1831, there were three of them: the Italian Father Ricadona, the French Father Planchet, and the German Brother Hans from Hanover. The best known of these educational establishments founded was their Université de St Joseph in Beirut, created in 1875.

Even in the area of education, there is evidence of foreign rivalries. The American Presbyterian Mission, which arrived in Beirut in July 1823, and brought the Gospel back to its birthplace, established a printing press some eleven years later. This was done under the direction of the scholar Pliny Fisk, who had been dispatched by the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions to Beirut in 1823. Their work culminated in 1866 with the foundation of the famous institute the Syrian Protestant College, which became in 1920<sup>13</sup> the world famous the American University of Beirut. The alteration of the University's name does not seem at first to be of any particular significance. But it is quite possible that the alteration of the name intended to characterise it as an institution in which the teaching of secular subjects and the adoption of a secular trend were to be the guiding rules of study rather than what had been the case before. The University was to become the intellectual centre of the Lebanon and remains so until the present day. Among its first graduates was Shibli Shumayyil (1860-1917).

It soon became apparent to the Lebanese people that active competition existed between the Jesuit Missionaries and the newly-arrived American Presbyterian Mission. Neither the American, French nor British governments had a unified policy towards the missionaries' activities; nor did they have a good relationship at first with the missionary institutions in their own countries. Disputes between the French government and the Jesuits at the outset of their ventures is exemplified in many memoranda in the archives of the French government. The missions initially aimed to establish schools and so instill their own culture in the young in order to create an intelligentsia of their own choosing.

Some time after the Crusades, the Maronite Christians became Catholic and united to the Pope in Rome, while retaining their own

liturgy. A Maronite seminary had been established in Rome in 1584 by Pope Gregory XIII, which was later to produce many famous native Lebanese theologians, historians and writers, like Istifānus al-Duwayhī (1629-1704), the author of *Tārīkh al-azminah* (The History of the Epochs), and Yūsuf Samʿān al-Samʿānī (1687-1768), who represented the Pope at the Maronite synod held at Luwayzah, Lebanon, in 1736, the synod which sealed the union between the national church of Lebanon and the papal see.

This historical connection with the Church of Rome and the Jesuits, and at an earlier date, the capitulations granted by Ottoman Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent (ruled between 1520 and 1566) to Francis I (1494-1547) in 1535, supplemented by later privileges and concessions, allowed the French to maintain and strengthen their political involvement in the area throughout the nineteenth century.

It is a delicate task to summarize what Lebanon owes to missionary activity. Before this activity, books had played no great part in the development, dissemination, and transmission of culture from generation to generation. Now thanks to it they became most important. The American missionaries seem to have had a rather more liberal policy than their French counterparts. This is reflected in the publications of the French Jesuits, who, because they printed their scholarly works in French or Latin, had little influence, whilst the American Presbyterian Mission adopted a policy designed to be popular. It promoted the publication of their various works including school-text books using Arabic. In the first year of its establishment, the American University of Beirut, contained sixteen students from Beirut, twelve from Mount Lebanon and one from Tripoli, while its teaching staff numbered three with Arab dress who taught in Arabic.

It is noteworthy that the Jesuits began their teaching in Arabic

and Italian, the former because it was the native tongue of the inhabitants, and latter because it was the language of the missionaries. But some changes in their relations led in 1848 to the adoption of French as a teaching medium in their schools and to apply a curriculum similar to that in France.

A quotation from Daniel Bliss, president of The American University of Beirut, at the opening ceremony, makes this clear:

A man white, black or yellow; Christian, Jew, Mohammedan or heathen, may enter and enjoy all the advantages of this institution for three, four or eight years; and go out believing in one God, or in no God. But it will be impossible for anyone to continue with us long without knowing what we believe to be the truth and our reasons for that belief.<sup>14</sup>

Despite differences concerning educational policy and curriculum, there were many points of agreement between the Americans and the French. The American Presbyterian Mission included men of action rather than of contemplation. Through the works of Cornelius Van Dyck (1818-1895), among others, various problems and topics were tackled on an entirely new scale; in a scientific manner and on the basis of rationality.<sup>15</sup> Among The most important of his works are *al-Mir'āt al-waqt'ān*, (The Clear Mirror) a manual of general geography. (Beirut, 1871); Elements of algebra. (Beirut, 1853); and *al-Naqsh fī al-ḥajar*, a treatise on natural science consisting of 5 parts. (Part I. Natural Philosophy. II. Chemistry. III. Physics. IV. Physical Geography. V. Geology), (Beirut, 1886-7). Their missionary and educational work was to play a part in the Arab Awakening which took place at a slightly later date.



Through the use of Arabic as a printed medium of communication and education, the American influence attained an intellectual position of such prominence that it can in no way be regarded as a mere by-product of the intellectual life of the Lebanon. It gave additional impetus to the first nationalist aspirations in the country, which accelerated the passion of revolt against the Ottomans. The Lebanese scholar Edward Atiyah, in his work The Arabs wrote :

But the Arab revival, though largely launched by Western agencies, did not derive its inspiration solely or mainly from the West. The Arabs had, in their own language and past culture, a great and stimulating heritage on which to draw for the revivification of their faculties, the restoration of their self-respect vis-a-vis both the Turks and the Europeans, and, above all, the recapture of their sense of identity as Arabs. It was in this field that the Americans rendered their greatest service to the Arab peoples. They helped the Arabs to rediscover their past by laying the greatest emphasis on the revival of classical Arabic and its adaptation to modern needs, and on the printing and dissemination of Arabic books.<sup>16</sup>

The factors and forces which have woven the pattern of this new intellectual venture were numerous and varied. Among them was that both American and French missionaries used their medical clinics not only to provide medical services but also to gain access to certain sectors of the population to proselytise them, especially the womenfolk, whose freedom to go out was restrained by social custom.<sup>17</sup>

The European and American missions, in the Lebanon and many other parts of the world which came under European influence, did, whether or not by intention, manage to give their respective governments, through

their educational policy, a western view of the world. It is, of course, true to say that the principal motivation of the missionary groups' educational policy was a religious one, in that their influence was first felt among the Greek Orthodox, from whose converts was organized in 1848 an independent church *al-Kanisah al-injiliyah al-Sūriyah* (The Syrian Evangelical Church), as well as from Maronite communities. But for the most part they were not sympathetically received, largely as a result of the efforts of the Maronite patriarch. It is recorded that the latter reacted strongly to their activities and issued two manifestos, first in 1824 and again in 1829, ordering members of the Maronite community to avoid all contact with them, whether religious or temporal.

But, in the long run, the missionary schools were set up as an alternative rather than as a complement to indigenous educational practice. Thus, Protestant and Catholic missionaries further fragmented the Syrian religious mosaic by fostering splinter sects. This educative process created a serious problem for the development of a specific Lebanese national identity, in that the class formed in association with the "new culture" was drawn largely from one faith, namely Christian, which resulted in a new political dimension within Lebanese society. This may be too general a statement for strict accuracy, but it helps us to understand roughly what happened in the Lebanon.

French merchants found it natural to select as local assistants people who were not only Christians but also sympathetic to the Catholic faith; traders thus joined missionaries in providing a powerful incentive for Orthodox individuals to break away from their community and enter the growing Greek Catholic Church. When Lebanon returned to Ottoman rule in 1840, many Muslim artisans and merchants were ruined by the very trade with Europe which enriched their Christian neighbours.

Muslims were falling behind the Christians in education, for the Ottoman administration was slow to extend modern schooling methods to its province. This was to have tragic consequences and is of such importance that it is worthwhile seeing how it came about.

Missionary education prepared this sector of the Lebanese population for leadership and was designed to fit people into a world different from the one in which they were born. The peculiar teaching of the missionaries does not enter directly into our scope, but some of its influence was destined to exercise an incalculable role in the formation of modern Lebanese thought. Between 1871 and 1883, for example, sixty-two doctors graduated from the American University of Beirut, most of them Christians from Mount Lebanon, among them, one Muslim and three Druzes. P. Hitti states :

The emphasis in missionary work gradually shifted to education in all its aspects: liberal, scientific, professional and technological. It was soon realized by the people that education of Western style enhanced personal prestige and increased the earning power of the recipient. It opened up new avenues of work at home and abroad hitherto unknown. French and American schools flourished throughout the land. Normally an infiltrating culture hits first the city folk and among them the upper or middle class. The country folk gets it second-hand, filtered and adapted. But in this case such picturesque Christian villages as Suq al-Gharb, al-Shuwayr and 'Ayn Waraqah offered special attraction with welcome relief from the summer heat in cities.<sup>18</sup>

This missionary activity was not confined to the Americans and French :

The other evangelical agencies at work in Beirut are as follows: The Deaconesses' Institute, conducted by the Sisters from Kaiserswerth, Germany, containing an orphanage with 200 pupils, and a boarding-school for higher education; the British Syrian schools, superintended by Mrs. Mentor Mott, which comprise a training-school for teachers, six day-schools, and a school for the blind, in all of which are taught about 1,000 scholars. The Established Church of Scotland conducts a boys' and a girls' school for Jewish children, and Miss Taylor, of Scotland, conducts a school for Moslem and Druze girls.<sup>19</sup>

The British Rev. William Fulton, in turn, wrote, in 1907, inspired by missionary experience in India, the following:

The continuance of the cleavage of East and West is due as much to the Western mode of approach as to the apathy of the East. The prime fault of the Western is his attempt to Europeanise the Asiatic. This is a false end. Not that Christianity is offered, but that it is offered in the form of the West; after its ideas have passed through the personality of the West. And the curse of the missionary system is the desire to make the converts not only Christians but English.<sup>20</sup>

### **Beginning of Critical Secular Thinking**

However, in considering the progress of Western expansion in the various Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire and the role played by the missionary establishments, particularly in the field of education, it remains a fact beyond contention that Lebanon was to benefit the most.

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towards the creation of a sense of national identity, particularly amongst the educated and literate section of the community. This new intelligentsia soon found something else to do, for it was set on a new venture of freedom and human dignity.

The result of this process had, in many ways, a less than beneficial effect on the government under the control of Ibrāhīm Pāshā as he had no means of defending his position against the various factions. The Maronites, the Russian and Greek Orthodox, the Sunni, Shī'ā and Druze Muslim sects, all, in some way, resisted his occupation and each was soon supported by one of the Great Powers, Russia, Great Britain, or France.

The concept of nationalism was not as yet crystallized with the Lebanese, who were more inclined towards the expression of religious and factional loyalty than towards a unified national identity. This phenomenon became, as we have pointed out, apparent only after the arrival of foreign missionaries (American, British, and Italian), who deliberately fostered divergent ends among the Lebanese groups for their own interests. The Lebanese who were only gradually to become aware of this kind of political manipulation adopted at least the posture of a national unity:

The poor Jews and Christians of Damascus revived on seeing the yoke removed; and, to the honour of Ibrahim Pasha's government, it must be recorded, that, in a few days after our arrival, he ordered, with equal liberality and justice, that Jews and Christians should be placed in all respects on an equal footing with Moslems, being permitted to ride in and about the city, and to wear white turbans. This act of justice is entirely due to the government of Mehemet Ali, under his son Ibrahim; and it is amazing to me that it was either not known or not

appreciated in England and other parts of Europe, perhaps from ignorance of the value of those privileges in the East, or of the existence of a different system under the former dynasty.<sup>21</sup>

The tolerant policy followed by Ibrāhīm Pāshā in allowing these Western influences into the country resulted, paradoxically, in a powerful impetus in an increasing sense of national feeling, among his Lebanese subjects, such a strength as was unknown in Lebanese history. This was, among other things, to lead indirectly to his downfall.

It was the Lebanese rebel Tānyus Shāhīn (1815-1895), a former blacksmith, who gave the national feeling its socio-political foundation. In 1858 Tānyus Shāhīn.<sup>22</sup> led a number of Lebanese peasants into open revolt, the third *ʿāmmiyya*. This Shāhīn Revolt was primarily directed against the peasant-master system, and as such was designed to overthrow the existing feudal system as the order of the day. Shāhīn directly challenged the authority of the feudal princes. At the outset of the revolt in 1859 the insurgents turned on the wealthy family of the Khawazin, drove them out, and seized their property. Tānyus set up a short-lived peasant republic in Kisarwān, with himself at its head. The liberal character of the Shāhīn Movement has been recognized by many Arab and orientalist scholars, one of whom, Bernard Lewis, writes :

A more definite expression of liberation ideas occurs in an account of the revolt of the Maronites of Kisrawan in 1858-9, led by Tanyus Shāhīne; he is said to have aimed at "republican government" (*ḥukuma jumhuriyya*), probably meaning some form of representative

government. 23

Later, in P.M. Holt's words, this "popular movement for peasant emancipation",<sup>24</sup> was suppressed by Da'ud Pasha, ruler of Lebanon (1861-8). Significant also in this regard is that the area which was liberated by Tāniyus Shāhīn was not involved in the sectarian conflict between his co-religionist Maronites and the Drūzes. This gives an idea of the standard which politics had attained in Lebanon at that time. The armed campaign raised by Shahin was continued by Yūsuf Karam (1823-1889)<sup>25</sup> who lost three successive revolts against the Ottomans. After the failure of Karam's first uprising, he was banished to Constantinople, and on the defeat of his second abortive rebellion he was exiled further away, in Algeria. He was so popular with most sections of his country, that the Ottoman authority had its hands tied, when it came to punishing him. On the failure of his third and final revolt he was banished even further afield, this time to France. Karam wished to make Lebanon independent of Ottoman rule and place it under the leadership of the Algerian prince 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, then an exile in Syria. The choice of leader may well have arisen in part on account of the protection afforded by the prince to a number of Maronite Christians fleeing from Drūze persecution during the events of 1860, and also because of the experience which he had gained through his contacts with a few liberal Ottomans and several enlightened Europeans, whom he met in his time in exile. Karam's suggestion, as M. Khadouri remarks, brought the concept of secularism nearer to Lebanese consciousness, and to that of the other provinces of the Fertile Crescent, than it had ever been before.<sup>26</sup> During his third exile, Karam moved around Europe seeking to return to Lebanon, but died in Italy in 1889.



By virtue of their contacts with European and American missionaries, Lebanese Christians were more amenable to modern ideas than their Muslim compatriots. The majority of the Muslim community were reluctant, for religious reasons, to send their children to the new missionary schools which taught a culture alien to their own:

The Moslems have even so far run counter to their old traditions and practices as to open schools for girls, lest their Fatimas and Zobeids should learn in our schools too many verses of the Bible and too many Gospel hymns.<sup>27</sup>

In this manner, whatever the content of missionary education was, one thing remains clear: that the better educated Christians later became the natural endorsers of European capitalism and were to devote considerable attention to international affairs and to the concept of a secular society. Their Western education had made it possible for them to attain positions in the administration under the Ottomans and later under the French Mandate.

It is relevant here to refer, briefly, to the works of the Lebanese scholar Nawfal Nawfal al-Ṭarābulṣī (1812-1887),<sup>28</sup> in particular, to his article on "Syria under Mehemet Ali".<sup>29</sup> This work has special importance<sup>30</sup> because it recorded the effects of Ibrāhīm Pāshā's expedition to Lebanon. Nawfal was himself to suffer when his father was hanged by Ibrāhīm Pāshā on a false accusation. However, when his innocence was discovered, Ibrāhīm Pāshā tried to make amends.

The value of Nawfal's writing is twofold. First, his testimony is contemporary and derived from a non-Muslim. Secondly, the manner in

which he presents his material is as significant as the content itself. In his organization of it Nawfal was among those who set the tone for the Arab Renaissance. Besides his own works,<sup>31</sup> Nawfal also made a translation of the Ottoman constitution into Arabic. He is remembered as being deputy of his home city, Tripoli, in the first Ottoman parliament, which was abolished by Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II in 1876.

Almost no-one appears to have taken notice of the progressive and enlightened work of the Lebanese scholar As'ād al-Khayyāṭ (Assaad Kayāṭ). al-Khayyāṭ was born in Beirut where he grew up. As a young man he came in contact with British missionaries for whom he acted as a translator. Indeed it was through his contact with them that he had the opportunity to visit England on three occasions, on the third of which he became a lecturer on social reform for one of these societies, in Birmingham. As a result of these visits al-Khayyāṭ stimulated interest in his country, and on his return helped to establish the first primary school in 1840 for boys and girls in Beirut. This interest in Lebanon was strengthened even further when al-Khayyāṭ became a naturalised British citizen in 1846 after a third visit to England.

There he had extensive tours and major contacts with British missionaries whom he encouraged to pay more attention to the educational needs of his country. It is clear that the peak of his career came after the completion of his medical studies in London where he had been sent to qualify at St. George's Hospital and Chelsea Dispensary,<sup>32</sup> when he was appointed Her Majesty's Consul at Jaffa. Khayyāṭ's activities, in fact reflected the outlook of the early Renaissance of Lebanon, with its zest for knowledge and its impatience with the accumulation of narrow rules and restrictions which former ages had imposed upon human activities. In this respect he anticipated al-Bustānī, in whom Lebanese rationalism reached its

highest point.

al-Khayyāt was, in fact, the first native of that country to publish, in precise and fluent English, an accurate record of his visit to several European countries :

Now, having arrived at Beyrout, after a year's absence and wanderings, I must recapitulate the various countries I had visited—Egypt, Spain, England, France, Belgium, Prussia, Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Turkey; and I may boast of being the greatest Syrian traveller in modern times, as I have to include Arabia, Isak (sic) [Iraq], Greece, and Italy.<sup>33</sup>

To the Lebanese and other Arabs who had experienced social degradation at the hands of the Turks, a further indignity, as related in al-Khayyāt's book, was that that he and fellow Lebanese were referred to as Turks by the English:

I employed the time entertaining the parties with accounts of Syria, and was astonished at the ignorance of most people respecting my country. Some asked me if we wore shoes and stockings, - if we lived in tents, - if we ate rice, - if we had poultry, if we were all Turks. Many knew not the geographical situation of Syria.<sup>34</sup>

It seems that this geographical ignorance was not only confined to Englishmen, for, as Dr George Taʿmah tells us in *al-Mughtaribūn al-Arab fi Amrika al-Shamaliyyah* (The Arab Immigrants in North America), where he recounts his experiences as a diplomat in America, the American Immigration Department, between 1869-1898, showed the same lack of discrimination by not only referring to the Lebanese

as Turks but also including Armenians with Greeks, Syrians, Turks, and Cypriots, lumping them all together under this grossly misleading heading.<sup>35</sup> P. K. Hitti, writing a number of years before, Ta'mah notes the same fact.<sup>36</sup>

al-Khayyāt's activities were all directed at giving his country what it lacked in educational institutions. He is also remembered as the first Lebanese scholar to succeed in establishing in his own country a new type of school not only non-denominational but also non-sectarian and outside the old classical tradition:

My first step was to establish a school, which was no sooner opened, than it was filled. I had twenty-five boys, and seven girls. The word of God was taught them, as well as plain reading and writing, with arithmetic. Among the scholars was a little Druze princess, and some Mohammedan boys. It was a free school, and if I had possessed the means I might have had a hundred boys...I employed a pious, but rather humbly educated clergyman, to go and teach young ladies in their own houses; for, according to custom and law, they cannot go out after they cease to be children. The priests and medical men are the only people admitted into the inner houses. I was determined to effect the emancipation of the ladies, that they should be allowed to join the gentlemen in society, and I resolved that my own family should set the example.<sup>37</sup>

He is also recognised now as a pioneer propagandist in the field of education for females, their social advancement and gradual emancipation:

The excursions I made through the country, and the intercourse I had with the natives, satisfied me that great improvements are in progress. The thirst for education is astonishing: the breaking down of prejudices, and their

friendly feelings towards strangers, gave me great hope. I consequently resolved to sacrifice a few years in the cause, and my chief aim was to promote female education.<sup>38</sup>

al-Khayyāt went on to explain the obstacles which might arise in applying his plan of female education:

There are two classes of people who can begin the instruction of females in their apartments, ecclesiastics and medical men. The former, how ignorant soever they may be, are highly respected, - their hands are kissed, they take the highest seats, and are called *abuna*, or "our father;" and the latter are greatly exalted, though they may be no better than quacks. I sought out the most enlightened men in the country, and tried to induce them to teach the females in their respective apartments; and the result was very gratifying. Many who would not listen to any argument in favour of a woman being taught to read, were not prepared to contend the point with a minister of religion. The great barrier that had hitherto excluded that sex from society and mental cultivation was rapidly giving way, and a few able, courageous men were alone required to hasten its fall.<sup>39</sup>

He was one of the first to advocate the removal of the veil:

After this speech, some looked pleased, some perplexed, but all remained standing, for no place had been pointed out for the ladies to take off their veils. I continued, "Brethren, now I have shown you my treasure, will you not let me see what you have hidden under those veils? Friends, this barbarous custom of excluding from society our mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters, was forced upon us in the seventh century." I proceeded to give them a short outline of the history of our country, as connected with this system of seclusion. No sooner had I finished, than some of my guests told their wives to take

off their veils, and the word was hardly pronounced when the ladies threw them aside. The great wall of ages was pulled down.<sup>40</sup>

There is no real evidence to show that al-Khayyāt converted to Protestantism, although he himself had largely Protestant leanings in some of his views. This is evident in his own statement:

This was a most favourable opportunity for interesting these two prelates in the cause of education. I gave them a detailed account of England and the Protestant Christians; and I tried to impress them with a conviction of the sincerity of Protestant Missionaries.<sup>41</sup>

On another occasion he returned to this affair and explained that:

This Church has been called the Eastern; but it might, in consequence of her protesting against the errors of the Church of Rome, be designated Protestant in the true meaning of the word.<sup>42</sup>

He continued:

In consequence of these efforts on the part of the Protestants, the Jesuits became very active, forming colleges, visiting the sick, and doing all in their power to extend their creed. On the other hand I was resolved to exert all my influence to prevent them from gaining access to our people, which brought upon me their vengeance, and the anger of their adherents. A Roman Catholic, half Englishman and half Levantine, but of considerable influence, took a particular dislike to me, and it will soon appear how he shewed it.

I felt now more than ever the necessity for well-educated men of our community taking the lead in schools and elsewhere, to make a stand against the

efforts of the Jesuits, and that young men thus employed ought to possess great abilities and superior education, to be able to contend with the Romanists. I therefore sent to England, first, Abdallah Azar; second, Antonino Ameuny; third, my own pupils Abdallah Araman... that those who had promised to educate such a number of Syrians, would now come forward. Other Syrians, encouraged by my example, went to England also for improvement.<sup>43</sup>

Along with Nawfal's, al-Khayyāt's work represents a fascinating record of events and personalities of the formative years of European political and educational penetration into Lebanon, during and after the Egyptian Expedition. "What was the object of this war?" al-Khayyāt wrote:

It was to drive Ibrahim Pasha out of Syria. It was to drive out the best government the country had had for many years. Syria was wretchedly governed before his time, and it was he who gave liberty to Christians and Jews. He entered Syria with a great army in 1831, and was welcomed by the whole Syrian population of all sects. He wisely secured the cooperation of the Emir Bashir, the best governor that ever ruled the people of Lebanon and the mountainous district...For two years Ibrahim imposed no new taxes; he was satisfied with the custom-house duties. He gained the love of the people by making all equal in the sight of the law, Mohammedan, Christian, Jew, Druse, Metwali ( Mutawali: nickname for Lebanese Shi'i), Anzeir [Nusayri or 'Alawi] ...He established in every town a divan or council to decide all public matters; these divans were composed of all sects equally, and were subject to his approval of their decisions.<sup>44</sup>

al-Khayyāt now emerges as more important than any other Arab writer

of this historical period. In his work, we find the first positive reaction of a contemporary Arab thinker to Western influences :

With all the disadvantages of climate, and dearness of living, a man in no part of the world can enjoy greater liberty and comfort than in England; and, taking it altogether, it is indeed a most happy country. the constitution is divine! the institutions are glorious! and the poorest British peasant has more independence than a prince in many other countries. This, however, was not the case in Britain five hundred years ago; quite the reverse, it came by degrees, with the increase of light and knowledge; and the same means employed in behalf of Syria might in time produce the same results there. These reflections frequently occupied my mind, and made me long to work for the good of my own people.<sup>45</sup>

In Malta, on his way to London, al-Khayyāṭ met his compatriot al-Shidyāq:

Through Divine protection, we arrived at Malta, and, after performing quarantine during fifteen days, I went to Valetta, to the lodgings which had been engaged for me by my learned friend, the Arabian poet of the age, Mr. Faces [sic] Shediak, of Lebanon, now in the service of the Church Missionary Society, under the able head of mission, the Rev. Mr. Shillintz... This good man knew a great deal concerning me from the American missionaries at Beyrout... I opened my heart to him on the subject of promoting female education in the East, and the absolute importance of native agency; also on the duty of Christians in the West to maintain love and charity towards the ancient oppressed Eastern Christians.<sup>46</sup>

Although both scholars had similar tendencies and although both of them were linked with European missionaries, their relationship was



very transient, and did not go beyond a seemingly superficial level. al-Khayyāt's references to al-Shidyāq are brief and cursory. It was natural that this should be so because of the large gap of orientation separating them. al-Khayyat's main interests were essentially of a political nature, as he was interested in political status. He was naturalized and granted British citizenship. In fact, he was even appointed as their consul in Jaffa. al-Shidyāq, on the other hand, left Europe, not because he had failed to secure wealth but as a matter of principle. His long-held ambition was to obtain a post at Cambridge. His failure to do so, caused largely by the institution's refusal to recruit non-British people, prompted his departure to Constantinople.

al-Khayyāt visited England in an effort to convince missions to establish schools in Lebanon and help in the teaching of Lebanese clergymen. At a later date, we read in the periodical *al-Jinān*, about the student mission which was sent to England on al-Khayyāt's initiative, and which had, as its particular objective, the study of Western medical technique and practice. The secret of his success was, among other things, the coincidence of his strong ambition with the transition in the Lebanon from the feudal system to a state of bourgeois dependence on the West.

The Lebanese intelligentsia were also to play a significant role in influencing the process of modernization in Egypt. The dynamic activism of these scholars led to an Egyptian revival of Arabic as a cultural language<sup>47</sup>, by means of the periodicals and newspapers which they established in Cairo and Alexandria.

Many of their published works upheld the supremacy of reason, the principles of religious freedom and the separation of church and state, and rejected the authority of traditional institutions. This "extreme" position was perhaps not entirely approved of by the community but

there was widespread sympathy for such views.<sup>48</sup> "Since for a whole generation they provided almost the only popular reading-matter in Arabic, they gave the Lebanese an influence over the Arabic-reading public, great although short-lived."<sup>49</sup>

In the field of politics, there were various developments worthy of discussion. The conflict of the new order with the old taking place in Lebanon at that time, was, on the whole, similar to events that took place in Egypt under Muḥammad 'Alī and in Constantinople under Sultan Mahmud II.

However, in the case of the Lebanon these events were on a smaller scale. To take a very simple example: during the attempt to subdue the *Pāshāliks* and subjugate all their local chieftains to his authority, Ibrahim Pasha had to use considerable force in order to introduce his reforms. He succeeded, for a short period, in breaking the dominant power of the Maronites and also temporarily disarmed the Druze. The latter task was accomplished only with extreme difficulty, for enshrined in the traditions of the Drūze was the basic right of any individual to bear arms to protect himself, his family and his beliefs. The Lebanese people were not naturally disposed to live peaceably under the "usurper", except for those who had opted to become his feudal vassals. What they wanted was to manage their own affairs in their own country.

The conquest of Lebanon and Syria did not bring to Ibrahim Pasha the results for which he had hoped. The Egyptian administration failed to achieve any cohesion within the country, and because of this, could not be expected to last any length of time. Thus, his ambition to establish an empire in the East came to nothing in a way similar to that of Napoleon thirty years earlier.

Foreign power involvement in the Lebanon also proved too much for him and under the weight of their interventionist military pressure, he despairingly made the excuse that he had, for various reasons, to return to Egypt. On the 20<sup>th</sup> May he was allowed to evacuate his forces.

What is often forgotten is that Ibrāhīm Pāshā's nine years rule of Lebanon was not altogether a negative experience for the people of that province. This period may be said to have been regressive from a political and nationalist viewpoint, but it proved to be very rich in literature and philosophy. For the first time, too, in their modern history, the Lebanese saw that their Turkish rulers could be defeated in battle. If their power could be easily contested by an Egyptian army, then, Lebanese national resistance to Ottoman rule had become a realizable political ambition.

The foreign intervention became the subject of acute political controversy among Lebanese groups; since foreign political and diplomatic influence had been clearly established, the best possible recourse lay in increased co-operation between the conflicting groups. It had become obvious that some basis for national unity must be found if the Lebanon was to be saved, and that a way out of the impasse could only be found by adopting a non-sectarian approach.

After the massacres of Lebanon and Syria in 1860, the Christian thinkers and, to some extent, their Muslim counterparts had to search for an end to continuous inter-denominational conflict.

The awakening of national consciousness in such thinkers as al-Shidyāq and Būṭrūs al-Bustānī served to establish their position in modern Lebanese social and political philosophy, and since al-Shidyāq rose to prominence before al-Bustānī, it would seem appropriate to

begin our discussion on Lebanese thought during the nineteenth century with him.

## Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1801-1887)

### Early Years:

Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq was born in 1801 at Ashqut in Jebel Kasarwan. His family held various official posts in the service of the notables of the centre and south of Lebanon and provided leaders for the Maronite community. He received an excellent schooling at the Maronite seminary of ʿAyn Warāqah an educational institute in the al-Hadath district of Beirut, where his parents moved in 1809.

At an early age he showed signs of a literary talent which was later to earn him distinction, as a writer and poet. When only ten years of age, he was composing quite mature poems and had an intense interest in lexicography and the indexing of old Arabic words which were not generally in use or were of archaic provenance. This studious endeavour had its benefits, as it allowed al-Shidyāq to have a command of language superior to most of the thinkers discussed in this thesis. This ability is clearly seen in his later books : *al-Sāq ʿalā al-sāq fī mā huwa al-Faryāq ʿan ayyām wa-shuhūr wa-a ʿwam fī ʿujm al-Arab wa-al-ʿAjam* = La vie et les aventures de Fariac: relation de ses voyages, avec ses observations critiques sur les Arabes et sur les autres peuples... Paris, 1855.", and *al-Jāsūs ʿalā'l-qāmūs* (The Spy on The *Qāmūs* ).

To understand the development of al-Shidyāq, one has to consider him in the context of his relationship with his four brothers. It is,

therefore, necessary to digress a little and discuss these other talented members of the al-Shidyāq family.

Ṭannūs, the eldest brother, was a prominent historian, and his work *Akhbār al-aʿyān fī Jabal Lubnān* (Annals of the Notables of Lebanon), is known and respected by modern scholars as an essential source of Lebanese history. In his evaluation of this historian, Salibi wrote:

The lay tradition in Maronite historiography, started by Duwayhi and developed by 'Aynturini and Shihab, received its first mature expression in the work of Tannus al-Shidyāq, the first Maronite (and Lebanese) historian to deal with Mount Lebanon as a unit. His history, *Akhbār al-aʿyān fī Jabal Lubnān*, is not a chronicle, although its historical sections are related in chronological order: it is a systematic survey of the component parts of feudal Lebanon.

Shidyāq was neither an ecclesiastic nor feudal lord. His ancestors and his kinsmen had been clerks and household tutors in the service of Lebanese feudal families since the early seventeenth century. Apart from some private tutoring and a year's stay at the college of 'Ayn Warāqa, the well-known Maronite college of his day, Shidyāq was self-taught. He entered the clerical service of the Shihabs as early as 1810, when he was scarcely sixteen, and continued to serve various members of the family as clerk or household tutor for many years, while earning an additional living as a merchant.<sup>50</sup>

The second brother, Mansūr became a prominent adviser on commercial and financial matters to various elite members of the Lebanese community. Asʿad, the third brother, born in 1798, was a gifted scholar and poet in his own right who worked as a teacher of Arabic and Syriac to a group of American Missionary scholars. In support of

this we can quote his contemporary As'ād Khayyāt to the effect that

I wished to add the English language to my other acquirements. The Rev. Pliny Fisk, who lived with my dear and excellent friend, the Rev. William Goodell, kindly undertook to teach me; and so eager was I, that I often got to their house before they were up. I remember, the first English sentence I ever heard was from Mr. Goodell, when he knocked at Mr. Fisk's door, and said, "Assaad is come!" Mr. Fisk, on beginning to teach me, discovered that I knew nothing of my own grammar, the Arabic. This brought the good well-known Assand (sic) [Asa'd] Shediak to the acquaintance of the missionaries.<sup>51</sup>

As'ad also, possibly, acted as a translator of Evangelistic pamphlets and brochures. According to Hourani, Fāris and As'ad were among the prominent writers who helped the famous Lebanese historian Ḥaydar al-Shihābī in producing material and drafts of his authoritative work *Lubnān fī 'ahd al-ūmarā' al-Shihābiyyīn*.<sup>52</sup> Through the influence of the American Mission As'ad embraced Protestantism in 1820. Ghālib, the fourth brother, travelled to Egypt in 1827 and served there on the financial staff in the court of Muḥammad 'Alī for one year, then returned to Lebanon to spend the remainder of his life in various administrative posts.

Two of the brothers, Ṭannūs and As'ad, were strongly to influence the development of Aḥmad Faris al-Shidyāq.

The al-Shidyāq family, as we have noted above, held prominent positions in the Lebanon, principally with the Shihāb Princes. About 1820-21 an unfortunate accident occurred when Ṭannūs and Mansūr were accused of assaulting two members of the retinue of the Amīr

Bashīr al-Shihāb. The family, then, had to flee Beirut for a short time. Later, the al-Shidīyāq family was to suffer the severe shock of seeing As'ad being imprisoned,<sup>53</sup> by the Maronite Patriarch Yūsuf Ḥubaysh, when he rebelled against his Catholic upbringing and became a Protestant in 1825.<sup>54</sup> At that time, embracing Protestantism was not merely an act of religious emancipation, but also an act of social emancipation. As'ad, died in prison in 1830 at the age of thirty-two years, as a result of this persecution.<sup>55</sup>

As'ad esh-Shidiāq, a brilliant young Maronite scholar, who had been secretary to the patriarch, gave instruction in Syriac and Arabic to Mr. King, author of the locally famous "Farewell Letters," which gave his reasons for antagonizing the errors of Rome. Shidiāq not only polished the Arabic of these letters, but ended by accepting the views therein advocated. By the command of the patriarch, in the year 1826 he was imprisoned in the desolate monastery of Qannubin, which hides in the deep gorge of the Qadisha. There he was chained, tortured and beaten. The peasants were encouraged to visit his cell, to spit in his face, to call him vile names. Once he was assisted to escape, but he was recaptured and finally died amid the filth of his prison.<sup>56</sup>

It is not without reason that he is named by Būtrūs al-Bustānī and Colonel Churchill "The Martyr".<sup>57</sup> The death of his beloved brother and mentor affected the sensitive mind of Faris and represented a turning-point in his life.

He too sought solace and refuge in religion, and like his brother As'ad, he worked with the American mission and embraced Protestantism. The adoption of Protestantism was a means of being able to enjoy the freer atmosphere of reformed Christianity, and the change of religion

made by Faris and his brother must be understood in this sense and no other. He is said to have shown great enthusiasm for the new doctrine. It is his honesty and courage which force him to make plain what most people try to hide. He seems at one time to have been in real personal danger from the hostility of the Patriarch's men. Both temperament and training had unfitted him for any other career than that of a scholar. Thus, in 1825, he was delighted to accept an offer by the American mission of Beirut to travel to Egypt in order to further his Arabic linguistic abilities. (1825-1834).

In this troubled background, Faris al-Shidyāq left Lebanon for ever, and started a life of wandering, in Europe, North Africa and Constantinople, which was not to end until his death, taking with him tragic memories of his native land. In Egypt, he continued a serious study of the Arabic language under the tutelage of Naṣr allah al-Ṭarābulusī (1770-1840) and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Mālikī (1803-1857). To help to pay for his keep, he gave lessons in Arabic grammar to children of wealthy migrant Lebanese families resident in Cairo.

It may be said that more than all the Arab thinkers discussed in the thesis, al-Shidyāq had a special love and appreciation of his native tongue. Although we have no direct reference to substantiate this, it may be presumed with a degree of certainty that he took great delight in examining the works and commentaries of the ancient Arab authors found in book form or in manuscript in the great libraries of Cairo.

His linguistic talents were soon generally recognised and he was offered the post of senior editor with the journal *al-Waḳāʾiʿ al-Miṣriyyah* which was directly sponsored and financed by Muhammad ʿAlī. This journal, as we have noted in the chapter on al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, was the first newspaper in the Arab world.



Thus, al-Shidyāq added the skills of the journalist to that of the academic. His experiences in Egypt as teacher and journalist were to prove invaluable, and gave him the confidence and ability to establish the first Arabic newspaper in Constantinople.

Soon after his arrival in Egypt, he married a Syrian lady whose family was resident in Egypt. He had two sons by her, Fā'iz "qui devait mourir a Londres." <sup>58</sup> and Salīm.<sup>59</sup> Later as a mature man, Salīm was to follow in his father's footsteps<sup>60</sup> and become an editor of some repute of the newspaper *al-Jawā'ib* which was published in Istanbul under the direction of his father.

The formative period of the development of al-Shidyāq as thinker began in 1834 when the American Mission offered him a senior editorial post in Malta, where they had an Arabic press. It was here (1834-1848) that he came into fuller contact with European cultural influences which began to extend the range of his vision from the Arabic-speaking world.

He assisted an Arab Greek Orthodox priest from Jerusalem 'Īsā Buṭrus in the production of several evangelizing publications issued by the American Mission

They were supervised by Christopher Schlienz, Jowett's German assistant, recruited from Basle Seminary, and Samuel Gobat, a French-speaking Swiss from the same institution. The Arabic books that were issued fall into two categories: those intended for use by native pupils under missionary influence, and those designed for literate adults to read on their own or to discuss with a missionary or a catechist.<sup>61</sup>

al-Shidyāq was also to produce several books of his own. Amongst these the best known are: *Kāshf al-mukhabba' 'an funūn Urubbā* and

*al-Muhāwarah al-unsīyyah fī al-luġhtayn al-Arabīyyah wa-al-īnglīziyyah.*

His most important experience of European culture may be said to have really started when at the age of forty-seven, as a now mature and internationally respected scholar he was invited in 1848 by "The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge", in London to revise the Arabic translation of the **Pentateuch** which had originally been carried out by the English Orientalist **Samuel Lee** (1783-1852).<sup>62</sup>

al-Shidyāq completed this task with the collaboration of Lee himself; the first edition of the New Testament was printed in 1851, and the whole Bible in 1857. It was later found that the translators had followed the English Authorised Version, errors and all, which, along with an clumsy style, hindered any widespread use of the version. He spent the next ten years in London, Cambridge and Oxford. He also spent much time during those years in Paris, where, in 1854, like his contemporary al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, he was to record, in detail, his impressions of Europe and his personal experiences there, which still interest and amuse the modern reader.

It is difficult to pass judgement concerning to what extent al-Shidyāq was influenced by his collaborator in translating the bible, Doctor Lee. The reason behind this difficulty can be seen in the following:

The above mentioned person gained a great reputation among Englishmen for his knowledge of Oriental languages. In his early years, he worked as a carpenter. However, once he had passed thirty, he devoted himself to study and acquired considerable knowledge, although he did not master the languages that he attempted.<sup>63</sup>

Then I travelled to Royston and from there to the village of

Barley, which lay three miles distant from it; I reached it at 11 o'clock at night. I proceeded to Dr. Lee's house and found him already preparing for bed. He said to me that the Society had written to him telling of my coming and that I should go to stay at the village inn.

I stayed there overnight, and in the morning he wrote to the Society to tell them that he had arranged proper and comfortable accomodation for me. They thanked him for doing so. 64

In addition to this, al-Shidyāq tells that

Doctor Lee taught Arabic at Cambridge but could not properly speak even one sentence of it. 65

Professor Hall, in tracing the history of the Arabic translation of the Bible, in a number of articles, says

Between 1840 and 1850, Fares es-Shidiak and Professor Lee, under the auspices of the Church Propagation Society, made a version of the Scriptures in Arabic. In this the mistakes of King James's English version are copied. It seems that Shidiak translated from the English and Prof. Lee was supposed to reduce it to agreement with the Hebrew. This version never came into use. It was printed between 1851 and 1857 at London. 66

He was quite a resolute character and refused to abandon his native costume or to remove his distinctive *tarboosh*. He must have presented a flamboyant and colourful figure as he promenaded the streets of Victorian London and the boulevards of the Paris of the Second Empire. 67

By now a British subject, he had hopes of being offered one of the two Chairs of Arabic at Cambridge University. But in 1854 they went to Henry Griffin Williams and Theodore Preston

They do not employ foreigners in these colleges; they allow them only to give private tuition to individuals. They neither understand properly themselves nor do they permit others to give proper instruction.<sup>68</sup>

al-Shidyāq strongly criticised the habit of the English academic writers of having their publisher list their social status, literary and academic merits on the covers of their books. al-Shidyāq found this habit very offensive and considered it to be essentially an English failing:

It is a characteristic inherent in the English to be anxious for fame and renown amongst their peers for any cause, but especially in matters of learning. If one amongst them should know some words of Arabic or of Persian or Turkish, for example, then he would insert, when writing a book in his own language, everything he knows of the foreign tongues, to give the impression that he is indeed a linguist regardless of whether he writes the words correctly or not. And the title-page of his book is embellished by grand-sounding titles, and it is stated that he is a member of such and such a society, that he has abridged such and such a book, that he is the author of such and such a pamphlet, that he is the preacher of such and such a tabernacle, and so on...And if you were to squeeze his book completely, you could not water one thirsty question.<sup>69</sup>

To be objective, one should remember that the Arab writer of this period is not renowned for modesty. Indeed, when one considers Arab

the name Ahmad as his own.

However, fate was now to be kinder to him. Whilst in Paris, he had, in 1853, during the Russo-Turkish war, also written an epic poem of 130 couplets, which eulogized the Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd and the justice of his cause. Such was his fame that the Ottoman Sultan invited him to Constantinople (1857) and there al-Shidyāq launched an Arabic newspaper, *al-Jawā'ib* in 1861, which was to continue with considerable success until 1884. The essays which occupied the pages of this influential periodical were of varying degrees of seriousness, and covered a large range of topics; its first priority, however, was political, in particular the publication of the official decrees of the Ottoman Empire, and it was concerned with Ottoman policy in general, together with social criticism, manners and philosophy. This gained al-Shidyāq and his newspaper wide recognition among Arab scholars and Orientalists alike.

It must be repeated that as a subject of the Ottoman Empire, al-Shidyāq, even though he was born a Maronite Christian and later became a Protestant, had been surrounded all his life with the Islamic Arab cultural legacy of which he was proud and to which he was sympathetic. There was also, we may add, his psychological sensitivity towards the Christian clergy whom he blamed, rightly or not, for his brother's death. Thus, it was natural for him to veer towards Constantinople as a cultural centre, despite his willingness to imbibe fresh ideas from European society. He died in Constantinople after three years (1887), with the dying wish that he should be buried in Lebanon.

In understanding the work of al-Shidyāq, some mention should be made of the effect of the influence of various European writers on his

intellectual and philosophical development. The broadening of his mind was due to his own openness towards the culture of the European countries that he was to visit :

Anyone who has known Europe also knows that there is really no difference between us and Europeans; neither in the power of reason, nor in the power of understanding, nor in the power of intelligence ... nor in any other natural attribute.<sup>72</sup>

It may reasonably be assumed that the first, and possibly the most constructive influence on al-Shidyāq, apart from his family, was that of his adviser and companion, the English scholar J. Nicholson,<sup>73</sup> with whom he worked closely on the translation of the Pentateuch in 1848. al-Shidyāq's relationship with Nicholson was close and he had a continuing and rewarding correspondence with him. Through the influence of this person and possibly others in the Society, al-Shidyāq was introduced to the world of European literature and was able to gain a greater insight into Western culture. His extensive reading of English and French literature obviously had a great effect on him, and he proceeded to form his own philosophy regarding the improvement of the Arab world.

It appears that his favourite writers were Byron, Swift, Goldsmith, and Sterne, whose works he studied avidly during his stay in London. These authors he mentions repeatedly in his own writings.<sup>74</sup> During his later Paris sojourn, he came into contact with the works of the contemplative poet Lamartine, with whom he afterwards became acquainted. He was also fascinated by the accounts of Chateaubriand's Travels in America, which appeared in Paris in 1827.<sup>75</sup> The works of Francois Rabelais (1490-1553), the French humorist, also influenced

him greatly; so much so, that his own, later, writings were criticized as following too closely the Rabelaisian style.<sup>76</sup>

It may be said that the London Period represented al-Shidyāq's true starting-point for the formation of his own individual view of the Arab world. It was in London that he came into contact with that new phenomenon the "Christian Socialist". al-Shidyāq, now a Protestant Christian, was greatly influenced by the Protestants' democratic and humanitarian approach to Christianity. The influence of these "Christian Socialists" led him to consider the validity of applying democratic principles to the Arab people for their own betterment.

It may be said that al-Shidyāq was not a typical religious theologian — such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh, the Egyptian reformer of a later period, who will be discussed in a subsequent chapter —. He was not blinded by dogma but, remained an individual thinker:

It is possible to say that the Established Church is one of the *Diwans* of the state. The title Rector of the village is much more important than the title Officer of the village ... It is more suitable to call him the Chief of the town ... One finds that he has the best house, servants, carriages with a private driver ... and when he ascends the pulpit to preach, he advises the poor people to be ascetic and avoid the temptations of life.<sup>77</sup>

It is surprising to find Hourani, whose authoritative work on Arab thought is usually acute, giving an opinion such as "He [al-Shidyāq] wrote a description of England and France, less perceptive than that of Ṭaḥṭāwī."<sup>78</sup> He fails to discern the factors which make al-Shidyāq's work superior to that of his contemporaries. Unlike al-Ṭaḥṭāwī's preoccupied vision, al-Shidyāq's is more extensive and includes more

than one dimension. Not only do his views benefit from his experience of France, which country is the only European source of formation of al-Tahtāwī's vision, but he also goes beyond the simple comparison between Arab and French cultures. He makes his comparisons, as one of his main objects, between Arab culture and both French, Maltese, Scottish, and English, on the one hand, and between the cultures of these European countries themselves, on the other hand. This is a sufficient indication of the scope of his thought, a fact which refutes Hourani's conclusion.

Throughout his life he was a seeker of philosophical truth, as a guide to his personal life and to the development of his own philosophical views, along with his fiery attacks on religious institutions. Even though born a Christian, as an Arab philosopher, he had similar views to nineteenth-century Muslim Arab philosophers with regard to upholding Ottomanism. "They [The Ottomans]" says Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, in his book The Future of Islam :

were aided in this [to explain the Hanefite dogma of the Caliphate] by a powerful instrument, then first employed in Turkey, the press. A newspaper in Arabic called the *Jawaib* was subsidized at Constantinople under the direction of one Achmet [Ahmad] Faris, a convert to Islam and man of great literary ability and knowledge of Arabic, who already had views on the subject of the Caliphate.<sup>79</sup>

"al-Shidyāq" wrote Hisham Sharabi:

Came close to forming an idea of Ottoman nationalism based on administrative reform and on the brotherhood of all subjects within the Ottoman Empire regardless of religion or ethnic origin.<sup>80</sup>



This can be readily seen in his pioneering approach to the concept of the rights of subjects under the Ottoman Turks. He also believed that the development of any culture could not take place without, first, promoting the formation of an awareness of national identity amongst the peoples of the Arab world. The Arabs had first to be made fully aware of their own race, the right to their language and a national homeland. al-Shidyāq believed that religion by itself, Christianity or Islam, was not sufficient to provide for the political and social needs of any people.

It may be said, in conclusion, that the works of al-Shidyāq essentially comprise a detailed description and commentary on the social and educational structure of England and France and lengthy descriptions of the various cities and villages he visited during his European travels. They are unlike the works of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn, in that he made no attempt to comment on the political systems of the countries he visited. The type of "European association" which these writers held in high esteem comprised those private organizations which were popular in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth-century, and dealt primarily with welfare, medical, and philanthropic activity.

There can be no doubt that his European experiences were the spring-board for the formation of the intellectual and cultural maturity which enabled him to develop his own individual reforming ideas for the Arab world. The European capacity to organize most aspects of the business, social and educational life of the community caused amazement among Arab thinkers, who referred to this as the "success of European culture". The European accomplishments were seen by them as the foundation of a progressive society. They could not see,

however, that this society was essentially secular, free from any influence or interference by religious institutions. This was perhaps not entirely the case in the United Kingdom, where al-Shidyāq may have seen the considerable involvement by the Church of England and particularly by non-conformist Christians in areas of education and charity.

He became increasingly aware of the responsibility accepted by the European states in the organization of these aspects of society. However, like al-Ṭaṭṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn, he failed to perceive that the real success of the Europeans in these fields was due largely to the fact that such institutions were essentially secular and were not directly controlled by any of the Christian churches. The failure of Arab scholars to make a distinction between Western systems of justice, social and commercial organizations and religious influences was common in the nineteenth century. This can largely be explained by the fact that visiting Arab scholars of the period pre-1801 were mentally restricted by the structures of Islamic teaching and the all-embracing law of the *Sharī'ah* covering every aspect of a Muslim's life: social, cultural, educational and spiritual. In the minds of the Arabs all these aspects of society were inseparable from the state.

The development of European thought, on the other hand, incorporated in its framework Greek philosophy and the Roman legacy along with the teaching of the more radical thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In particular, the influence of contemporary French and German philosophers had generally promoted a more secular approach to the organization of social, political and economic life. The ability of Europeans to organize for public and private ends, as we have seen, was considered by al-Shidyāq and other Arab

travellers as the touchstone of the success of European culture.

al-Shidyāq and his contemporary like-minded thinkers went to great trouble to make available detailed descriptions of these European institutions, but limited their discussion to an abstract interpretation of the social and political aspects of the subject. It becomes abundantly clear on reading the work of al-Shidyāq that he failed to realize that the actual functioning of the social systems he examined was related to, and indeed owed its existence to, the fact that some form of constitutional government existed within the societies he discussed. It may be said also that his idealistic proposal that the Arab world should adopt similar social, administrative and welfare systems and be consequently rewarded with the material and social benefit of these was inapplicable. He failed to realize that the employment of such Western systems in the Arab world could have come about only after a total revolution of the Arab social order and the establishment of some kind of elected constitutional government, whether in the guise of Ottomanism or some other form.

Although, al-Shidyāq was enthusiastic about all things European, he nevertheless found that an immense gulf existed between himself and the Christians he met in Europe. He was accepted but as a foreigner, rather than as a fellow Christian. He had expected to be treated as an equal and as a Christian by those who had the same faith as himself. However, he had a different cultural background. This had a depressingly negative effect on him, which was reflected in his preference for Constantinople to Europe. He was aware of himself as a foreigner but nevertheless always praised all the positive features of European culture which might be beneficial to the Arab world.

Dr Lee, taught Arabic at Cambridge...and in my estimation

there is no one as well known as him regarding Oriental languages. It was his employment at Cambridge which motivated me to come to this country. Accordingly, when the Society asked the governor of Malta, via the minister of foreign affairs, to collect me, I thought my stay would have been in that city. [Cambridge].<sup>81</sup>

Although he was always conscious of the gulf between East and West, he constantly urged his fellow countrymen, in his writings, to visit Europe. Although no clear-cut written evidence exists on his contacts with European scholars during his stay in England, we have reason to believe that he imbibed some of the current influences of British philosophy and particularly that of the political influences of the activities of the Christian socialist movement.

al-Shidyāq's method of subtly introducing Western ideas into the Arab world made him include in his travel books very detailed descriptions of European life, and express critically caustic comments on Arab counterparts. In this respect, he was a pioneer, for both al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn very rarely ventured into this field, their time being almost wholly taken up with the more direct emphasis of political reform. The class structure of European life, religion, trades and professions, economic power, mercantile and military accomplishments, and the manner and customs of the people were all examined in great detail by al-Shidyāq:

These people [the English] can be divided into five classes. The first class includes the princes, ministers, the nobility, others in very high positions, and the Bishops. The second class includes the notables (*A'yān*) who live on income derived from their properties rather from their professions; they do not possess high titles.

The third class includes scholars, jurists, lawyers, priests, and industrialists. The fourth class includes small businessmen, professional writers...In the fifth class are to be found the craftsmen and laborers, followed by the peasants. These constitute the greatest majority of the people.<sup>32</sup>

In this approach, al-Shidyāq may be said to have been closer to the style that was to be adopted by al-Kawākibī - some thirty years later. It should be noted that al-Shidyāq was the first modern Arab scholar to write about his Western experiences as a means of introducing the concept of social and political reform. He was more responsive to Western culture than al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, the Muslim, for example. His Christianity gave him a more open-minded approach when dealing with the absorption and later, with critical observations of, European life. His experiences were all direct, and he saw with his own eyes what he was later to describe in his books.

The principal and most important difference between al-Shidyāq and al-Kawākibī is that al-Shidyāq's approach, based on his direct experience, has still a fresh sparkle in its style. On the other hand, al-Kawākibī, who formed the basis of his philosophy by reading translations of the works of European writers, philosophers and scholars, lacked this full exposure to European culture; he never travelled to the West nor did he ever master any European language.

Khayr al-Dīn and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī were both versed in French. Although he had a mastery of spoken French, Khayr al-Din never translated any French work into Arabic. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, however, who had a limited ability in spoken French, nevertheless made some good written translations from French into Arabic, with some attempt to explain concepts not known to the Arabs.

al-Shidyāq was the first Arab scholar to compile two excellent English-Arabic text-books. These books are entitled: *al-Muhāwarat al-unsīyyah*, Arabic and English grammatical exercises and familiar dialogues (Malta, 1840), and "A Practical Grammar of the Arabic Language: With Interlinear reading lessons, dialogues and vocabulary", (London 1856). The latter went into three editions within a short period, and may be considered as an important linguistic landmark in the development of European and Arabic cultural interchange. As **Henry G. Williams**, Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, wrote, in his introduction to the "Practical Grammar" :

The little Arabic Grammar by Faris El-Shidiac has met with considerable success, the whole of the former edition having been for some time exhausted. It has been well received, both in Egypt and Syria, and found useful, as well by travellers in those parts, as by others whose business has led them to seek a temporary home in the East... While the book is primarily intended to supply the want of such as do not contemplate any extensive progress in the language, it is also hoped that it will furnish a solid foundation to those who wish to refer to a larger treatise on Arabic Grammar.<sup>83</sup>

It is interesting to note that al-Shidyāq introduces many colloquial expressions as well as academic Arabic. This was, no doubt, done for the purpose of making English easier for less educated Arabs and of promoting the language as part of his drive towards reform. Among the terms which al-Shidyāq used two have survived to the present day: *hāfilah*, meaning bus,<sup>84</sup> and *jarīdan*, meaning newspaper.<sup>85</sup> al-Shidyāq, in short, was not only a brilliant and unerringly exciting writer but also an innovative linguist, introducing, for the first time,

certain key terms, shaping, selecting, and above all, revitalizing language in its very substance.

## **The Beginning of Secularism in the Fertile Crescent.**

### **al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustānī (1819-1883)**

In al-Bustānī's time, Lebanon found itself involved in a circle of Western diplomacy and commerce. As already stated, this was largely due to increasing Western influence, which became a significant force following the withdrawal of Ibrahim Pasha's troops. The period of Egyptian occupation provided the security necessary for a dramatic increase in Lebanese trade with Europe :

European merchants had been active in the coastal towns since the Crusades or earlier, but it was the Egyptians who opened the interior of Syria to European trade, and it was Ibrahim Pasha who broke the resistance of the Damascenes to accepting a resident British Consul.<sup>86</sup>

In addition, with the advent of the Christian missions, Lebanon was given new possibilities and new directions. A surge of intellectual activity was then stirring the Lebanese atmosphere, and it was much more powerful than its size would indicate:

a European air of business runs throughout, and when the traveller takes into consideration the many natives he will meet who speak his tongue fluently he begins to feel himself at home, and almost regrets that his search for Orientalism has been in vain, and that Bayroot is only a second edition of his native place (...) Those who knew

Bayroot twenty years back and the condition of its inhabitants then, will acknowledge the midnight and midday difference between 1835 and 1855.<sup>87</sup>

There had been some earlier attempts at the reform of commerce, such as Amīr Fakhr al-Dīn's in the seventeenth century. But this European-based commercial activity differed fundamentally from previous efforts in this direction. As Beirut became cosmopolitan in character, with Greeks, Italians, and other Europeans, as well as its Levantine population, it was natural that this new condition should leave its mark on contemporary Lebanese thinking:

Its [Beirut] shops and stores are well provided from the factories of Europe and America. The produce of the Indies he [The Visitor] finds in almost every street. Suspended on a rope from the verandahs of the various shops, he will see exposed for sale New England drills, Manchester greys, Scotch Zebras, French silks, Swiss handkerchiefs...and all bearing the stamps of the various factories where they are manufactured.<sup>88</sup>

al-Bustānī came from an influential Christian family in Dubayyah well-known for maintaining its traditions of religious learning and culture.<sup>89</sup> Early in his life, al-Bustānī showed much promise of his later prominence and, at one time, was expected to be a priest. Antonius tells us that "the monks selected him for a scholarship at the Maronite College in Rome". He was willing to go, but his recently widowed mother "wept at the thought of her son being sent so far and entreated him to stay".<sup>90</sup> Occasionally he was sent by the bishop of Tyre and Sidon on missions to other parts of the Lebanon.<sup>91</sup> But Dubayyah soon became too small for the ambitious spirit of al-Bustānī.



In the year 1840 something happened which provided him, now a man of twenty-one, with the greatest opportunity of his career. He went to Beirut, where he attracted the attention and friendship of men like the American Eli Smith (1810-1857), and Cornelius Van Dyck.<sup>92</sup> The latter, a doctor newly arrived in Lebanon to join the Mission, was to remain the lifelong friend of al-Bustānī. al-Bustānī's arrival in Beirut also coincided in date with the exile of the Amīr Bashīr II to Malta and the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops. The poet Nāṣif al-Yāziǧī, whose livelihood had depended on Amīr Bashīr II, was compelled to move with his linguist son Ibrāhīm to Beirut to seek other employment in the American mission. At this time, he also became one of al-Bustānī's intimates. This situation led to a period of concentrated diplomatic and intellectual activity probably unparalleled in Beirut's modern history which no doubt influenced al-Bustānī's decision in moving there. He seems to have taken full advantage of the intellectual opportunities Beirut offered.

A few general points may be noted in regard to al-Bustānī's views before he established himself as a thinker. It must be mentioned that he was from the very start a competent scholar, and rapidly acquired all the education that Lebanon could offer at that time. He was well trained in the classical disciplines of theology, logic, and philosophy, and had mastered the Italian, Syriac and Latin languages: these were studied alongside Arabic at 'Ayn Waraqaḥ, the monastic college, where he studied, between 1830 and 1840. His future interests in intellectual matters and his capacity for intellectual pursuits presumably stem from this period. In addition, he found time to learn English which enabled him to secure contacts firstly with the British Army as translator in 1840, and later with the Protestant mission as

translator and teacher. He had not yet shown any serious interest in politics. It seems that he received certain cultural benefits from the missionaries. In particular, "on being asked to help Eli Smith in the work of translating the Bible, he applied himself to learning Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, in addition to perfecting his knowledge of Syriac and Latin".<sup>93</sup> There can be no doubt that al-Bustānī's knowledge of these languages, and his familiarity with medieval theology and philosophical disciplines, equipped him to handle competently the complexities of translation. H.H. Jessup, in his memoirs, Fifty-Three Years In Syria, describes the preparation behind the translation by the three scholars involved:

First Mr. Bistany made a translation into Arabic from the Hebrew or Greek with the aid of Syriac. Then Sheikh Nasif [Nasif al-Yaziji], who knew no language but Arabic, rewrote what had been translated, carefully sifting out all foreign idioms. Then Dr. Smith revised Sheikh Nasif's manuscript by himself, and made his own corrections and emendations. Then he and Sheikh Nasif went over the work in company, and Dr. Smith was careful not to let the meaning be sacrificed for a question of Arabic grammar or rhetoric.<sup>94</sup>

The Encyclopaedia of Missions, on the other hand, states:

The method pursued by Dr. Smith was to have Mr. Bistani make a translation from the Hebrew and Syriac in the Old Testament, and from the Greek and Syriac in the New Testament.<sup>95</sup>

Jessup took an active part in every aspect of the work of the Mission. He covers this in great detail and provides us with an invaluable source for the period. There is the added importance of the fact that

he supplies pen portraits of the various individuals working for the Mission at that time. He gives descriptions of the personalities, premises and educational work of the Mission. Of even greater value is his work as an accomplished photographer and his book contains several splendid photographs which better than any words illustrate the atmosphere of those times.

### The Decisive Years

al-Bustānī's early translations, such as *Kitāb al-bāb al-martūh fī a'māl ar-rūn*<sup>96</sup>, of an (unknown) English work by Eli Smith, and his translation of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, under the title of *Siyāhat Masīhī*, and his translation of D'Aubigne's History of Redemption under the title of *Tārīkh al-Fidā'*, were theological, but, as we shall see, he quickly altered direction, in favour of specifically political writing. His real abilities rapidly asserted themselves. In 1846, while helping the American missionaries to establish their institution, the 'Abayyah School, he started his initial work on textbooks on grammar and arithmetic.<sup>97</sup> In 1848, the American Consulate employed him as an interpreter, a post he held until 1862.

In spite of his own earliest intellectual interests, which had made him thoroughly familiar with the Western tradition, al-Bustānī was perhaps the first Arab scholar to raise the concept of secularism and nationalism into the intellectual debate. During the events of this period, al-Bustānī was uncertain as to which career to pursue; various avenues opened out before him: missionary work, diplomacy, and journalism.

It is true that he helped the American missionaries of Beirut, in particular, Eli Smith, with the first translation of the Bible into

modern Arabic. He also helped with other activities such as his participation with Cornelius Van Dyck in establishing in 1846, 'Abayya School, and taught there for two years. It appears that the reason why Van Dyck was sent to Lebanon was to replace Smith as the latter was dying from cancer, as it was traditionally reported. But the question was much more complex. In fact, the first parts of the New Testament which Smith translated into Arabic did not comply with the requirements of the Bible Society in New York, since Smith:

adopted no known text of the Greek, but selected from Tischendorf Lachmann, Tregelles, and Alford, as he thought fit. He had gone on far with the New Testament before Alford was published, and he stopped until he could go back and compare what he had done with Alford.<sup>98</sup>

Professor I. Hall uncovered the reason for the burning of the first translation draft supervised by Smith and the initiation of a new translation directed by Van Dyck with the collaboration of the same translators who participated in Smith's translation, along with a graduate of al-Azhar, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Asīr (1815-1890).

Van Dyck's appointment as a translator was actually instrumental in the development of modern Arab thought; it benefited from his various activities such as the writing of text-books, the editing and publishing of Ibn Tūfayl's and Avicenna's works, and last but not least, the compilation of a comprehensive list of all publications in Arabic during the nineteenth century up to his own time.

al-Bustānī's period with the mission provided an additional avenue along which to continue his exploration of Western culture. Later, and after his conversion to Protestantism, al-Bustānī did not relinquish

his nationalist aspirations. His Christianity hardly affected his literary accomplishments, since he never allowed it to conflict with his Lebanese nationalism, a position which he was not afraid to defend. Such a position is illustrated by his use of many Qur'anic terms and expressions, unexpected from non-Muslims,<sup>99</sup> and by his adoption of attitudes which disappointed the Missionaries:

I long ago cherished the hope that Butrus Bistani would enter the ministry. Before your visit I had begun to give him instruction in theology, and when immediately after that...he refused to be considered as a candidate, I still urged him to continue the study, hoping he might change his mind.<sup>100</sup>

al-Bustānī's career as a recognised author began in 1847 with the establishment of the first Arabic Cultural Society, "The Society of Arts and Sciences". This Society comprised fourteen members including al-Bustānī and Nāṣif al-Yāzījī, as well as a number of American missionaries, such as Dr. Henry de Forest, Dr. C. Van Dyck, and one Englishman, Colonel (Charles Henry) Churchill.<sup>101</sup> All participated in its administration. al-Bustānī acted as its General Secretary and recorded the minutes of the meetings. He soon became recognized as the leading spirit of the group. Apart from keeping the minutes, in the last year of the society's existence (1852), he benefited future scholars by having the minutes published. Now began the most fruitful period of his intellectual life. The major aim of this society, the creation of a body of modern Arabic literature, was stated in 1844 in the periodical *Z.D.M.G.* in a report about the formation and activities of this society written by Eli Smith.<sup>102</sup> The society was in existence for five years, during which time 53 meetings were held, and

a library on various topics was established. One of the most important functions of the Society was consultation with European orientalist societies, and it had an immediate and striking success in the Lebanon. Among its published works is al-Yāzījī's criticism of De Sacy's work on al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* (The Assemblies of Ḥariri) (1054-1121). al-Yaziji's criticism was first published in Arabic and then translated into French. Finally it was translated into Latin by the Orientalist A.F. Mehren under the title *Epistola Critica Nasifi al-Yazigi Berytensis ad De Sacyum*.<sup>103</sup>

Another important work by al-Yāzījī " *al-Maqāmah al-'Aqābiyyah*" was also published by the society, and later appeared in the periodical *ZDMG*. Judged in retrospect by the influence of its achievements, the Society appears to be the first of many great literary societies of the Arabic speaking world and the model for the "Oriental Society" which operated between 1850 and 1852 under the direction of a French Jesuit, Father de Prunieres (1820-1872), and later under his successors, Dr Ibrāhīm Najjār and Shaykh Ilyās Daḥdah.

al-Bustānī's vision did not stop with this initial step, however. In 1857 along with al-Yāzījī, he was influential in planning *al-Jam'īyyah al-'Ilmiyyah al-Sūriyyah* (The Syrian Scientific Society). Its composition was broad, and included Christians, Muslims, and Druzes. His outlook now became almost exclusively secular. Lebanon, at that time, was the battlefield of two major conflicts which left its inhabitants little time for the cultivation of the mind. Firstly there was the social conflict between the peasants and their feudal princes on the one hand, and the Maronites and the Druzes on the other; and secondly there was the ideological conflict between Ottomanism and Westernism. This circumstance was to determine the character of the

arguments that appear in al-Bustānī's subsequent writings. We may suppose that it was during this time that his attention was drawn more and more to political subjects, and the formation of the idea of a secular country. We may also suppose that during these years he, along with Naṣif and his son Ibrānīm al-Yazīji, carried his vision of nationalism to a point far beyond that to which any other Arab scholar of that period attained. In 1859 he edited Ṭannūs al-Shidyāq's *Akhhbār al-ā'yan fī Jabal Lubnān*, and in 1868 the society launched a monthly periodical under the name *Majmū'at 'ulūm*.

These societies prepared al-Bustani for a second major phase in his thinking. More and more he found his own way, his own philosophy, himself. During the events of 1860, he proved able to rise above hatreds and passions. More than any other man of his time he was a Lebanese nationalist in the widest sense. This outlook, which permeated his short-lived periodical *Nafīr Sūriyyah* (1860-61), the first unofficial political journal ever published in the country, is for many critics, the most satisfying of any of his writings on nationalism. It represents a small item in the list of al-Bustānī's writings, but it is not insignificant. In the pages of *Nafīr Sūriyyah* he stressed the freedom of the individual, and political equality, displaying optimistic faith in the potency of human intelligence and reason. Through this periodical, al-Bustānī established his reputation as both a nationalist and as a secularist scholar within the Arabic-speaking countries. What he offers his readers is not a series of dogmatic pronouncements on man, but a sincere and thoughtful examination of all the evidence he can bring to bear on the subject. The appearance of the journal, with its leading articles, did more than anything to consolidate al-Bustānī's secularism as a recognized school of thought. The objectives of the *Nafīr* were ambitious. al-Bustānī

began this attempt by introducing a distinction between "religious" and "sectarian". This fact is of considerable historical importance, for thus al-Bustānī first came to evince a lively concern with the problem of sectarianism. He made clear, as it had never been made clear before, the distinctive character of secularism. Such writers as al-Shumayyil, Anṭūn, and Ḥaddād owe much to his concept of secularism. It is essential, al-Bustānī pointed out, that

A barrier should be placed between the Leadership, that is to say, the Spiritual Authority, and the Administration, that is to say, the Civil Authority. This is because the Leadership is concerned, intrinsically and naturally, with stable internal matters that do not alter with the alteration of times or conditions. The Administration, on the other hand, is concerned with unstable external matters, subject to alteration and amendment according to place, time and conditions. They are mutually opposed and contradictory, and thus the reconciliation of the two in one person is difficult, or virtually impossible. Thus, it is inevitable that a mingling of these two Authorities, differentiated by nature and opposed in their concerns and their issues, should cause obvious disruption and evident damage to both secular and religious ordinances; so that we do not exaggerate when we say that it would render impossible the existence, life and growth of civilization.<sup>104</sup>

Apart from political studies and studies in local history, he also occupied himself in the translation of Robinson Crusoe.<sup>105</sup> His translation, begun a short time after the infamous events of 1860, deserves some mention. This work has important implications. His choice of this kind of literary writing at that point in time tends to



corroborate and enhance what we have already mentioned about the nationalistic character of his thinking. In other words, al-Bustānī was not one who sat in his ivory tower and meditated on things. His writings during all periods show signs of his attempts to find some common ground with contemporary political and intellectual movements. He declares in his introduction to his translation that his purpose is to encourage his students, in particular female students, to develop a love of literature in order to broaden their horizon. Nevertheless, without denying the importance of this aspect of his teaching, mentioned above, this was only one aspect of his goal. If we link this proposal with its socio-political background, we come undoubtedly to the general conclusion on the basis of the information before us,<sup>106</sup> that his translation reveals that his programme was designed to serve as a framework, a set of guide-lines within which the problems of the Lebanon and other parts of the Fertile Crescent could be studied. Under the prevailing conditions, al-Bustānī took the view that political salvation through foreign intervention was unrealistic and that one could only depend, like Defoe's eponymous hero, on one's own resources.

By any standard, the high point in the progress of his secularism was reached with the foundation of his school *al-Madrasah al-Waṭaniyyah*, which operated continuously between 1863 and 1875, for the purpose of grouping together the children of the country without religious segregation. *al-Madrasah al-Waṭaniyyah* conflicted with traditional teaching and fundamentally challenged the dominant sectarian schooling of the period. Thus it encouraged secular schooling on more objective terms than had been the case before with any other kind of teaching. This school played an essential role in supplying the very first groups of

students to the newly established Syrian Protestant College. The role played by *al-Madrasah al-Waṭaniyyah* has hitherto been largely ignored by previous writers, and when mentioned, it has not been given the importance that it deserves. Whenever it was mentioned, it came to the recording of visits of various Turkish notables and diplomats, the awarding of a medal to Bustānī and the donation of a sum of money to him by the Ottoman Sultan.

He was always supremely confident in his own ability and the rightness of everything he did. In 1870, he undertook the publication of his two periodicals: firstly, *al-Jinān* published for sixteen years between 1870 and 1886, a political, literary, and scientific journal. It began with a statement that has since become as famous as it was then prophetic: "Love of fatherland is part of faith". Many articles were written by well known Arab scholars of the period and by a number of teachers and students of his school. There were also a number of translations from Italian and French by his relative the scholar Sa'īd. The second periodical was *al-Jannah* in 1871; these two were followed by the third *al-Junayna*, which he co-edited with his cousin the famous scholar Sulaimān. *al-Junayna* was the first attempt made in the Arabic-speaking world to produce a daily newspaper, and was also the first to concern itself with financial and commercial affairs.

One may conclude that this provides some evidence in support of the assertion that Christian missionary activity established the emergence of a new class system based upon religious differences within Lebanese society:

Thus then the westerners have a large measure of civilization, and, taken as a whole, are at a higher level of civilization than are the easterners, and consequently than are inhabitants of these lands which have in past

times played their part as a seat of civilization and a centre of taste and brilliance. When everything unfamiliar becomes splendid and everything new becomes exciting, when the age becomes western and western customs and taste take on greater authority than those that the easterners possess, and inevitably dominate them, it is to be feared that most of the people of our land, who are among the most amenable of men to imitation and the most gifted for it, may be satisfied with imitating what western civilization they can, their customs, clothes and modes, under the illusion that this would be enough to attach them to the ranks of the civilized and set them on a higher level than their fellow countrymen. They have failed to realize that this only makes them strangers in the eyes of their compatriots and despised as imitators or as assumers of customs or wearers of clothes to which they are not entitled in the eyes of the foreigners. Although we believe that any acquisition of benefits from any direction or nation is something laudable and acceptable in the eyes of any intelligent person, that most of the benefits of civilization come to us from the West, and that many of the peoples of Europe merit complete respect, we cannot absolutely and blindly accept that everything that comes to us from there is beneficial in itself and consonant with the success of the easterners and the climate of their lands, one of the greatest influences on a man, particularly in this respect. In fact, we know that those who accept avidly everything that comes to them from the territories of the westerners, without close investigation, sound criticism and selection of only the greatest things that will bring them progress and instruction, equivalent to those of the westerners, only too often abase themselves, grasp the false dirham together with the sound dinar and patch worn-out clothes with new cloth. Such is the case with individuals. It is also clear that those who disparage everything simply because it is western, and approve of

everything simply because it is Arab, or vice versa, fall into a damaging extremism.<sup>107</sup>

One of the outstanding characteristics of his writings, whether on literary scholarship or on his other interests was his pride in his Phoenician and Arabic heritage. At that time, he regarded his missionary pursuits as essential to the modernisation of his country and as providing a means of contributing to something of lasting importance to its development. Even if one considers that his attitude in forming a native church was antagonistic rather than diplomatic towards his relationship with American missionaries, it may be said that this division was made by him solely with the intention of benefiting his own countrymen. However, it does suggest that behind all this was his prime objective of encouraging nationalism and the development of the control of domestic policy-making by Lebanese. It was the time at which Lebanon at large became aware of a challenge to its traditions and of growing unease about the future.

It may seem strange that one of the greatest scholars of nineteenth century Lebanon has had to wait so long for full recognition. The reasons for this are not far to seek: judgements on the works of al-Bustānī often stem from distorted sources which provide biased and sinister accounts and this has made it until very recently almost impossible to gain reliable information about him. This was due to the peculiar political condition of Lebanon, in which all successive governments and their ideologists deliberately ignored any expression of nationalism and similar feelings to be found in al-Bustānī's writing. It was with a certain self-centered trepidation that they perceived that the outcome of secular tendencies would be likely to lead to the questioning of the assumption of Christian Maronite superiority over

other communities within Lebanese society. In other words, a divided society was one that could be ruled by playing alternately on the fears of either of the communities, as the situation required. On the other hand, the Muslim Lebanese intellectuals, and with them the scholars of other Arab countries, such as the Palestinian al-Ṭībawī - but with different criteria and objectives in mind - under pressure of this official corruption of Lebanese policy and in reaction against it, found themselves in a defensive situation and were forced to concentrate only on commentaries on the works of Muslim scholars and ignore their Christian counterparts such as al-Bustānī. In order to see him as the first secularist we shall have to rely on history, for there is no other way of proving or disproving that he had not been completely traditionalist before the arrival of American Missionaries, and did not become completely Westernized immediately after that. We are not without hope that the emphasis here placed upon al-Bustānī's nationalism may help correct the one-sided interpretation which portrays al-Bustānī as a subordinate missionary, and to check the habit of treating this distinguished scholar as a mere propagandist. We shall select for this purpose two of Tibawi's articles, one of them written in English, entitled "The American Missionaries In Beirut and Butrus al-Bustānī"<sup>108</sup> and the other in Arabic *al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustānī*.<sup>109</sup> We shall also examine the work of I. F. Harik: "Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon, 1711-1845",<sup>110</sup> because, to our mind, these two historians typify the two opposing attitudes.

It is a good practice to compare one scholar with another or one movement with another. It is misleading to make a comparison between a scholar and a movement, even more so when these are differentiated by country and period. al-Tibawi would seem to have

erred in this way when attempting to compare the influence of al-Bustānī with that of an unspecified movement allegedly in existence in Aleppo, in the hope of deposing al-Bustānī from his position at the head of secularist philosophy. His tenuous evidence for this assertion is based only upon hearsay.

Harik, although a Christian, finds the ideas of his coreligionist al-Bustānī with regard to non-religious and non-sectarian Lebanese nationalism abhorrent. He clearly believes in the superiority of the Maronite Christians within Lebanese society. This he often expresses in his work, the above mentioned. Such is the depth of his prejudice against Lebanese nationalism that, although he covers many aspects of Lebanese history in the minutest detail, he never once makes any reference to al-Bustānī. Another example of his prejudice is to be found in his commentaries on the achievements of the rebellious Yusuf Karam. Harik discusses only Karam's activities with his coreligionists, while deliberately editing out any reference to Karam's nationalist views.

We have to begin by admitting that al-Bustānī, despite his originality as a thinker, perhaps accepted his role as mediator between the American missionaries and his fellow country-men in the hope of maintaining the existing state of affairs until the situation became stable. This explanation finds its justification in the fact that such American missionaries were protected by privilege.

Viewed from this angle, al-Bustānī's view is similar to Khayr al-Dīn's. Both scholars accepted the necessity for maintaining support for the Ottoman Empire as a means of resisting the negative aspects of Western influences and possible colonial expansion within the Arab world. Although neither were convinced by the validity of the Empire

as it stood, they saw no alternative. The primary emphasis of al-Bustānī, therefore, was as much philosophical as political. As the political situation became more strained, his own point of view became more distinct, and in the hope of remedying the situation, he encouraged the ruler to undertake a series of administrative reforms, such as appointing trained officials to replace the corrupt and incompetent bureaucrats who maintained their positions solely through special privilege.

This secular outlook can be seen particularly in al-Bustānī's appeal to the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent only, and not to the rest of the peoples of the Ottoman Empire :

O sons of the fatherland, among the things that we think to be essential in these days for the civilization of the sons of our fatherland, the inhabitants of Syria, are two that we have mentioned many times in our previous patriotic writings. One of them is the existence of harmony between their individuals and their classes, and in particular social harmony, the existence or non-existence of which depends more on the power, energy and will of those in charge of affairs than it does on the varied desires and aims of the inhabitants. As for the difficulty or perhaps impossibility of religious harmony, after what has happened, and with the death that we can see overcoming the religions of the fatherland, this cannot be doubted and should surprise no one.

The second thing is love of fatherland and preferring its interests to personal interests, whether individual or sectarian. As long as the sons of our fatherland do not feel that the fatherland is their fatherland and the country is their country, they cannot be expected to demonstrate love of the fatherland or concern for its general interests. Rather they will be always divided, with each of them seeking what he imagines to be most advantageous to himself or to his class. It is a

commonplace that every house or kingdom divided against itself inevitably ends up in ruins.<sup>111</sup>

With such views as his defence of the interest of the nation as a whole and not merely one of its religious communities, and with his pride as an individual belonging to the people of this area, al-Bustānī was naturally attracted to the works of older Arab scholars, whose writings he began to study.<sup>112</sup>

This kind of political literature represents his pioneering efforts and his contribution to the Arab intellectual awakening.

Following from what has just been said, when we try to improve a nation it is the education of women that is the first rung of the ladder and the door that must first and foremost be opened. We must begin this from their childhood. Those who leave women on one side and proceed to educate only boys and youths are like those who have one foot on the ground and the other in the clouds. Whenever they build a monk's cell, you find that their women demolish a tower, and whenever they raise them [their male children] a step, you find that their women lower them several steps.

The famous Bonaparte said that what you built in a hundred years a woman will destroy in one year. All of this has been proved by experience, and anyone who doubts it can see and consider for himself. Perhaps what I have said is enough for an introduction to a subject like this, which has not been broached by the pens of the inhabitants of the country who have preceded me. The nub of it is that it is necessary to educate women, seeing that she who rocks the cradle with her right hand is the one who moves the world with her arm.<sup>113</sup>

However, the most significant aspect of his writing is found in his many



observations on various Western values which had been adopted by many Lebanese people of that time. The upper class in particular, who had in their midst many Westernized dilettantes, was a target for his criticism, particularly those who copied all things Western. However, in condemning this, al-Bustānī did not mean that genuinely nationalist concepts must be expressed without any reference to the particular historical circumstances of different cultural contexts. His criticism demonstrated that the response to Western influence by Lebanese society had begun long before the arrival of the American Mission in 1826.

This important aspect of al-Bustānī's writings has been disregarded by many modern scholars. They have failed to note the full implications of al-Bustānī's views concerning the early impact of Western culture. In a striking passage al-Bustānī warned his countrymen to beware of assuming that all Europeans were like the lower class representatives who had brought their vices to Lebanon or like the highly cultivated upper class Europeans whom he had met in Beirut. Neither group, he held, was typical of European society.<sup>114</sup>

This point will become clearer as we examine his attitudes :

It is well known that the number and power of the presses have greatly increased in this generation, but many of them have been sectarian and devoted to printing religious books. Some of them have failed to give the public proof of their existence. In this very town there are five or six presses from which issued varied books and paper, and there is no doubt that if these presses were to devote themselves properly and solicitously to printing what would certainly benefit the public in general, in terms of literature and civilization, they would, in a short time, enrich the sons of the Arabs with books and libraries.<sup>115</sup>

This brief statement is the fundamental outline of al-Bustānī's disappointed attitude towards the West. He was keenly conscious of the free hand and power that the foreigners were enjoying in Lebanon and was particularly resentful of the fact that the Lebanese, not only the officials, but also ordinary citizens, had come excessively to admire foreigners and uncritically to adopt their manners. The essential characteristics of this period are summarized in al-Bustānī's own words:

Therefore we have had no alternative but to sit down and lament for this unfortunate country, which has become the victim of opposing aims and individual interests, and in which the number of lovers of the fatherland has decreased.<sup>116</sup>

From there he went on to discuss several problems to which al-Bustānī devoted special attention such as the emancipation of women. His contributions to the education of women were particularly influential. His major work on this topic *Ta 'līm al-nisā'*, which dealt in some depth with the condition of Arab women, appeared in 1849.<sup>117</sup>

It is, in general, of the nature of pagan or barbarian nations, in every age and place, to depreciate the status of women and to despise them utterly for them.

It is a law and principle of their religions that a woman must submit to the bondage of servitude for the whole of her life: under the domination of her parents before marriage, and under the authority of her husband after it; after the death of her husband, the poor woman is obliged to show obedience to the fruit of her womb themselves.

No one is concerned to teach her anything useful, whether she comes from a rich and important family or a humble one. They claim that knowledge will cause her to become a widow or to suffer some other calamity, to the extent that, among the many millions in India, you will not find twenty of this sex that are familiar with the various branches of knowledge to be found in this kingdom. In the eyes of Indians, their status is that of serving maids or slave girls used for arduous work. The difference between them and chattels and cattle in the possession of their menfolk is small and hardly noticeable. A woman may win only a very small part of her husband's heart; this is not large enough for the love that ought to exist in the heart a husband for his wife, who has the right to occupy it completely. It is clear what confusion in the organization within the life of the family and the upbringing of house and families this will cause ... Even if the women in this country enjoy a pleasanter condition and a higher status than those in pagan countries, they still have not attained the desirable level of knowledge and culture that the success of the country and the progress of the inhabitants. It is as though they occupied a middle position between the barbarians of the world and the civilized nations. They are civilized in relation to the women of India, but in comparison with the women of Europe they still have some way to go.<sup>118</sup>

al-Bustānī's patriotism was strong enough in any case to modify his concepts of things desired. It will be worthwhile to look into some of the details:

For the shaping of them [women] in moulds of education and civilization and the colouring of them with the laws and that social organization demands will crown this world of ours with crowns of good fortune and success, will adorn its neck with the necklaces of

ease and safety and will encompass it with torques of happiness. Leaving them to dwell in the darkness of ignorance and abandoning them to the mercy of nature and the care of instinct will lessen the standing of mankind and bequeath it shame and degradation. In addition, it will reduce woman herself to the level of the dumb, unintelligent beasts. It is surprising that we should see many of sons of this age, even in civilized places, neglect this sex, unwilling to elevate it from its savage condition to a condition befitting those who might share with them the intellectual faculties and assist them in improving the conditions of the public and the country.<sup>119</sup>

The primary aim of al-Bustānī's politics in its relation to his philosophy as a whole is that there should be equal toleration for all religious beliefs and equal political opportunities for all subjects of the Ottoman Empire. He believed that this was necessary, for otherwise the nation would not only be a weak nation but also a nation which would lapse into moral and social degradation. This is to say that the nationalist tendency continuously manifests itself in al-Bustānī's activity. He finds himself, under its pressure, resolving the problem of education, by moving from a religious system of education to a secular system. Accordingly, for him, breaking off his engagement with the American mission was a decisive step in implementing his nationalist views, a position from which he never afterwards departed. According to Spencer Lavan - a specialist in the study of al-Bustānī:

Al-Bustani's purpose was to break the domination of American missionaries on Lebanese Protestantism, which he saw as a form of colonialism in disguise.<sup>120</sup>

It is significant that even in the early phase of his thought, the move

towards this purpose was initiated when the converted natives held their meeting at 'Abayyah in 1847 under the chairmanship of al-Bustānī himself. The significant result of this meeting was the presentation of a petition to the missionaries' headquarters in America suggesting that the name of their proposed church should be "The Evangelical Church of Beirut". But the Americans, although recognizing them, refused their request for financial support:

If our brother Butrus has ever had the thought of getting an independent support from this country, he should relinquish it altogether. None [in America] who regard the true welfare of religion in Syria will countenance any cause that tends to divide the strength and impair the peace of the mission and its operations.<sup>121</sup>

Still earlier, at the age of twenty-six, we encounter an attitude unparalleled in any contemporary scholar. In his letter to Eli Smith, al-Bustānī declares that "the Christians were this time the aggressors, since the Drūzes had from the beginning no design to fight". It is important to remember this in discussing the implications and consequences of al-Bustānī's political theory.

With al-Bustānī, we are here faced with another example of an ambiguous relationship between an Arab Christian scholar and the West. As we have seen in the case of al-Shidyāq, who left France and England after his disappointment at Cambridge to settle in Constantinople, al-Bustānī distanced himself from the influence of the American Presbyterian missionaries in order to establish a distinctively Lebanese Protestant church.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the individual careers of al-

Bustānī and al-Shidyāq should follow a parallel course, since both scholars were Lebanese, receiving their schooling at the same college 'Ayn Waraqaḥ and were in close contact with Western scholarship, even although al-Bustānī's knowledge was not gained at first hand like that of al-Shidyāq. Through their own experience, they came to realize the differences between their own and Western cultures. Both wanted to be themselves and not lose their identity. But they are parts of a serious attempt to deal with a crucial problem, the problem of providing a reasoned justification for nationalist appeal.

al-Bustānī's writings are a part of the nineteenth-century's effort to find a foundation for nationalizing the culture of his country, through something more than the simple appeal to a religious commitment.<sup>122</sup> He did not rely upon vague poetical-images to proclaim the profound unity of all his compatriots, but he elaborated and fully confirmed it by strictly rational procedures. By so doing, he earned himself the title *al-Mu<sup>ṣ</sup>allim*, a title reserved only for great figures such as Jesus and Aristotle. The first sign of this nationalist movement may be seen in his asserting independence of American missionary activities and then in his establishing a national Lebanese Protestant church. In his large dictionary, *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ* published in 1870, "Which is for the Arabic language what Webster's or Worcester's dictionary is for the English"<sup>123</sup> he shows himself conversant enough with the importance of how much the introduction of fresh Arabic expressions adds to the strength of the process of cultural reform.

The high point of his fame and activity however, properly dates from his compilation of an encyclopedia of modern Arab culture which proved to be one of the most significant of his achievements. It



Notes to Chapter Four

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30. See: Rustum, Asad Jibrail "Syria under Mehemet Ali." The American Journal of Semitic Languages, vol.41, October, 1924, pp. 34-57.
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34. Ibid., pp. 185-186.
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67. See for example, Arberry, A.J. "Fresh Light on Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq." Islamic Culture, 26, No.1,(1952), p. 156.
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## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Theologian's Last Defence and the Secularist's Illusion.

**Muhammad 'Abduh:** (1849-1905)<sup>1</sup> The reformer Muhammad 'Abduh was born in 1849 at the Egyptian village of Maḥallat Naṣr near Tanta in the Nile Delta. Before discussing his works and his place in modern Arab thought, it is necessary to shed some light on the period in which he lived by considering aspects of the social and political structure of the Egypt of his day.

A great deal is known about 'Abduh from the writings of his contemporary, but partisan, Arabic biographer Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), the editor of 'Abduh's Qur'ān-Commentary and of the reformist journal *al-Manār*. In addition to the salient facts, these writings give us invaluable insights into 'Abduh's character.

The most significant ruler of Egypt during the rise to prominence of Muhammad 'Abduh was the Khedive Ismā'īl (1863-79), who actively encouraged and fostered the development of progressive ideas and social innovations. There can be no doubt that the radical attitude of the Khedive was partly due to the fact that he was both the second son of Ibrāhīm Pāshā and grandson of Muḥammad 'Alī, and that he lived in times when ideas from the West were to some extent becoming accepted.<sup>2</sup> Such was the liberal atmosphere during the rule of Isma'īl that by the mid-nineteenth century there was progress achieved<sup>3</sup> in the area of education, which was no longer to be organized for totally military purposes: "Between 1865 and 1875, 63 per cent of the

graduates of civilian schools were absorbed in the army.<sup>4</sup> As a consequence, a Ministry of Education was established along with two schools for girls in 1873 for the first time in Egypt.

It has often been claimed that after "a period of fifteen years' stagnation" under 'Abbās Ḥilmī (1848-54) and Muḥammad Sa'īd (1854-63),<sup>5</sup> Ismā'īl resumed the sending of educational missions abroad."

This negative view concerning Muḥammad Sa'īd's reign has gone unquestioned by a number of writers. It is neither fair nor adequate to dismiss his rule as characterised by stagnation even if he did not send any missions at all. The extent of stagnation, or lack of it, must be measured against his various achievements in the field of political, cultural, social and agrarian reform.

In 1856, Sa'īd Pasha created a kind of consultative council. This council, though without any real political influence, constituted the blueprint for a much more sophisticated process of power-sharing that was introduced at a later stage. In this regard, two outstanding achievements must be mentioned to Sa'īd Pāshā's credit. He made a bold attempt to abolish the trade in negro slaves and, for the first time, made it possible for the fellahin to attain the rank of officer in the army.<sup>6</sup>

To return to our original discussion about achievements, Ismā'īl's reign which witnessed, among other things, the foundation of a national library, a museum and the encouragement of journalism.<sup>7</sup> In his search for something new for modernizing Egypt, Ismā'īl achieved great improvements in the area of transport and communications, especially in the railway system, which had been established in 1851: 910 miles of track were laid, 500 bridges built and 500 miles of telegraph lines connected. The postal service was reorganised as a public concern;



this helped to secure Egypt's admission to the Universal Postal Union in 1874.<sup>8</sup> In industry, there was a radical change when Western manufacturing methods began to be introduced. Nevertheless, with regard to the military aspects of his reform, the opinions of historians are disparate.

The reign of Ismā'īl also saw in 1866 the first attempt in Egypt to establish a constitutional monarchy, with the formation of *Majlis Shūrā al-Nuwwāb* (Chamber of Deputies), modelled on the French Chamber of Deputies. It consisted of seventy-five members, chosen by indirect election; of these only five represented the great cities of Cairo and Alexandria while the remainder were village chiefs elected for a term of three years.

Ismā'il's personality was an important factor in this process. He tended to be forgiving where his predecessors were cruel. Such an attitude was greatly aided by the fact that he was sent to France as part of a particular mission which was called the *Ba'ṭhat al-anjāl* (The Mission of the Sons), which included, in addition to the sons of high officials, two of Muḥammad 'Alī's own sons, Ḥusain Bey and Ḥalim Bey, and two of his grandsons, Aḥmad Bey and Ismā'īl himself. Since these were the relatives of the Viceroy, this mission was placed under "the supreme directorship of the French Minister of War and all the teachers were Frenchmen. In addition, they were allowed to visit "Cherbourg, Compiègne and Fontainebleau and other towns...public buildings and institutions."<sup>9</sup> Ismā'īl is also remembered as having made the often quoted prophetic statement that "Egypt is part of Europe".<sup>10</sup> In this atmosphere of relative intellectual freedom, Egypt was able to attract the main Arab thinkers of the time, and play host to a remarkable group of writers in search of new opportunities; it soon became, because of its size, among other reasons, as important an

intellectual centre as Lebanon within the Arabic-speaking world. There was a less practical side to Ismāʿīl's character. For Safran, "While his great predecessor [Muhammad 'Alī] had built only arsenals and factories, Isma'il built operas, palaces."<sup>11</sup> In the first instance, with the assistance of the British Ambassador in Constantinople, he was able to obtain a *Ferman* which gave him the title of Khedive,<sup>12</sup> instead of Pāshā. In 1866 he purchased from the Sultan the right of succession for his eldest son (and similarly for the latter's heirs) to the Egyptian throne, instead of his brother, who as the eldest male of the line should have succeeded according to the Ottoman law applied to Egypt by the Treaty of London. These actions served to hide the actual situation. The modernisation of Egypt had its price.<sup>13</sup> It is estimated that this innovation cost him an increase in the annual tribute from 400,000 to 750,000 Turkish pounds.<sup>14</sup> This money was raised from bankers in France and Britain. The work of digging the canal, which had begun on April 25th. 1859, "kept 20,000 Egyptians busy continuously under threat of the *courbash* (The Whip)."<sup>15</sup>

Ismāʿīl started his reign with an economic advance, as a result of the American Civil War which lasted from 1861 to 1865 and which, because of the damage it inflicted on the American cotton trade, brought Egypt a great boom.<sup>16</sup> The value of Egyptian exports in cotton rose from £4 millions to £14 millions per year.

As soon as the civil war ended, the American economy steadily recovered and the boom in Egypt collapsed.<sup>17</sup> This new condition did not destroy the Egyptian community, but it made it part of a widespread European system. In this regard, Adams comments that "The Khedive Ismāʿīl had been introducing European ideas into the country more rapidly than they could be assimilated."<sup>18</sup> However, this

period also saw the awakening of new interest in intellectual matters and the rise of new political forces; it was to be expected that Egyptian nationalism would find expression in intellectual revival.

Thus, Ismā'īl's reign was to end dramatically with serious economic decline, culminating in the international control of Egypt's finances, on one hand, and on the other, the development of an international urban culture as a result of his "open door policy" towards the West.

In June 1879 "The Khedive received the following: The French and English Governments are agreed to advise Your Highness officially to abdicate and to leave Egypt."<sup>19</sup> As a result of the actual deposition of Khedive Isma'il by the Ottoman sultan, under the pressure of the European powers and the appointment of Ismā'īl's son, Tawfīq, as Khedive in 1879, Egypt came under British rule in 1882, and Arab intellectuals, not willing to live and work under the repression of the Ottoman authorities, flocked to Egypt to pursue their scholarly activities in a tolerant climate. Most of these migrant intellectuals were Western-educated Lebanese and with intellectual skills, so that they contributed substantially to their new homeland, in particular to developments in journalism,<sup>20</sup> the theatre and the Fine Arts. All this served to acquaint Egyptians with liberal and scientific French and British currents of thought and consequently to accelerate the process of their awakening.

Egypt also attracted Orientalists such as Wilfred Blunt (1840-1922)<sup>21</sup> who discussed his ideas with his circle of Arab friends, and proposed the radical plan of a revived Arab caliphate to replace Turkish rule.<sup>22</sup> According to Sylvia Halm, this scheme was to inspire al-Kawakibi to form his political vision, as will be shown in a later chapter.

There were periods in the life of 'Abduh where he was under the

tutorship of various people. As a boy, (in 1862) he detested the strict regime under which he received from his education the shaykh of the Aḥmadī Mosque in the provincial city of Ṭanṭā. Both the form of teaching and its approach was based on a sterile medieval tradition which he deemed unattractive, tedious, and laborious:

Because of the harmful character of method of instruction; for the teachers were accustomed to use technical terms of grammar or jurisprudence which we did not understand, nor did they take any pains to explain their meaning to those who did not know it.<sup>23</sup>

Because of his father's insistence that he should continue his education at the Aḥmadī Mosque, 'Abduh ran away from home and settled under the protective wing of his granduncle Shaykh Darwish Khidr. According to his own account, it was Shaykh Khidr who first opened his eyes to the foolishness of his position, and in 'Abduh's words:

You saw me soaring in spirit in a different world from that which I had known. The way which had seemed to me straitened had widened out before me. The life of this world which had appeared great to me, had become small, and the acquirement of knowledge and the yearning of the soul towards God which had been small in my eyes had become great; and all my anxieties had been dispersed and there remained but one anxiety, namely, that I should become perfect in knowledge, perfect in discipline of the soul.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike other Sufis of the time, Shaykh Khidr did not give himself completely up to a life of asceticism. 'Abduh, was not slow to learn

from his uncle's example, which enabled him to steer through many difficulties. After spending only two weeks under the supervision of his uncle, who had created a new motivation in him and changed his attitude towards learning, 'Abduh returned to his father, resuming his studies under the shaykhs of the village. In 1866 he left Ṭanṭā for Cairo, where he completed the course of study at the Azhar.

For four years he followed the studies prescribed by the university and attended lectures with more or less regularity. He had not the patience to continue to sit under teachers whom he did not understand or from whose lectures he was not receiving benefit; so he absented himself from those lectures or sat reading from some book which he had brought with him. Meantime, he was searching eagerly through the books of the Azhar for information on subjects which were not being taught.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout his teens, 'Abduh showed an inclination towards Sufism, but it seems that he was turned away by his uncle, with whom he had some infrequent contacts, from the traditional asceticism into a new Islamic outlook.

I had found no leader to guide me in that towards which my soul was inclined, except that shaikh who had in a few days delivered me from the prison of ignorance into the open spaces of knowledge, and from the bonds of blind acceptance of authoritative belief (*taklid*) into the liberty of the mystic union with God.<sup>26</sup>

The question arises as to what extent this description of 'Abduh's early life is true. When one takes into account that he married at the age of sixteen, the view that he adopted sufism in early youth must be brought into question. However, it is true to say that a general

disposition towards sufism was part of life in Egypt at that time. In any case, he underwent some changes in his views, particularly when he met Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839-97),<sup>27</sup> who was described as *Hakīm al-Sharq* (The Sage of the East). ‘Abduh was fascinated by al-Afghānī; he revolutionised the young man's outlook on life, and completed his separation from asceticism.

The tradition of the itinerant scholar survived from medieval times until the early twentieth century. We find this tradition still in existence when ‘Abduh joined al-Afghānī's scholarly circle. Likewise, at a later date, Rashīd Riḍā left Tripoli (Lebanon) for Cairo as a disciple of ‘Abduh, who himself became *Ustādh* and *Imām*.

al-Afghānī's writings are, for the most part, occasional pieces rather than systematic treatises. Of the several books written by him, the most important to Arabs was *al-Radd ‘alā al-dahriyyīn* (Refutation of the Materialists).<sup>28</sup> He also wrote a few articles<sup>29</sup> defending freedom and attacking despotism. However, Jamāl al-Dīn was better known for his ability as a public speaker; he travelled all his life, lecturing extensively, and living in many countries: Egypt, the Sudan, Persia, Turkey, France, Russia, America, India, and England. But his influence was mostly felt in Egypt, where he twice resided: for forty days in 1869 en route from Bombay to Istanbul, and then on his return in 1871 for a period of eight years. It was said that he had the ability to silence his adversaries and critics not only by the eloquence of his argument but also by an extraordinary force of character. In ‘Abduh's words:

I have been endowed by you with a wisdom which enables me to change inclinations, impart rationality to reason, overcome great obstacles, and control the

innermost thoughts of men. I have been given by you a will so powerful as to move the immovable, deal blows to the greatest of obstacles, and remain firm in the right (haqq) until truth (haqq) is satisfied.<sup>30</sup>

Further testimony comes from another contemporary French writer, Ernest Renan who had engaged in debate with him. He paid tribute to Afghānī's talent in the following manner:

The freedom of his thought, his noble and loyal character made me believe during our conversation that I had before me, brought to life again, one of my old acquaintances, Avicenna, Averroes, another of these great infidels who represented during five centuries the tradition of the human spirit.<sup>31</sup>

Not only is it for these skills that he is remembered, but also for the impact of his teaching, which inspired a large number of thinkers, Christians and Jews, as well as Muslims, many of whom, in later years, became famous scholars of independent position such as the Egyptian Jewish writer Ya'qūb Sannū' <sup>32</sup> (1839-) and the Syrian Christian Adīb Ishāq (1856-85).<sup>33</sup> It is interesting and relevant to note that al-Afghani's influence in Egypt indirectly inspired the formation of the first national party *al-Hizb al-waṭani* by Muṣṭafā Kāmil (1874-1908.)<sup>34</sup>

ʿAbduh soon began to develop as a thinker of some importance in his own right, and gradually, due to the influence of al-Afghānī, drew away from the constraint of the strict religious approach to pragmatic reasoning.<sup>35</sup> Under the tutorship of al-Afghānī, he pursued a serious study of philosophy, largely from unedited manuscripts. He also immersed himself in other subjects, including mathematics and

politics. The teaching of Islamic philosophy at this time had lost its true purpose and had degenerated into a negation of its original pure form. The only subject-matter used in the teaching of logic and the Islamic rationalist theology known as *‘Ilm al-kalām* was taken from medieval commentaries.

It may be said that by virtue of al-Afghānī's explanations and commentaries, ‘Abduh and a number of Arab scholars were able to come to terms with the problems of philosophy. But it would not be right to avoid raising the question as to whether al-Afghānī's teachings were really revolutionary from a secular point of view. From a number of sources, we are informed that he depended for his commentaries, as one would expect from such a prominent Shi‘i scholar, on Ibn Sina's *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, and on the need to open the door of *Ijtihād*.

We may quote Rowlatt's summary of al-Afghānī's teaching:

This renaissance, he felt, could not be carried through without political revolution, and political revolution, given the circumstances of the day, might not succeed without political assassination. The flow of thoughts and events might include the flow of blood.<sup>36</sup>

Whether or not al-Afghānī's political belief included such an idea of assassination, it seems a salient element in his political activity which deserves further consideration. His revolutionary attitude can be considered more appropriately in the context of resistance to authority; this has always been represented in Shi‘i consciousness vis-a vis Sunni domination, which is viewed as an illegal usurpation of the Imam's authority. An example supporting this view can be found in the fact that al-Afghānī himself was implicated in the murder of Naṣir al-Din Shah, by providing the source material which



motivated the assassin, one of al-Afghānī's disciples.<sup>37</sup>

However, it is fair to mention that Shaykh Ḥasan al-Ṭawīl also lectured on logic and philosophy at the al-Azhar slightly before al-Afghānī's arrival, but his lectures do not seem to have been as popular as those of al-Afghānī, owing to his less illustrious style of lecturing.<sup>38</sup> al-Afghānī drew his disciples' attention to the need for the study of classic Arab philosophy by consulting original texts rather than depending on sterile commentaries, the method prevalent in the teaching of al-Azhar.

Thus, still another world was opened before the gaze of Muhammad 'Abduh, that of Western scientific thought and achievement. This was to be scarcely a less decisive influence in his life than was the independent attitude of thought towards the ancient authorities which Jamal exemplified in his teaching.<sup>39</sup>

The impact of al-Afghānī upon the young man's mind can be shown in the latter's five articles published in al-Ahrām. Depending on these articles, we may claim that 'Abduh was enduring the stirring of a new intellectual vision. This stirring is clearly presented in his fourth article entitled "Speculative Theology and the Demand for the Contemporary Sciences" in which he criticises the *ʿUlamā'* who were busying themselves with what

was perhaps more suitable for a time long past whose records are closed...We must study the affairs of neighbouring religions and states to learn the reason for their advancement. And when we have learned it, we

must hasten towards it, that we may overtake what is past and prepare for what is coming.<sup>40</sup>

It may be said that this period counted greatly in 'Abduh's intellectual development, and that during it he began his career as an author, writing his first work in 1874 entitled *Risālat al-wāridāt* (Treatise on Mystical Inspiration). This work, which is the major source for the knowledge of 'Abduh's ideas in this period, was considered by many authorities, such as Horten and Goldziher, as the starting point of a new philosophical trend, which 'Abduh, in fact, did not pursue further.<sup>41</sup> *Risālat al-wāridāt* shows marked traces of pantheism; this reflects the strength the impact of al-Afghānī on him. Moreover, a number of historians<sup>42</sup> attribute to 'Abduh another book entitled *Risālah fī waḥdat al-wujūd* (Treatise on the Unity of Existence). If this is true, it would have followed, as the title suggests, the path of *Risālat al-wāridāt*. However, at a later date, while he was engaging in polemic with Hanatoux, he condemns such philosophical elements as being an essential reason for the backwardness of Muslims and an alien body of teaching which can be traced back to Persia and India.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the impact of al-Afghānī's untraditional views on 'Abduh's thinking had gone beyond the theoretical level to extend to a practical one. A clear demonstration of this is his joining *Kawkab al-sharq*, the Masonic Lodge of the Eastern Star, which was affiliated to the Order in England. About al-Afghānī's connection with this Society, Safwat, in tracing the role of Freemasonry in "Freemasonry in the Arab World", wrote:

His joining [al-Afghani] occasioned considerable surprise and raised many speculations...and he rose rapidly in its

ranks, being elected chairman only three years later.<sup>44</sup>

As result of this confusion which surrounded al-Afghānī's life, it is not surprising to find a diatribe against him, *Tahrīr al-Umam min kalb al-‘Ajam* (The Liberation of Nations from the Persian Dog)<sup>45</sup> from the hand of an Azharī shaykh.

Between 1874 and 1882 ‘Abduh's ideas developed rapidly. To help expand the process of educational reform, he personally introduced new texts in theology, which were based on Mu'tazilite teaching, and new methods of study, which were to incur the wrath of ‘Ulaysh, an adherent of the Mālikī *madhhab* and the most conservative among the *shaykhs* of al-Azhar, to the extent that he physically assaulted ‘Abduh. The reaction against his approach did not end here but extended to the prejudiced attitude of the board of examiners during his oral examination for obtaining the newly founded diploma *al-‘Ālimiyyah*.

Where an opportunity seemed to offer itself, ‘Abduh regularly undertook piecemeal social reform. In the course of the next few years, after obtaining the diploma<sup>46</sup> in 1877, he embarked on a new career, lecturing on theology, logic and ethics at al-Azhar.<sup>47</sup> In 1878, he was appointed teacher of history at the *Dār al-‘ulūm* (The House of Sciences), the first higher training college in Egypt outside al-Azhar, established by ‘Alī Pāshā Mubārak (1823-93),<sup>48</sup> (author of *al-Khiṭaṭ al-tawfiqiyyah al-jadīdah*),<sup>49</sup> to introduce traditional al-Azhar-type teachers to the new methods and fields of study in order to become judges or teachers in government schools. Here his course was based on Ibn Khaldūn's Prolegomena and through it ‘Abduh managed further to diffuse the influence of his ideas along with his lectures.

Accordingly, the claims that all Arab reformers in the nineteenth century began their new departure with Ibn Khaldūn's social and political concepts, seems true, not just in the case of reformers such as al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn, as we have shown above, but also with ʿAbduh. About this affinity between ʿAbduh and Ibn Khaldūn, Adams comments:

Not only was the teaching of this work a new departure in Egypt, but the method of teaching it was also unheard of hitherto. The young professor took the ideas of the great historian on the causes of the rise and fall of nations, the principles of civilization and the organization of human society, and made them a point of departure for adding ideas of his own on political and social affairs, drawn from modern works, and applied the whole in a practical manner to the case of his own country.<sup>50</sup>

The lectures which were delivered in *Dār al-ʿulūm* and in his house included Miskawayh's work on ethics and the Arabic translation of Guizot's History of Civilization in Europe.<sup>51</sup>

Early in the reign of the Khedive Tawfīq, ʿAbduh turned to journalism and was appointed as one of editors of state-controlled publications, including the official journal *al-Waqaʿiʿ al-Misriyyah*. It seemed that ʿAbduh had, at last, found his true field of interest.

So insistent was the editor upon higher literary standards in official reports that those responsible for writing them were obliged, many of them, to attend night schools which were opened for the purpose of training writers and journalists, in which Muḥammad ʿAbduh himself volunteered to give instruction.<sup>52</sup>

Under his editorship, which began in 1880, this journal developed and became a pulpit for liberal views. He showed, over a period of eighteen months, in thirty-six articles, a departure from his earlier *sufi* tendencies towards a new and rationalistic outlook. In a move which reminds us of what had been established earlier in Lebanon by al-Bustani, his efforts led to the establishing of a Superior Council to the Department of Education.<sup>53</sup>

By this time, he had developed a humanist attitude,<sup>54</sup> evident in his treatment of religion as complementary or even subordinate in the overall structure of his rational and pragmatic thinking.<sup>55</sup>

It was his power of reasoning, which led him to the same conclusion reached a generation earlier by al-Bustānī and Khayr al-Dīn regarding the superficiality of the understanding of European institutions. He reached this from a moral viewpoint, not from the economic or political one adopted by these two scholars. About this phenomenon, he wrote:

It is not simply a matter of acquiring a smattering of European sciences or of imitating Europeans in their manner of life, for, in the majority of instances where such views of education have been held, the result has been the imitation of Europeans in their customs, buildings, dress, furniture, and expensive luxuries; and this has led to the creation of a spirit which ignores the straight path of true glory and personal honour. But the uplift of the nation can only be accomplished by following the path for uplift of individuals. Customs must be changed gradually, beginning with the simplest changes. The reform of the character, ideas and actions of the people is the most important duty of the nation. Without this no reform is possible. But this is a long process which requires time, the first step of which is

the improvement of education.<sup>56</sup>

‘Abduh is considered by several Arab historians of nationalistic persuasion as having been instrumental in contributing through his writing to the ‘Urābī Rebellion (1881-1882). In order properly to understand his role in this rebellion, it is necessary to consider the events of the time. In the Egyptian army the native Arab was quite openly discriminated against with regard to the opportunity of gaining any promoted post. These were reserved for Turko-Circassian officers.<sup>57</sup> This bias culminated in a rebellion which was led by an army officer Aḥmad ‘Urābī, together with two other officers, ‘Ali Fahmī and ‘Abd al-‘Āl Ḥilmī, under the slogan "Egypt for the Egyptians"<sup>58</sup>

One example of such a bias has been pointed out by most of the modern Arab historians, along with Blunt, from whom we may derive the most credible information, to the effect that:

Sa‘īd Pasha, the then Viceroy, had a scheme for training the sons of village sheykhs as officers... Thus, at the age of fourteen he [‘Urābī] was taken for a soldier...he was pushed on through the lower ranks of the army, and at the early age of seventeen became lieutenant, captain at eighteen, major at nineteen, and Caimakam, lieutenant-colonel, at twenty. This rapid and unexampled advancement in the case of a fellah was due in part to the protection of the French general under whom he was serving, Sulīman Pasha el Franzawī, but still more to the fevour shown by the Viceroy...It was during this close intercourse with the Viceroy that he acquired his first political ideas, which were those of equality as between class and class, and of the respect due to the fellah as the preponderating element in Egyptian nationality. It is this particular advocacy of fellah rights which

distinguished Arabi from the other reformers of his day.<sup>59</sup>

‘Urābī eventually became the Khedive Sa‘īd's A.D.C. However, after the latter's death, he remained in the same rank for seventeen years, without promotion<sup>60</sup> and was given only subordinate duties to perform in the transport service and semi-civilian posts, a fact that inevitably produced a feeling of inferiority in the minds of the native officers. About this case, however, an important point may be raised. It is possible that prevailing circumstances determined the moment at which the ‘Urābī Rebellion broke out, but they were certainly not the only cause.<sup>61</sup> In other words, this Rebellion was only partially related to maladministration by Khedive Tawfīq who, at one time:

had come under Jemal-ed-din's potent influence, and through him was in close communication with the reformers, and had given them repeated pledges that if ever came to the Khedivial throne he would govern on strictly constitutional lines...The new Khedive, however...was not long in changing his opinion, and a month had hardly elapsed before he had forgotten his promises and betrayed his friends.<sup>62</sup>

While his maladministration was a fact: "he consented first to his Minister Sharīf's suggestion that he should issue a decree granting a Constitution and then at the instance of the Councils refused to sign it",<sup>63</sup> it is equally true that this Uprising can be traced back through centuries to the oppressive Mamlūk period prior to the equally oppressive rule of the Ottoman Turks. For the Egyptian people, in Ismā‘īl's words:

Must lean on something and follow some one...and it is not surprising in the circumstances that the Egyptians clung to him [‘Urābī].”<sup>64</sup>

For a little while things looked promising. In his uprising, ‘Urābī was partly successful, in that he gained power on a temporary basis and ostensibly achieved some of his aims by forcing the Khedive Tawfiq into making certain changes. In a few months, the situation became strained. In a diplomatic move to preserve his own authority, the Khedive Tawfiq catered for ‘Urābī’s need for power firstly by his promotion to the rank of colonel then to Under-Secretary of War and finally by persuading him to accept the post of Minister of War. This office ‘Urābī held on two occasions,<sup>65</sup> being reappointed on a change of cabinet.

When the Rebellion had abated and control was re-established, by British intervention, in 1882, the Khedive had ‘Urābī and his associates arrested and tried for “subversion.” ‘Abduh was also, at this time, arrested and charged with aiding and abetting the Revolt - not a new charge in the history of political thought - by writing certain articles which had appeared in the journals *al-Ahrām* and *al-Waqa’i‘ al-Misriyyah*.<sup>66</sup> This charge was not based on any accurate interpretation of his writings and activity, a fact emphasised by most of his biographers:

If, during the latter stages of the ‘Arabi movement, he was actively identified with the revolutionists, it was because, as has been said, he was drawn by force of circumstances into acceptance of methods which he did not approve.<sup>67</sup>



'Abduh always clearly stated that he abhorred any form of violent revolutionary change:

This divergence of view is evident in the account of a discussion which Muhammad 'Abduh had with 'Arabi Pasha and others of the military party in the house of Talbah Pasha. 'Arabi and his followers were of one mind that constitutional government was, without question, the best form of government for a country, and that the time for a change to that kind of government had come in Egypt. 'Abduh opposed this view. He maintained that a beginning must be made in educating the people so that men would be raised up who could perform the duties of representative government with intelligence and firmness... It would not be the part of wisdom to give the people what they are not prepared for.<sup>68</sup>

This, moreover, was not the only charge brought against him. He was also accused of having dared to issue a *fatwā* in which he demonstrated the illegality of Khedive Tawfīq's reign, and to sign a petition "which was approved by Mahmud Sami Pasha and 'Arabi Pasha, and sent by Mr. Blunt"<sup>69</sup> to William Ewart Gladstone in 1881, and which was published in *The Times*, about discrimination against the promotion of native Egyptians in the Egyptian army.<sup>70</sup> In addition to this, he was accused of having contacts with the radical English writer and poet Wilfrid Blunt, who "had never been ashamed to call the 'rebel' 'Arabi his friend", and who was the supporter of many nationalist causes, in order to agitate for the overthrow of the administration. With him I discussed [Blunt wrote]

with the help of Mohammed Khalil, who knew a little French and helped on my insufficient Arabic, most of those questions I had already debated with his disciple, and

between them I obtained before leaving Cairo a knowledge really large of the opinions of their liberal school of Moslem thought, their fears for the present, and their hopes for the future. These I afterwards embodied in a book published at the end of the year under the title of "The Future of Islam". Sheykh Mohammed Abdu was strong on the point that what was needed for the Mohammedan body politic was not merely reforms but a true religious reformation. On the question of the Caliphate he looked at that time, in common with most enlightened Moslems, to its reconstitution on a more spiritual basis. He explained to me how a more legitimate exercise of its authority might be made to give a new impulse to intellectual progress, and how little those who for centuries had held the title had deserved the spiritual headship of believers. The House of Othman for two hundred years had cared almost nothing for religion, and beyond the right of the sword had no claim any longer to allegiance.<sup>71</sup>

For these "crimes" he was given a short prison sentence, but he also received the heavier penalty of being exiled from his native land to Beirut and Paris for three years and three months.<sup>72</sup>

'Abduh's exile abroad opened up a new phase of his life and thought. He stayed briefly in Beirut, then joined his spiritual master, Jamāl al-Dīn in Paris. There, for the first time, he came face-to-face with 'The Other', European civilisation. Along with Jamāl al-Dīn, he founded a semi-religious, semi-political weekly paper *al-'Urwah al-wuthqā* (The Firm Link), of which eighteen issues appeared between 13 March and 17 October 1884.<sup>73</sup> Its aims were to promote a unifying Pan-Islamic message, in order to defend Eastern countries against the inroads of Western imperialism and attack the internal despotism of their rulers. Moreover, it examined and discussed the weakness and the causes of decline which had made it possible for Egypt and other Muslim countries such as Tunisia, Algeria and India to fall under

European domination. It also attempted a more acceptable understanding of the Islamic faith which would not come into conflict with the needs of the times.

While in Paris, 'Abduh was to have many discussions on the validity of Islam and Arab independence. He also paid a visit to England in 1884 to engage in dialogue with several leading figures – with the assistance of his friend Wilfrid Blunt – regarding the policy of his newspaper and to gain their support for Egypt in its struggle against the British rule. Lord Randolph Churchill (1849-1895) and the Minister of War, Lord Hartington (1833-1908),<sup>74</sup> were amongst the notables he visited.

'Abduh's knowledge of controversial articles published, before his arrival, by al-Afghānī in a number of periodicals in France must be considered in any study of 'Abduh's intellectual background. These were not without unorthodox views on Islam. This began to be realized as a result of the meeting between him and the Lebanese scholar Khaiīl Ghānim. Through this friendship al-Afghani was able to make some impression on French intellectual circles, first through *al-Basir*, the Lebanese newspaper, which along with *al-ʿUrwah al-wuthqā*, strove to create a civilized image of Eastern societies for a French audience, then in *La Justice*. What is more important is that Ghānim himself introduced al-Afghānī to Renan.

The Mahdist movement in Sudan prompted al-Afghānī to write a series of articles in *L'Intransigeant* about ideas dear to him, the concept of Mahdism in Islam, and the role expected of the mahdī in reforming society.<sup>75</sup> At that time 'Abduh, and to lesser degree Afghānī, looked on the Mahdist movement as an important event which might provide hope for their pan-Islamism.

The journal *al-ʿUrwah al-wuthqā* was not a success largely because it

was not of general interest to Europeans and also because it was banned from the outset by the Turkish authorities throughout the Ottoman Empire and by the British in India. This eventually led to the closure of the paper and the silencing of a liberalizing voice.

Following the collapse of the paper, 'Abduh found himself attracted to the countries which were experiencing French culture. This attraction was due to his own experience of France. He first went to Tunisia where he attracted a large number of followers and friends and had a pioneering influence on the Tunisian reform movement. Then he returned to Beirut where, for a period of three years, he held the post of lecturer at the *Suṭāniyyah* School.<sup>76</sup> The material used in lecturing on theology at this institution provided the basis of his famous book *Risālat al-tawḥīd*, twelve years later. During this stay in Beirut, he happened to discover a neglected but important treatise on logic by al-Sāwī entitled "*Sharḥ kitāb al-Baṣā'ir al-Nuṣayriyyah fī 'ilm al-Mantiq*", which he later edited, for the first time, with scholarly annotations.<sup>77</sup>

Much more could be said with reference to 'Abduh's influence both on the theoretical and on the practical levels. In his visits London and Tunisia, and during his prolonged sojourn in Paris and Beirut, contacts with local intellectuals served to bring to his consciousness new social and political dimensions, consolidating his vision on the internal problems of the Ottoman Empire and opening his mind to a number of new possibilities concerning the peculiar relationship between Europe and the respective Arab provinces. He is remembered for his remarkable vision, through which he sought to bring together the great religions of Lebanon. He was instrumental in forming a society in Beirut which embraced a number of persons of different

nationalities and religious affiliations such as the English Reverend Isaac Taylor and the Persian Mirzā Bākīr.<sup>78</sup> The aims of this society were to promote this unique attempt at rapprochement between Jews, Christians and Muslims, in order that they might come to believe that they could establish a new civilization.<sup>79</sup>

However, the possibility of the implementation of such radical ideas was not the sort of view that the Ottomans and British wished to foster. With regard to the British and French, both saw 'Abduh's activities in Lebanon, with his ideas of religious unity amongst the various native religious groups of that province, as an attempt to consolidate nationalistic feelings which, in turn, would inevitably put an end to foreign interference. The very presence of British, French and Russian councillors in Lebanon at that time was justified by the fact that they were protecting the various minority religious groups i.e. Christian Maronites, Druzes and Jews. Thus, if 'Abduh's initiative was to ever become universally acceptable, it would make the need to have any foreign presence on Lebanese soil totally redundant, as there would be no necessity to protect any of the minorities. Thus, indirectly, the major powers actually supported tyranny and denied the very people whom they were so enthusiastic to protect the right to any national freedom.

'Abduh's failure to achieve the unification of the various religious groups, his main idealistic objective in Lebanon, did not prevent him from making a later attempt to introduce similar progressive reforms. While he was in exile, The Earl of Cromer, the consul-general and high commissioner, and the real ruler of Egypt between 1883 and 1907, was very much in favour of a free press. Cromer himself was a competent scholar and in some of his writings made a contribution to the study of

the Islamic problems of his day.<sup>80</sup> Hourani lists Cromer as among the founders of the modernist movement in Egypt. Likewise, Brown relates that:

Shaykh Muhammad Bayram V, of the famous Tunisian Bayram family...was a close disciple of Khayr al-Din and worked with him in several capacities during his years as chief minister. After the establishment of the French protectorate in Tunisia, Muhammad Bayram V moved to Cairo where he became a good friend of Lord Cromer.<sup>81</sup>

The restoration of order after the 'Urābī Rebellion, seemed to offer 'Abduh an opportunity. At the demand of 'Abduh's friends, Cromer intervened with Khedive Tawfiq on his behalf.<sup>82</sup> This appeal was subsequently granted, provided that he did not again involve himself in politics. On his return from his exile in Beirut and Paris, the period of his greatest reformist activity opened up. He seems to have learned quite well the lessons of that period. His departure from the policy of his master Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī took place when he came to tolerate the British rule of Egypt and its economic and financial reforms under the Earl of Cromer. This seems to contradict with what he declared in London in an interview with *The Pall Mall Gazette*:

We Egyptians of the Liberal party believed once in English liberalism and English sympathy; but we believe no longer...There is no Moslem in Egypt so oppressed as to wish for any more of your help. We ask only one thing of you, and that is that you leave us at once and forever...If England wanted to repair the wrong she has done to us, she would, as I have said, give us a first proof of her sincerity by ordering back her troops from Egypt.<sup>83</sup>

He was not, however, a self-contradictory opportunist when he did shift his ground; he was well aware that he was doing so, and he went to elaborate lengths to show that he had not really sacrificed his principles. He seems to have entertained a very high appreciation of the liberality of Cromer. Although the latter and 'Abduh were far apart in their mode of thought and religious views, there was never an actual conflict between them. 'Abduh's reformist view was modified to meet the requirements of his own new position. Such a modified view he considered the only way to save the identity of his country under colonial rule, on the assumption was that such rule must eventually end and sovereignty pass to the Egyptian people. The underlying argument was that political awareness grows in line with the process of education. He was not interested in ultimate principles of political philosophy but in concrete objectives to be accomplished through practical measures. Thus, he was forced to resort to the help of the new Kediye, Abbās II. By virtue of the latter's interference, 'Abduh was able to establish "an Administration Committee for the Azhar...representing the four orthodox rites or schools of canon law.",<sup>84</sup> previously no more than an object of faint hope.

'Abduh realised that the widely-spread misunderstanding of religious matters was the root-cause problem facing those seeking the reformation of Arab society. Without re-educating the Arab masses, he saw no way to reform Arab society. To achieve this, he believed the most effective means to be the alteration of the perspective of religious thought. He believed in internal reform initially through the spread of education and the elevation of public awareness of standards of social responsibility. He had great difficulty in convincing others that social and educational maturity was a necessary preliminary to political independence.

The difficulty in any Muslim religious reform is the closeness between the spiritual, the temporal and, even more so, the political, which is inherent in the Islamic view of the world. All these facets of life were, and, in certain instances, are for some fundamentalists, bound entirely together under the one controlling power of Islam. Thus, Cromer's statement, that to try reforming Islam would lead to something completely different from Islam, is perfectly justified.

In his emphasis on the need for abandoning *taqlīd*, without which, he thought, Muslims could not catch up with the changing conditions of life, 'Abduh showed the influences of Aristotle and also *Ibn Rushd*, *Ibn Sīnā* and to a lesser degree, a number of key figures in European thought. From his assumption that: "the worst disease inflicted on the Muslim's resolve and intellect is domination by ignorant regimes.", he turns the reader's attention <sup>85</sup> to the importance of rationalism as a means towards the ethical and social realization of life. Thanks to his masterly knowledge of *al-sharī'ah*, he penetrated so deeply into the Egyptian mind that he achieved results similar to those of Luther. 'Abduh went a long way in helping to establish a modern view of education. He was a great admirer of Herbert Spencer whom he visited in England, and whose work on "Education" he translated from a French version into Arabic.<sup>86</sup>

He continuously reiterated the theory that one needs to liberate oneself from prejudices in order to be in a position to cultivate knowledge. Thus, knowledge becomes not a mere abstract good but a practical guide to a better life.<sup>87</sup> His rationalistic approach, it may be said, was the most significant aspect of his argument, which allowed him sufficient space to move towards the restoration of the concept of *Ijtihād*.<sup>88</sup> The Gates of *Ijtihād*, said 'Abduh, are wide



open to provide answers to all the questions arising in every condition of life, provided the reformer has always the public good in mind:

Islam turned aside the hearts of men from exclusive attachment to customs and practices of the fathers, which had been handed down from father to son. It attributed folly and levity to those who accept blindly the words of their predecessors. And it called attention to the fact, that precedence in point of time is not one of the signs of knowledge, nor a mark of superiority of intellect or intelligence; but that the preceding generations and the later are on an equality so far as critical acumen and natural abilities are concerned. Indeed, the later generations have a knowledge of past circumstances, and a capacity to reflect upon them, and to profit by the effects of them in the world, which have survived until their times, that the fathers and forefathers who preceded them did not have.<sup>89</sup>

He argued that, in the final analysis, our judgements must no longer be dependent on ancient commentaries, but must be the result of a personal pursuit of knowledge in the light of *maṣlaḥa* (public welfare or common weal). It was one of his central beliefs that with the help of reason, we can force our own path through the thickets of received opinions and illuminate even the holiest texts :

Religion is a general sense, the province of which is to discover means of happiness that are not clearly discernible to reason. But it is reason which has the final authority in the recognition of this sense, in directing its exercise in its appropriate sphere, and in accepting beliefs and rules of conduct which that sense discovers for it.<sup>90</sup>

He argued, wherever the occasion arose, that Islam was essentially a rationalistic religion, which had liberated man from the authority of priesthood and had provided him with the knowledge of God, without any mediators, teaching him not to rely upon any intercession:

Every Muslim has to know God, must consult God's Book, and likewise His messenger, to truly know his sayings. For this, no intermediary agent is required, nor precedent or antecedent. To realise this, one needs to develop faculties which make him qualified to understand such as the grammatical rules of the Arabic, its literature and structure, along with the contemporary circumstances of Arabs, in particular during the time of prophethood.<sup>91</sup>

His view of the history of religion was that Islam, by virtue of its rationalism, was the final stage of the development of all the religions of mankind of all ages and that it was suitable for all people at all states of cultural development.

He perhaps more than anyone else united the forces of religion with humanitarian reform and developed the idea of social service by religious institutions. He sought to stimulate this idea by establishing The Muslim Benevolent Society in 1892, with distinguished friends such as Sa' d Zaghlūl, as part of his great plan to reform Egyptian society. As soon as this society was founded 'Abduh was elected president of it.<sup>92</sup> The main purpose of the Society was to establish schools with the aim of providing education and moral and material aid to the poorer classes. On this, Adams comments:

Muhammad 'Abduh had been impressed, during his travels in European countries, by the extent to which charitable institutions had been developed in those lands and the importance attached to public co-operation in practical

benevolences. Here, he came to believe, was one of the directions in which Muslim peoples might commendably follow the lead of Christian nations.<sup>93</sup>

In this and other comments, it seems that Adams's view of 'Abduh was confined to his works, since he omitted to compare his ideas with those of other Egyptian and Arab scholars and to place him properly within the Egyptian intellectual movement. This is clear from his failing to mention al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, who was the first to refer to the importance of charitable institutions as a social phenomenon.

By the time of 'Abduh's death, seven of these schools had been established, with no less than seven hundred and sixty-six students. A very practical part of the course was that young people in the Society's schools were to be supplied, on leaving, with a small amount of capital and some preliminary career training.<sup>94</sup>

In 1899, he was appointed by Khedive 'Abbās II as Grand *Mufti* of Egypt, a post he held until his death in 1905. He took advantage of this position, as the highest religious authority in Egypt, to introduce an impressive number of religious, social and educational reforms. What is often regarded as his major reform is his *Taqrīr fī Iṣlāḥ al-Maḥākīm al-Shar'īyyah* (Report on the Reform of the Sharī'ah Courts).<sup>95</sup> He believed in the need for a revival of religious values for the courts properly to exercise their legal and spiritual justice. With this in mind, he prepared a report on the state of the courts which showed that their disorganized state could not meet the responsibilities of an age in which Arab family affairs were being badly eroded by a lack of proper education in both spiritual and temporal matters.

He did this, by demonstrating that court judges were inadequately

trained and that it was vitally necessary that they were given proper instruction in the Sharī'ah and its application. 'Abduh's report was generally accepted and became the foundation stone of the reform of the judicial procedure particularly in *Maḥākīm al-Ahwāl al-Shakḥsiyyah*.<sup>96</sup>

'Abduh's concept of reform, based essentially on a radical change in the thinking of the people, contrasts with those of his predecessors, al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn, who concentrated primarily on the promulgation of ideas of a political nature, hinging upon the formation of a workable constitution and a remoulding of the laws in such a way that a truly just state would be established. The fact of matter is that he was undergoing a complete change of attitude towards the subject of reform: abandoning al-Afghānī's revolutionary ideas and reiterating his view of gradually introduced mass education for Islamic communities.

'Abduh cannot be considered as an enemy of Westernism merely because he criticised the teaching of Christianity. He held the view that periodic travel to Europe stimulated thought:

I never once went to Europe...that there was not renewed within me hope of the change of the present state of Muslims to something better...Whenever I returned to Europe and remained there a month or two, these hopes came back to me, and the attainment of that which I had been accounting impossible seemed easy to me.<sup>97</sup>

However, unlike al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn, he did not see much good coming from any reform being based on the teaching of Western radical thinkers only. His view was that for progress to take place reform

should be based on concrete proposals rather than abstract ideals. Islamic teaching and law should be revitalized in such a way as to constitute a reformed system that would be more sympathetic to the Arabs, their spiritual beliefs and their aspirations for self determination.

Apart from being remembered for his important work in Egypt, ‘Abduh maintained a remarkably wide correspondence with several important European scholars who were facing similar problems in reconciling intellectual freedom with traditional ideology. He argued that religious beliefs could be supported and defended by the weapons of logic and rational philosophy, and he maintained that it was necessary to use such rational argument in order to defend Islam from the encroaching influences of negative Western materialistic philosophies. It is not appropriate to categorize or associate ‘Abduh with any particular school of thought, as a Mu‘tazilite, pragmatic, or humanist, although, in some ways, he did share some of the beliefs of the Mu‘tazilite School,<sup>98</sup> the earliest school of Islamic-Arab philosophy (the Eighth Century): faith could be attained by the use of reason. Religion and philosophy were compatible, and one should pursue a personal quest for knowledge and spiritual awareness by employing reason and logic wherever they might lead one.

There is general agreement among Muslims that in case of conflict between reason and what has been given as Tradition, the conclusions of reason are to be given preference.<sup>99</sup>

Despite the fact that some authors such as Cromer came to the conclusion that ‘Abduh was "an agnostic",<sup>100</sup> this was not the case. The mystical divine revelation of God to the Prophet, in which he

believed fully, could not be explained by rationalist philosophy. About this point Safran comments:

In order to avoid the thorny question of the relation between the absolute and divinity, he did not resort to an absolute natural-law principle, as the Mu'tazilah had done. Instead, he took advantage of the Arabic terms for beautiful and ugly - *hasan* and *qabih* - which are applicable in that language to the expression of value as well as aesthetical judgment, in order to evolve a utilitarian theory of ethics based on common aesthetics.<sup>101</sup>

He attempted to establish a philosophical system that might serve the Arab intelligentsia as a bulwark against the influx of what he conceived as the negative aspects of Western culture and their possible threat to Arab Islamic cultural values. It is obvious that 'Abduh was facing what has been called the characteristic predicament of the nineteenth century, a situation in which it was no longer possible to be estranged from Western influence, while still believing that a religious commitment of one sort or another was essential. In his case, this culminated in *Risālat al-Tawhīd* (The Epistle of Unity),<sup>102</sup> which is by common consent his principal work. *Risālat al-Tawhīd* comprises an accessible statement of his positive attitude towards theology. In it he devotes several pages to the problem of free will and its relation to dogma and reason. *Risālat al-Tawhīd* opens with an explanation of monotheistic theology.<sup>103</sup> Like the earlier Mu'tazilites, 'Abduh studies the problems of the attributes of God, prophecy, and free-will. His style is ponderous and archaizing, as though he were deliberately imitating his predecessors.

It is to this period that a great many of his extant works belong,

including his polemic *al-Islām wa-al-Naṣrāniyya Ma'ā al-'Ilm wa-al-Madaniyyah* (1902) (Islam and Christianity in Relation to Science and Civilization) against the Lebanese author Farah Anṭūn (1874-1922), the editor of *al-Jāmi'ah*. His confrontation with Anṭūn added a rich discursive dimension to his thinking. Before discussing Anṭūn's work and his quarrel with 'Abduh, it would be useful to make a brief reference to his biography and the periodical *al-Jāmi'ah*.

It may be asked why Anṭūn has been placed in this chapter together with 'Abduh, instead of being assigned a place in the chapter dealing with Lebanese scholars. The arrangement is justified, in that the name of Anṭūn is inseparable, both historically and academically, from that of 'Abduh, because of their polemical discourse, carried on in a number of Cairo periodicals.

Anṭūn, who was born in Tripoli (Lebanon) in 1874, belonged to a Christian family of which the prominent Lebanese scholar, Charles Mālik, of the American University of Beirut, was also a member.<sup>104</sup>

Antūn completed his primary education in 1880, after which he was sent to a school attached to the Orthodox monastery at Kiftīn, situated in the hills above Tripoli, where he stayed for three years. He was greatly privileged to be educated at Kiftīn school, where he studied a variety of subjects such as natural sciences, mathematics, history, geography and the Muslim religious sciences, along with Arabic, Turkish, French, and English.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to students from different religious there were Orthodox, Maronite and Protestant teachers as well as Muslims.

As early as the Kiftīn days, Anṭūn showed a great affinity for journalism, and he took an active part in producing the school's newspaper. During this time he also acquired some knowledge of the

works of a number of liberal French authors for whom he had a particular liking and who were later to influence his own philosophical and intellectual development. Unfortunately, at the age of sixteen, his schooling came to an end due to some obscure disturbances within the school, which led to its closure :

The disturbances which finally ended in the closing of the school did not grow out of a clash between sects ; the opposing sides in the incident belonged to the same sect.<sup>106</sup>

Anṭūn was then urged by his father Ilyās, a lumber merchant, to learn the trade, with the view that he should eventually assume control of the family business himself, as city tradition dictated. After a short period learning the lumber trade, Anṭūn, like many of his fellow countrymen, found that his real bent lay elsewhere. Thus, he decided against lumbering and determined to take up a literary career and follow up some of his intellectual interests. For several years, however, he worked as a schoolmaster at *al-Madrasah al-Ahliyyah* in Tripoli.<sup>107</sup> Here he established contact with the various literary circles in the city such as those of the historian Jurji Yannī and shaykh Rashīd Riḍā.

In 1899, he decided to visit Egypt in order to find fresh ideas for journalism. In that country, his base for teaching and research, he made a valiant attempt to establish the radical journal *al-Jāmi'ah* in which he developed his unorthodox views.

Appearing first as a bi-monthly in Alexandria in 1899 under the title of *al-jāmi'ah al-ʿUthmāniyyah* (The Ottoman Community), the periodical subsequently appeared irregularly, with the final issue



being printed in Cairo in 1910.<sup>108</sup> Much space in *al-Jāmi'ah* was devoted to translations of foreign writers, primarily French.

Given on the one hand the lack of a large liberal readership and on the other the then high level of illiteracy in Egyptian society, *al-Jāmi'ah* inevitably ended in financial difficulties. A number of other factors also combined to ensure the periodical's failure. Apparently, his political idealism landed him in a great deal of trouble owing to his pioneering anticlerical stance, which seemed at some considerable distance from the realities of nineteenth century Egyptian society. Like many other Lebanese who lived in Egypt, he adopted a secularist view, with democratic and liberal principles and a desire to promote in an active way any reform which would lead to equality between Christians and Muslims, within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.

Anṭūn was moved to write a defence of Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), at time of his excommunication by the Russian Synod, due to his attempt to rationalize Christianity through a series of works such as : "What I Believe", "What then Must We Do?", "The Kingdom of God is within You".

On another occasion, in the pages of his journal, Anṭūn was also to take the side of Qāsim Amīn (1865-1908),<sup>109</sup> the Western-minded thinker, the author of two pioneer books *Tahrīr al-mar'ah* (the Liberation of Woman), and *al-Mar'ah al-jadīdah* (The New Woman), in his argument against the "reactionary" attitude of the Egyptian scholar Muṣṭafā Kāmil (1874-1908) on the matter of the emancipation of women.<sup>110</sup>

Although Amīn's theory was not quite compatible with Anṭūn's, the latter's liberal sensibilities, which moved him to defend Qasim's stance, seemed to be a triumph for secularism over reactionary positions in intellectual life. At first sight, Muṣṭafā Kāmil's seemingly reactionary attitude towards Qāsim Amīn stands in uneasy

relationship to his allegiance to modernism. However, this attitude can be understood, in that he was the leading figure in the Egyptian nationalist movement. It seems that the disagreement between the two scholars was more verbal than real, due to differing views as to the timing of the change in Egypt's political life within the prevailing political circumstances. On the one hand, Kāmil (whose *al-Liwā'* (The Banner) had editions in English and French), as the leader of the National Party, was endeavouring to raise more far-reaching questions, for example, as to how Egyptian society could be rescued from foreign dominion and how the different groups and classes within its society could be reconciled. Amīn, on the other hand, was interested in social change, particularly the emancipation of women, even within the then prevailing socio-political situation. Kāmil, although his views accorded with Amin's reformist views, was motivated, as a politician, by political considerations. One may assume that he realized that an issue such as the question of emancipation of women would produce controversy, and that the reaction would undermine the "unification" of the nation. This would not favour his political activities, and such an issue as this could wait until a period after the more important liberation of Egyptian society, as a whole, from British rule. Nuseibeh writes: "when he found that he could not obtain European help in the struggle for independence, he turned towards Turkey and the Pan-Islamic movement."<sup>111</sup>

Anṭūn was allowed by the French philosopher Jules Simon (1814-96) (1814-1896) to translate into Arabic some of his works including some which dealt with the issue of women's emancipation: (*La Femme au 19e Siècle*).<sup>112</sup> It is significant that Anṭūn's subsequent defence of Qāsim Amīn's ideas was indirectly related to Simon's writings; both

had much in common, especially regarding the question of women's emancipation.

In these matters and others, then, Anṭūn showed himself to be as radical as his compatriot scholars Shibli al-Shummayil and Yaʿqūb Ṣarrūf (1852-1927), publisher of the influential periodical *al-muqtaṭaf*, which was primarily concerned with tackling and introducing new scientific topics. With these intellectuals, Arab thought ended one phase and embarked on a new one, and what appeared as ill-defined in the writings of the previous generation gave way to a new tendency following a distinctive approach in dealing with intellectual matters. In other words, with such thinkers, the student of Arab thought was able to classify the men of letters under the categories "progressive" or "traditional".

The great event in this period of Anṭūn's life was that after the first failure of his periodical, he left for New York in 1906. There, after more than a year's silence, he struggled tirelessly to breathe new life into a new version of *al-Jāmiʿah* and to circulate it amongst the Arab community in America. His American journal also failed to establish itself, possibly for financial reasons:

In New York Antun also published a daily newspaper, *al-Jāmiʿah al-Yawmiyah*, for about six months. When that venture failed, he followed it up with a weekly, *al-Jāmiʿah al-Usbūʿiyah*, which lasted from 1907 until 1909.<sup>113</sup>

He returned to Egypt after a year, encouraged by the revolution of 1908 in Turkey, which placed "A Committee of Union and Progress" on the Turkish throne. His most substantial contribution to Arabic literature

was when, for the first time, he translated into Arabic some parts of the German philosopher F. Nietzsche (1844-1900)'s work Thus Spake Zarathustra.<sup>114</sup> He returned to journalism again firstly with his periodical for one year and then with *al-Ahālī*. A feature of Anṭūn's philosophy is his attempt to convey the reformist message to as wide an audience as possible. Apart from his articles, his means was a series of novels attempting to describe the social and political conditions in Arab countries and the aspirations of the people. These were based on such works as Chateaubriand's Atala<sup>115</sup> and Dumas's Le Fils du Peuple.<sup>116</sup> Some of them were adapted for the theatre.<sup>117</sup> This was his productive period. After this he made no important contributions to philosophical literature, except for a few translations. The reason for this was the lack of contemporary minds capable of understanding him and stimulating him to further research. Although basically didactic, his writing style was never weighty; his reading of Western writers helped him develop a clear, readable, and colourful prose.

The dialogue between ʿAbduh and Anṭūn is important, they stand for two different points of view. Anṭūn, who had already gained considerable prestige as a thinker, through his contemporary commentaries on the works of Ibn Rushd which appeared in *al-Jāmiʿah*, was versed in modern philosophy and was particularly influenced by the works of the French philosopher and Orientalist Ernest Renan. He translated some of his books into Arabic: "Averroes et l'Averroisme" and "Vie de Jesus".<sup>118</sup>

From Renan, Anṭūn inherited a radical philosophical outlook which was tempered by his Christian beliefs. In Sharabi's words:

From the intellectual point of view probably the most

westernized of the Christian intellectuals, he gave the most systematic presentation of Renan's Ideas.<sup>119</sup>

Antūn's appreciation of Averroes, gave a rational approach to his work. He also had the ability and courage to re-assess the life and works of Averroes and show that during certain periods of his life he had been persecuted and his philosophical works suppressed by the Islamic conservatives and fundamentalist rulers:

Christianity separates civil authority from religious authority, and therefore make possible tolerance. On the other hand, one of Islam's tenets is that the ruler is both king and religious caliph, making it difficult to be there room for tolerance.<sup>120</sup>

He is not of course as explicitly concerned as 'Abduh with the problem of the possibility of reconciliation between Islamic and Western institutions.

Antūn was largely indebted to Western radical philosophies, especially Eighteenth century French philosophy, for many of his views; he was thus able to shed new light on the importance of the philosophy of Averroes. 'Abduh, on the other hand, a representative of the moderate views of the traditionalist school, strongly reacted against Antūn's commentaries on Averroes; he believed that these commentaries involved a number of incorrect statements about Islamic tolerance, especially Antūn's claim that Christianity was more tolerant towards philosophers than Islam. The debate originally appeared serially in *al-Jāmi'ah*, III (1902), and IV (1903), and in *al-Manār*, V (1902-1903). Each party then gathered his articles into book form: Antūn in *Ibn Rushd wa falsafatuh* (Alexandria, 1903), and 'Abduh in *al-Islām*

*wa al-Naṣrāniyyah* (Cairo, [1905-1906].

In these articles ‘Abduh engaged in erudite polemics with Anṭūn, whose replies included extensive quotations from contemporary European and American thinkers. The historical significance of these articles lay in the fact that this was the first occasion that such a theological polemic between Christian and Muslim Arab scholars had been published. More importantly it was the first occasion when two Arab scholars, one Christian the other Muslim, drew extensively on the concepts of various Western philosophers and historians to support and expand their arguments, and did not restrict themselves to Arab philosophical writings, Qur’ānic verses, or the Prophet’s *Ḥadīth*, as sources of inspiration:

All the tenets of my argument can be traced to the published works of Christian historians and philosophers.<sup>121</sup>

There is to be found within the text of the written "questions and answers" between the two much that is useful to our understanding of the development of Arab thought at this period.

Anṭūn was among the pioneers who believed that philosophy could be exercised and developed in a purely secular manner without adherence to religious dogma. With great tact and mental agility, he contended that religion exercised a control over the minds of the people and that when misused by rulers, who incorporated religion into the framework of their own policies, it could be used as a tool to further the aims of a tyrant. This both led to the destruction of the liberties of the people, and also greatly hindered their intellectual and philosophical development. All religions, not just Islam, but also Christianity,

Judaism, and Buddhism, were classified as being obstacles to philosophical and moral advance when they were abused or misrepresented by rulers and employed for their own purposes. Despite this criticism, he did not deny the place of religion in society, nor cease to respect the great religions of the world, provided they were confined to their own spheres. He also saw the dangers of a religious state, and demonstrated that those who comprised the minority religious groups would become victims of oppression, or at best second-class citizens in their own country. His chief aim is to demonstrate that the safeguard of the nation's interests lies fundamentally in keeping religion and politics apart.<sup>122</sup>

The weakness of his argument with 'Abdun is that he compares the Muslim rulers' attitude towards philosophers and education with European Christian rulers' attitude towards the same issue, without taking into consideration the different historical context and social development in Europe and the Levant. Religion in European societies remains an imported institution and it is easier to separate it from the state, whereas religion in the Arabic-speaking world is much more integral part of its fabric.

As a Mufti, 'Abdun performed all the functions of that office. He was also engaged in the publication of a series of articles which, providing a general defence of Muslims and their faith, comprised an analysis of, and commentary on, an article by the French historian and minister of Foreign Affairs, Gabriel Hanotaux (1853-1944), for a period an official in Tunisia, who was also an eminent scholar in his own right. Hanotaux's article published in the Journal de Paris in 1900,<sup>123</sup> and translated into Arabic and published by al-Mu'ayyad, "Confronting The Muslim Question", is an indirect attack on Islam. In this article, Hanotaux makes a comparison between Islamic and Christian teaching

concerning their respective attitudes towards free-will. The conclusion which is drawn is that the difference between the two teachings is the result of their different sources. His discourse, however, goes beyond its logical conclusion to political and racial implications; in comparing and contrasting the two teachings Hanotaux claims - repeating Renan's thesis - that the source of this difference between the two can be traced back to a difference in race; Christian teaching was developed by the Aryan race, whereas Islamic teaching stemmed from the Semitic race.<sup>124</sup> Hanotaux considers Islam to have been valid from its peak period up to the nineteenth century, but irrelevant to the needs of people in modern times. His views, in effect, are expressed in such a way that they contain a hidden justification for French colonial rule in North Africa.

‘Abduh's sincerity and profound spirituality as reflected in his writings cannot be questioned. Although his answers to Hanotaux's ideas are of a different type from those given by Anṭūn, they are of significance, in that he states that, at one stage or another, every society develops in its own way as a direct result of religious thought and practice. He holds that it is possible for Islam to dispense with the many useless accretions and erroneous creeds that have dominated it for so long and thus to be revitalized by utilizing its own heritage:

For to attempt reform by means of a culture or philosophy that is not religious in character, would require the erection of a new structure, for which neither materials nor workmen are available. If the religion of Muslims can work these ends and has their confidence, why seek for other means? <sup>125</sup>

He also accuses Hanotaux of having misunderstood Islam and Arab



history and its important role in the cultural development of the Muslim-Arab peoples and other peoples as well. This role can be clearly seen when one considers the richness of the Arab legacy in various branches of knowledge.

The present culture of Europe did not come from the original Aryan settlers; and as for the Greeks, whom M. Hanotaux called the teachers of Europe, they derived their civilization from contact with Semitic nations (...) The Truth is that all nations borrow from one another according to need, and the western Aryan has borrowed from the eastern Semitic more than the depressed East is taking to-day from the independent West. This is, then, no question of civilization but only one of religion.<sup>126</sup>

This eclectic way of thinking made his adaptation to "alien" ways of life a feasibility. Because he had deeply rooted ties to his education, he would hardly have voluntarily turned his back on Islam, for he never ceased to occupy himself with Islamic teaching, as his literary remains bear witness. Prior to his time as Mufti, *fatwās* had become little more than a rubber stamp. A *fatwā*, in any of the cases which had been brought to the attention of the Mufti, had been pre-decided by government officials such as the Minister of Justice.<sup>127</sup> On becoming Mufti, 'Abduh decided to reverse this process. He insisted on weighing up all the evidence relating to each case before pronouncing his *fatwās*. Request from individuals for a deliverance on any subjects were generally ignored; he opened its doors to individual appeals for decisions.<sup>128</sup>

This attempt to re-introduce the traditional system of adjudication as he understood it is indicative of his moral rectitude and strength of

character and offered a developed vision of *ijtihād* in its relation to contemporary social life. Such a positive effort to develop a new vision is found mainly in three of the *fatwās* which he gave: he attempted to strike a balance between Islamic laws and other religious and cultural influences. In this way, he demonstrated that the eating of meat prepared by devout Christians in the Transvaal would not lead Muslims to abandon their faith. Likewise, he demonstrated that the wearing Christian European forms of dress such as hats would not involve any apostasy. In the third, he declares it likewise lawful for Muslims to deposit their money in the Postal Savings Banks where it would draw interest. In so doing, he performed a valuable task. His courage made possible a further development. He is remembered for attempting to bridge the gap between Muslims and Christians; he is also remembered for seeking to bring together Sunni Muslims of all rites by presenting a body of *fatwās* containing everything essential for the Islamic faith, on which the differing schools could agree.<sup>129</sup>

In the course of his analysis of 'Abduh's ideas, Safran evaluates highly the radical implications of 'Abduh's exegesis of *sūrah* IV, verse 62 of the Qur'ān: "O ye who believe, obey God and obey the apostle and those among you invested with authority...".<sup>130</sup> The radical character of 'Abduh's exegesis was not a wholly unprecedented one. It is quite clear that Safran had not read al-Kawākibī's writings, which include the latter's exegesis of the same verse.

Literature was another field of great interest for 'Abduh. As he approached the end of his career, in the same spirit of reform, he pointed out that one of his primary concerns was the reform of the teaching of the Arabic language. It seems that this was due to his own poor experience while learning Arabic during his childhood, as

mentioned earlier.

Later he used to say that the study of Arabic books according to the Azhar method had done injury to his intellect and his reason, and that for a number of years he had tried to sweep his mind clean of the influence of such methods but had never entirely succeeded.<sup>131</sup>

He maintained that raising the standard of knowledge of the Arabic language was essential for a proper understanding of the teaching of the Qur'ān and for maintaining the true *Sunnah* of the Prophet.

He writes fine prose, both in the introductions to his textual editions of, and his commentaries on, a number of classical Arabic literary works such as *Maqāmāt Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*,<sup>132</sup> and indeed in his commentary entitled *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm*.<sup>133</sup> In the latter, he also presents an model expression of modernist views on the interpretation of the Qur'an during the late nineteenth century.

It was only after his active life was over that 'Abduh's real career began. When he died in 1905 he was world famous and the centre of a growing literature, and of controversies in periodicals, newspapers, and treatises.

While his discourse failed to provide any basis for a comprehensive political scheme, consideration of some of his general conclusions inspired some later advocates of rational faith. He considered that the faults of the present state of affairs, regardless of whether the form of government was democratic, aristocratic or tyrannical, could not be remedied by mere great political actions. No improvement was possible unless the individual himself was also concerned with the development of moral and educational values.

As for the question of ruler and ruled, I have left it to the disposal of fate and to the hand of God to manage, for I have learned that this is a fruit that needs planting and many years of growth before it can be collected. It is this planting that needs care and attention at the present, and God is our help.<sup>134</sup>

However, by a strange irony of fate, ‘Abduh actually became the leading mind of a movement which, in the end, brought about a permanent rupture between religion and politics and effectively destroyed the old theocratic system of Islamic ideology; this movement is represented in the writings of his disciples ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq and Luṭfī al-Sayyid. There was no chance for ‘Abduh to escape the consequences of secularism, once he began to promulgate the belief that reason was compatible with religion.

There are two further figures of this period who deserve to be mentioned; considerations of space, however, preclude detailed discussion of their careers.

### Ya‘qūb Ṣannū‘

All studies about Ya‘qūb Ṣannū‘ point out that his career started with the poem in which, encouraged by his father, he praised one of Khedivial family, Aḥmad Pasha Yagan, grandson of Muḥammad ‘Alī.<sup>135</sup> This poem was read by young Ṣannū‘ in Aḥmad Pasha’s presence. Aḥmad was so impressed by the thirteen-year-old boy’s precocity that he decided to send him to study in Livorno, at his own expense.

The three years which Ṣannū‘ spent in Italy (between 1852 and 1855)<sup>136</sup> established his interests, particularly in journalism and the theatre.<sup>137</sup> A short time after his return, he lost both his father and his benefactor and was compelled to support himself financially.<sup>138</sup>

His knowledge of several languages and sciences<sup>139</sup> made it possible for him to teach the children of certain Egyptian dignitaries, including members of the Viceroy's own family. In 1863, he obtained a post as a member of the staff of the Polytechnic School.<sup>140</sup>

His major achievements were the founding of several cultural societies. In addition to the satirical periodical *Abū Naḍḍārah* (Father of Spectacles), established in 1877, he published a number of other periodicals.<sup>141</sup> He is also remembered for having established an Arab theatre in 1870, twenty-two years after the first one was established by the Lebanese scholar, Mārūn al-Naqqāsh, whose name stands first among the introducers of drama and theatre into the Arabic speaking world. At some time al-Naqqāsh presented Moliere's *L'Avare* in Beirut before a number of notables and consuls. Two years later in the same city he presented a drama of his own composition on Hārūn al-Rashīd. Encouraged by his initial success he built a theatre next to his own house, the first in the Arab world.

Ṣannūf may be considered the first Egyptian to offer Arab culture to the West. He translated many Arabic poems into Italian and published numerous articles in English on Arabic and Islamic literature. He wrote three plays in Italian about the customs of his country which were performed with considerable success in Italy.<sup>142</sup>

For Egypt, *Abū Naḍḍārah* was a phenomenon with no precedent. This was because it used colloquial Arabic and introduced a number of satirical cartoons for the first time. Indeed this was the first humorous paper in Arabic.<sup>143</sup>

After his exile to Paris, his periodical was to reappear in Paris under a new title: *La Clarinette* (1880), *Le Flutiste* (1881), *Le Charmeur* (1881).<sup>144</sup> In fact, Ṣannūf managed to produce his newspaper while also making a living from lectures and contributions to the French

press. His articles appeared in papers like *Le Temps*, *Le Matin*, *Le Figaro* and other equally important journals.

In Paris Ṣannūf acquired some degree of importance as a literary figure and succeeded in attracting literary and philosophical contributions for his journal both from his Arab acquaintances such as ʿAbduh and ʿAbd Ullah Nadīm and a number of remarkable Frenchmen, including figures like Jules Simon.

His satirical essays and cartoons reveal a keen sense of identity with the poor and exploited, and they do not spare the Khedive Ismāʿīl,<sup>145</sup> whom he described as "pharaoh" and "the local street thug", attacking his methods of government in a satirical and allegorical manner.

**Adīb Ishāq**,<sup>146</sup> who was influenced by al-Afghānī, was the founder of periodical called *Miṣr*. This periodical later, in Paris, changed its name to *al-Qāhira*. It dealt largely with political and philosophical issues and Ishāq was encouraged "by the leaders of the National Party to continue the publication".<sup>147</sup> He also founded a newspaper *al-Tijārah* (Commerce) in 1878, in collaboration with Salīm Naqqāsh (d.1884), a pioneer of the Arabic speaking theatre and author of *Miṣr li al-Miṣriyyin* (Egypt for the Egyptians) in which he recorded in nine volumes what he had witnessed during the "ʿUrābī Rebellion".<sup>148</sup> *al-Tijārah* dealt at first with commercial matters but its later involvement in politics led to its shutdown and that of *Miṣr* as well.

Notes to Chapter Five.

1. For a detailed study of Muhammad 'Abduh's biography, see: Amīn, Aḥmad. Zu'ama' al-iṣlah fī al-‘aṣr al-ḥadīth (Leaders of reform in Modern Times), Cairo, 1948, pp. 280-337; Adams, Charles. Islam and Modernism in Egypt, London, 1933, pp. 18-103; ‘Abd al-Rāzīq, Muṣṭafā. ‘Muhammad ‘Abduh. Cairo, 1946 ; Rowlatt, Mary. Founders of Modern Egypt. Bombay, 1962.
2. See : Gibb, H.A.R. Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature. B.S.O.S., 4 (1926-28), p. 748.
3. See : Dodge, Bayard. al-Azhar. Washington, 1961, p. 114.
4. Heyworth-Dunne, p. 381.
5. See, for example: Dodge. al-Azhar. p. 115; ‘Abduh, Ibrāhīm. Tatawwar al-Ṣahāfā al-Miṣriyyah. pp. 42-44.
6. See, for example: Abu-Laghod, Ibrāhīm. " The Transformation of the Egyptian Elite: Prelude to the Urabi Revolt." M.E.J., 21 (Summer 1969).
7. ‘Abduh, Ibrāhīm. Tatawwar... pp. 44-102.
8. See : Little, Tom. Egypt. London, 1958, pp. 69-79; Baron De Kusel (Bey). An Englishman's Recollections of Egypt 1863 to 1887. London, p. 127.
9. Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 243- 247.
10. See: Hourani, A. In his preface to J. M. Ahmed, The Intellectual... p. VIII; Gibb. Studies In Contemporary ..., p. 748.
11. Safran, Nadav. Egypt in search of Political Community. Harvard University Press, 1961, p. 34.
12. Khedive is a term of Persian origin: *Khudaywi* (Seigneur), first used by Ismā‘īl a grandson of Moḥammed ‘Ali of Egypt. See: Dodge, Bayard. al-Azhar. p. 120, Footnote No. 30.

13. See : Landes, David S. Bankers and Pashas. London, 1958.
14. See : Little, Tom. Egypt. p. 71.
15. Ibid., p. 71.
16. See: Marlowe, John. Spoiling the Egyptians. London, 1974, pp.105, 115,150 ; Richmond, J.C.B. Egypt 1798-1952. London, 1977, p. 86.
17. See : Little, Tom. Egypt, pp. 69-80; Holt, P.M. Egypt and the Fertile... pp. 203-4.
18. Adams, p.36.
19. Rowlatt, Mary. Founders of Modern Egypt. p. 29.
20. See : Hartmann, Martin. The Arabic Press. p. 2.
21. See :al-Akiki, Najib. al-Mustashrikūn. *Misr*, 1947.
22. See : Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen. The Future of Islam. Lahore, 1882.
23. al-Manār, quoting from: Adams. Islam and Modernism, p. 22
24. Adams, pp. 24-25.
25. Ibid., pp. 30-31.
26. Ibid., p. 25.
27. On al-Afghānī's career see further: al-Makhzumi, Muḥammad: Khāṭirāt Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. Beirut, 1931; Kedourie, Elie. Afghani and 'Abduh. London, 1966.
28. See: al-Afghānī, Jamāl al-Dīn. al-Radd 'alā al-dahriyyīn. Fr. trs: La Refutation Des Materialistes. by A.M.Goichon, Paris, 1942.
29. See: for example: "al-Hukūmah al-istibdādiyyah" (Despotic Government), which published, firstly, in Adib Ishaq's weekly newspaper "Misr", II, no. 33, February 15, 1879, then reprinted in al-Manār, III, (1900-1), pp. 577-82, 600-07; "The Reign of Terror in Persia", The Contemporary Review, (London), 61 (January-June 1892), pp. 238-248.
30. Keddouri, Elie. Afghani and 'Abduh. London, 1966, p. 66.
31. Ibid., p. 42; Amīn, Aḥmad. Zu'ama' al-islāh fī al-'asr al-ḥadīth, pp. 86-93.
32. See : Gendzier, Irene. "James Sanu' and Egyptian Nationalism." Middle East Journal, 15 (1961), 16-28 ; Landau, Jacob "Abu Naddara, an Egyptian



- Jewish Nationalist" The Journal of Jewish Studies, 3 (1952), pp. 30-44.
33. See : Gibb: Studies ..., p. 755 ; Amīn, Ahmad. Zu'ama'... p. 70.
34. Landau, Jacob M. Parliaments and Parties in Egypt. Tel-Aviv, 1953, p. 86.
35. See : Fakhry, Majid. A History of Islamic Philosophy. Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 376-377.
36. Rowlatt, p. 23.
37. Keddouri, p. 61.
38. 'Abd al-Rāziq, Muṣṭafā. Muhammad 'Abduh. p. 49.
39. Ibid., p. 34.
40. Ibid., p. 39.
41. Horten, Max. Beitrage, xiii. 85, 86. quoted in Adams, p. 40.
42. See, for examle: Kedourie. Afghānī and 'Abduh.
43. Ridā's Tārīkh, ii. 397-99, quoted in Adams, p. 88.
44. Safwat, Najdat Fathi. "Freemasonry in the Arab World." Arab Research Centre, Arab Papers, number 4, London, 1980, p.12; Abd al-Raziq. Muhammad Abduh. p 55.
45. al-Qinawi, 'Abd al-Qāhir. Tahrīr al-Umam min kaib al-'Ajam (The Liberation of Nations from the Persian Dog), Cairo, (n.d.).
46. This certificate confers upon its beholder the title of 'Alim (Learned man in the theological sense) and qualifies him for a teaching post in the various branches of Islamic sciences .
47. See : 'Abd al-Rāziq. pp. 86-7.
48. See: Kenny, Lorne M. "Alī Mubārak: Nineteenth Century Egyptian Educator Writer and Administrator." MEJ, 1967, Vol. 21, pp. 35-51.
49. Published in Būlāq (1304-1306) (1887-89).
50. Adams, p. 45.
51. 'Abd al-Rāziq. 87.
52. Adams, p. 47, 71, footnote, 6.

53. Adams, p. 48.
54. See: Vatikiotis, P.J. "Muhammad 'Abduh and the Quest for a Muslim Humanism", Islamic Culture, 30-31 (1956-7), pp. 109-126.
55. See : Adam. pp. 120-6.
56. (Article on 'The Error of the Intellectuals) Rida's *Tarikh* quoted in Adams, p. 49.
57. "Circassians" a generic term comprising Kurdish, Albanian, Georgian and other non-Egyptian citizens of the Ottoman Empire.
58. See: Lewis, Bernard. The Middle East and the West. p. 80.
59. Blunt, Wilfred Scawen. Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt. Being a Personal Narrative of Events. London, 1907, pp. 99-100.
60. See: Abu-Lughod, Ibrahim. "The Transformation of the Egyptian Elite: Prelude to the 'Urābī Revolt". MEJ, Summer, 1967, vol. 21, pp. 325-344.
61. For more detailed account about the historical background of this event, see: Marlow, John. Cromer in Egypt. London, 1970, pp. 56-80.
62. Blunt. Secret History. p. 95-96.
63. Ibid., p. 97.
64. Broadly, A.M. How we defended Arabi and his Friends. London, 1884, p. 14.
65. See : Kedourie, Elie. Arabic Political Memoirs and Other Studies. pp. 6-7.
66. See, for example: Adams. p. 52.
67. Ibid., p. 62.
68. Ibid., p. 55.
69. Ibid., p. 54, footnote, 1, p. 56, footnote 4.
70. Blunt. Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt. p. 132.
71. Ibid., pp. 80-81.
72. 'Abd al-Rāziq, p. 120.
73. See: Amīn, Aḥmad. Zu' amā'. p. 82 ; Aḥmed, Jamāl M. The Intellectual \_\_\_\_\_, p. 28.

74. See: Rowlatt, Mary. Founders..., pp. 165-6.
75. Kedouri, Elie. Afghānī and 'Abduh. London, 1966, pp. 12-14
76. Adams. p. 64.
77. Ibid., p. 272.
78. Ibid., pp. 167-8; Kedouri, Elie. Afghānī and 'Abduh. London, 1966, pp. 12-14; Rowlatt, Mary. Founders... pp. 167-8.
79. A number of historians maintained that the idea was in fact originally the inspired thought of reformer al-Aghani, see: Haim, Sylvia. Arab Nationalism. An Anthology. California, 1962, p.18; See also: al-Makhzumi, Muḥammad. Khātirāt ... p. 82, 213 FF.
80. See, for example, his both studies Modern Egypt, in two volumes, London, 1908; Abbas II. London, 1915. See also: Owen, Roger : "The Influence of Lord Cromer's Indian Experience on British Policy in Egypt 1883-1907", ST Antony's Papers. Number 17. Middle Eastern Affairs, Number four. Edited by Albert Hourani, Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 109-139.
81. Brown. The Surest Path. p. 43, footnote 10.
82. While Abduh was in exile, Khedive Tawfiq had had his banishment term unofficially increased by six years.
83. quoted in Rowlatt, p. 164.
84. Adams, pp. 71-2.
85. 'Abduh. al-Islām wa-al-Nasrāniyyah . p. 14.
86. Adams, p. 95.
87. See: Rosenthal, Erwin I.J. Islam in the Modern National State. Cambridge, 1965, p.15-16.
88. A searching, independent, personal judgement based on Qur'ān and *Sunna*.
89. 'Abduh. al-Islām wa-al-Nasrāniyyah . p. 132.
90. Ibid., p. 65.
91. Ibid., p. 57.

92. Adams. p. 84.
93. Ibid., pp. 83-4.
94. Ibid., p. 84.
95. Ibid., p. 64.
96. About this aspect, see: Amin, Osman: "Renaissance in Egypt: Muhammad Abduh and his School." In M.M Sharif (Edit.) History of Muslim Philosophy.
97. Adams, p. 67, quoting from *al-Manār*, 465-66.)
98. Who used logic and dialectic methods to prove the validity of their doctrines .
99. Abduh. *al-Islām wa-al-Nasrāniyyah* . p. 52.
100. Modern Egypt. Vol. II, p. 180.
101. Safran p. 67.
102. See: 'Abduh, Muḥammad. *Risālat al-tawḥīd* . 1942-3. (Eng. trs., The Theology of Unity. By Ishaq Musa'ad and Kenneth Cragg, London, 1966.
103. Ibid., p. 29.
104. For a detailed study of Farah Anṭūn's biography, see: Reid, Donald. The Odyssey of Farah Anṭūn. Minneapolis and Chicago, 1975 ; Brugman, J. An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt. Leiden, pp. 224-228.
105. Reid, 13.
106. Reid, 14.
107. Ibid., 18.
108. Ibid., p. 42.
109. See his two books: *al-Marʿah al-Jadīdah* Cairo, 1901, and *Tahrīr al-Marʿah* . Cairo, 1899.
110. See: Adams, Charles. Islam and Modernism in Egypt. p. 225.
111. Nuseibeh, Hazem Zaki. The ideas of Arab Nationalism. Ithaca, 1956, p. 145, footnote no. 43.
112. Reid, p. 94.
113. Ibid., p. 42.

114. Antūn. " *al-Faylasuf Nietzsche wa falsafatuhu.*" *al-Jāmi'ah*. (New York) 1908, pp. 57-64, 81-86, 125-128.
115. *Atala aw al-hubb wa-al-jahl wa-al-dīn fi zulumat Amerika al-ula*. Reid, p. 144.
116. *Ibn al-sha'b al-latin*: Landau, Arabic Theatre, p. 262.
117. Adams, p. 110.
118. Antūn. *Ibn Rushd wa falsafatuhu*. Cairo, 1903.
119. Sharabi, Hisham. *Arab Intellectuals and the West*. p. 68.
- 120 'Abduh. *al-Islām wa-al-Nasrāniyyah*. p. 21.
121. Ibid., p. 15.
122. Antūn, Farah. *Ibn Rushd wa Falsafatuh* [Ibn Rushed and his Philosophy], Cairo, 1903, pp. 151-60, 160-72.
123. For detailed information, see: 'Abduh: *al-Islām wa-al-radd-'alā muntaqidihī*. Cairo, 1909-10.
124. Ibid.
125. Rida, *Tarikh*. ii. 477, quoted from Adams. p. 110.
126. Rida's *Tarikh*, ii. 397-99, quoted in Adams, p. 87.
127. For a detailed account, see: Adams. "Muhammad 'Abduh and the Transvaal Fatwa."
128. Adams. pp. 79-80.
129. see: Adams. "Muhammad Abduh and the Transvaal Fatwa."
130. Adams. p. 174.
131. Safran, p. 71-72.
132. 'Abduh. *Sharh maqamat Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*. Beirut, 1889.
133. Known as *Tafsīr al-Manār* (The Manar Commentary).
134. Ridā. *Tārikh*. I, pp. 11-13. quoted from Safran. p. 71.
135. See, for example: Khozai, Mohamed A: *The Development of Early Arabic Drama (1847-1900)*. p. 135; Landau, Jacob. "Abu Naddara, an Egyptian Jewish Nationalist." p. 31; Moosa, Matti. "The Rise of Arab Drama in Egypt." p. 402.

136. Gendzier, Irene L. "James Sanua and Egyptian Nationalism." p. 19.
137. Khozai. The Development. p. 123.
138. Gendzier. James Sanua. p. 19.
139. Landau. Abū Naddara. p 66.
140. Gendzier. p. 19.
141. Ibid., p. 27.
142. Landau. "Abū Naddara." p. 66.
143. Ibid., p. 66.
144. Daghir, Yūsuf. Masadir al-dirasah al-adabiyah. Vol. 2, pp. 549-552.
145. Badawi M.M "The Father of the Modern Egyptian Theatre Yaqub Sannū" p. 134.
146. See his works in al-Durār. Beirut, 1909120.
147. Landau, JAacob M. Parliaments... pp.107-124; Kedourie. Arabic Political. pp. 81-100.
148. Shayyal, Gamal el-Din. "The Syrian Historians In Egypt In The 19<sup>th</sup> Century." Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb, Alexandria, 13 (1959), pp. 25-29; Zaydan. Mashāhīr. Vol. I, pp. 75-80.

## CHAPTER SIX

From Ottomanism to Arabism.‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Kawākibī (1849-1903)

From the time of the early thinkers, al-Ṭahtāwī, Khayr al-Dīn, and al-Shidyāq, down to the time of al-Kawākibī,<sup>1</sup> we note the growing up of a number of concepts imported from Europe, such as "political liberty" and "nationalism". These played an essential role in directing the course of a new Arab philosophy. The movement of this philosophy has often been represented as a break with tradition, and a move into a more sceptical and analytical approach. Breaking with tradition, undoubtedly, facilitated the spread of these concepts. Prior to this period, Arab thinkers had been constrained by the need to fit all historical events into a rigid Islamic context. Although there were intermittent periods of religious revival after this, such as the Wahhabi movement, the traditional ideology could no longer perform its function. Ottomanism became hopelessly entangled in its own cobwebs. The only power which might conceivably have restored Ottomanism, namely resurgent Islamism, ebbed away. The new Arab philosophy stirred a wave of doubts as to the Sultan's rights, on which Ottomanism was based and once doubt or dissent appeared, it was hard to stop them. The general ferment extended itself to morals and even to the fundamental questions of society itself. The second half of the nineteenth century, the period in which the youth of al-Kawākibī was spent, and under the influences of which he was led to speculation, continued the earlier reaction in

a somewhat different form. We fail to understand the true reaction to Western institutions unless we take into account the multiplicity of religious groups within this region. Such institutions stimulated an interest in nationalism instead of in the apologetic religious appeals by means of which these groups could maintain themselves only with difficulty. It is not easy to understand the politics of this period without recognizing the background of religious diversity which played an indispensable part in the growth of secular attitudes and in the development of political awareness throughout the region. We discover in the reaction to Western thought not only the roots of al-Kawākibī's Arabism but also those of regional secularism in its most general form. Enthusiasm for European culture in the Fertile Crescent was perhaps displayed more in the hope of finding the secret of political freedom than out of eagerness for the culture itself. The introduction of Western ideas provided a vehicle for the elaboration and expression of a new political vision, which demanded a drastic revision of traditional values. Views that were once uncritically held could no longer be part of the new socio-intellectual order. Instead, a new faith in the value and worth of individuals as individuals arose and with it developed consciousness of democracy. This, however, raises the problem of whether at such times Westernism is not just to be contemplated but to be seized and acted on. The atmosphere of the second half of the nineteenth century seems to have generated a kind of revolutionary illusion through which neither its friends nor its enemies could see the situation clearly. The political literature of the day was therefore polemical rather than philosophical. It constituted a vigorous protest against political and social abuses of all sorts, and was written to stir up the masses rather than to satisfy the criteria of a



dispassionate scholarship. This state of affairs was bound to determine the approach of scholars of the period in the Fertile Crescent to socio-political questions. In fact, al-Kawākibī's life and thought exemplify a move in this direction. European thought opened up new paths, was not uncritically accepted by Arab thinkers, but with a good deal of modification, owing to the specific problems of their own environment. The motives underlying its acceptance were various, and not always explicitly avowed. Westernism, in the writings of al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn was a power that could be harnessed to create political and constitutional institutions in their respective countries. al-Kawākibī's period was that of disappointment in Europe's overseas empires. While still recognising that Western political institutions were the most developed, al-Kawākibī denied that there was democracy in these empires. Thus, the difference between the earlier and the later reactions to Western influence cannot be attributed to purely intellectual considerations; the historical dimension is also a factor in this.

With his traditional religious education, al-Kawākibī should have believed that perfection belonged to another world, not to this. His sensitive spirit needed all its intellectual equanimity and strength to raise itself above its background. But these qualities he never lacked. al-Kawākibī, like many contemporary liberal Arabs intellectually ahead of their society, was forced, when he came to what appeared to be a dead end in his mission, to break the shell that housed him and to flee from the reactionary rule of Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. This took place in 1898 when he left his home town of Aleppo and sought refuge in Cairo, where he was to achieve eminence as a writer and scholar, like many other scholars of Fertile Crescent. There he was

to die four years later. The trend of his interests was manifest from the start. His reaction to certain events in his life show at once the character of the man and of the times in which he lived, and the difficulties peculiar to the position of an original thinker in those days. During al-Kawākibī's early career he acted as a legal agent or mediator in the handling of various petitions that were presented to the authorities of Aleppo. Rashīd Riḍā describes how "al-Kawākibī held his own private court in a building between his house and the government house which he called *al-Markez* (The Office), and to which people went for arbitration, rather than to government courts."<sup>2</sup> This gained al-Kawākibī the title of *Abū al-du 'afā'* (The Father of the Weak).<sup>3</sup> But Rida's description contradicts al-Maghrabi's, who, after a trip to Aleppo tracing al-Kawākibī's impact there, denied that al-Kawākibī enjoyed any fame and said that he was hardly known by his neighbours.<sup>4</sup>

The logical progress along the path to which al-Kawākibī set himself brought him into open confrontation with the governors of his country. He edited the official paper of Aleppo, *al-Furāt* (Euphrates), both Arabic and Turkish sections, in 1875.<sup>5</sup> In 1878 al-Kawākibī, in collaboration with Hashim al-'Attar, published *al-Shahbā'* (a sobriquet for Aleppo), the first private weekly newspaper in Arabic printed in Syria.<sup>6</sup>

This venture, however, lasted only a short time (15 issues), owing to the fact that his writings were deemed to be offensive to the *wāli* of Aleppo, Kamīl Pāshā. The closing down of *al-Shahbā'* was a challenge to al-Kawākibī. And since the sense of criticism in his mind did not rest, he refused to yield his ground. A short time later (1879), he published a second newspaper under the title of *al-'itidāl*, (Moderation). It was Jamīl Pāshā, the *wāli* of Aleppo who

closed down the press in 1879. Moreover, the *wā'il* lost no opportunity in persecuting al-Kawākibī. On one occasion, in 1886, he exploited an assassination attempt by an Armenian lawyer against him, and imprisoned al-Kawākibī for a short term, alleging al-Kawākibī's complicity. However, what was far more harmful later for al-Kawākibī, was that he was not left to himself. The upshot came when 'Arif Pāshā "forged a document which he attributed to al-Kawākibī" and claimed that there was "a plan for handing over the *walāyat* of *Halab* to a Foreign Power." al-Kawākibī's property was confiscated, he was tried and sentenced briefly, but after an appeal, heard in a Lebanese court, he was found innocent.<sup>7</sup> On this Tapiero comments

son amour des reformes, de la liberté de parole et de pensée, devait lui créer vers la fin de sa vie beaucoup de difficultés. Le gouvernement se proposa même de l'arrêter et de le dépouiller de ses biens. C'est alors qu'il quitta Alep et se mit a voyager.<sup>8</sup>

al-Kawākibī was a master of Turkish and Persian, and, in fact, he continued to supplement his education from whatever source he could for the rest of his life. More than any of his contemporaries, he was fully aware of the failure of Ottomanism as a political system. He was the first Arab scholar to tackle the question seriously and his work in this field started a new movement in Arab politics. al-Kawākibī knew, of course, the work of al-Ṭahtāwī and he was acquainted with the works of Khayr al-Din. His inspiration, however, did not come only from these two scholars. He himself demonstrated that politics in the Arab provinces could involve Arabism without contradicting the principles of Islam. How this was possible, al-

Kawākibī's books *Ṭabā'ir al-istibdād wa masāri' al-isti'bād* (The Characteristics of Tyranny and the Crimes of Oppression), and *Umm al-qurā* (Mother of Villages) sought to explain, setting forth the causes of the corruption of Ottomanism and the opportunity the present time provided for the development of a new political movement.

At least one of these books, which were drafted before his arrival in Egypt, touched on the foundations of the problem of tyranny and its nature and why non-Arab rulers of Arab countries were able to maintain their authority in such an extraordinary way for over four hundred years. al-Kawākibī returns to this analysis time and again, his argument always supported by historical evidences.

Almost all of al-Kawākibī's discussions concerning political and social questions were subordinate in one way or another to his obsessive interest in tyranny. Hence it was natural for him to meet with backlash from the fundamentalists such as Abū al-Hudā al-Sayyādi<sup>9</sup> (1849-1909), 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's astrologer and the most influential figure in his court. In his attempt to preserve Islamic Orthodox teaching, al-Sayyādi was in a position to erect obstacles to the spread of liberal notions. At a later date, al-Kawākibī had to use pseudonyms such as: *al-Sayyid al-Furātī* and *al-Raḥḥāla K.*<sup>10</sup> These manifesto-like books are no less significant than Khayr al-Dīn's *Aqwam* or al-Bustānī's *Narṭr*. al-Kawākibī set out a plan of reconstruction for a whole political edifice. When *Ṭabā'ir* was published under the pseudonym *al-Raḥḥāla K.*, Jurjī Zaydan referred to it as unique in political literature.<sup>11</sup>

In essence, these books deal with political theory, but to the modern reader they possess a charged florid style with its own particular charm. They are designed for popular appeal rather than

the presentation of an argument based upon systematic reasoning; al-Kawākibī succeeds in transforming politics into a kind of literature. The treatment of existing social conditions is sensational rather than logical and reflects a deep desire to reform and revolutionize these conditions by creating a political awareness among Arabs. The aim he set himself was to ascertain the origin, extent, and limits of government in general, with specific reference to the effect of Ottomanism and its policies on modern Muslim society. His study explores the rise of tyrants, and he provides examples of the characteristics of despots from different periods, and outlines their destructive effect on society. These were the topics with which he was preoccupied in his *Umm al-qurā*, in which he applies his theories, as presented generally in *Ṭabāʾiʿ*, specifically to Arab topics. The essentially practical character of *Umm al-qurā* is evidenced by his frequent recourse to practical illustrations, and his singularly apt use of them to explain these theories.

It is noticeable that both al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn are confident that the progress of Arab thought will develop along the lines of European models. Both writers are convinced that the European method will prove to be a much better basis on which to form a political framework capable of sustaining the Ottoman Empire, comprised as it is of the various heterogeneous groups. They hold that such groups will be much more likely to benefit from constitutional government than from the imposition of an arbitrary authority. As government officials, both Khayr al-Dīn and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī hold that reform will be best achieved through edicts promulgated by rulers rather than through the actual participation of the populace. The consequence of their partially developed views is not, in effect,

to strengthen progress towards reform but rather to cause the development of a new form of tyranny which will exercise its power behind the screen of an apparent liberalism.

Although the beliefs of Khayr al-Dīn, al-Shidyāq, and al-Tahtawī, tend towards liberalism, since they hold positions in the Court, they cling to certain conservative views, largely in the interest of self-preservation, and in the belief that the time is not yet ripe for the wholehearted acceptance of their views. Thus, in effect, they lack the courage to implement their theories, and to achieve any kind of comprehensive reform. It is only with al-Kawākibī that a thinker arises not bound by the restrictions of being a courtier, a position which gives wings to his thoughts and enables him to speak out fearlessly against the injustice of Turkish rule.

al-Kawākibī's approach is different from that of Khayr al-Din and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī. Nevertheless, they have certain features in common; for example, they all believe in the reform of some of the more restrictive aspects of religion, and in the accountability of government, as the very core of reform. When we turn to al-Kawākibī's account of the distinction between a just and an unjust government, we discover the strength of the influence exercised upon his thinking by Western liberalism, although he never visited Europe, and his arguments do not accord with any particular set of European concepts. He holds progressive views in favour of removing the worst aspects of certain practices that had crept into Arabic culture and customs through the corrupt misapplication of Qur'ānic law and teachings, a result of the "confusion and weakness which had encompassed all the Muslims".<sup>12</sup>

His work, therefore, may be summarized as comprising two studies which are mutual related in a logical edifice. In *Ṭabā'ir* he

severely criticizes Islamic government in his own time identifying eight aspects of *istibdād* (authority) to be treated successively under their individual headings. This discussion establishes the basis for general reflections on the political backwardness of the Ottoman Empire. *Umm al-qurā* covers, with some important modifications, the same ground as the first, and is designed mainly to give a critical analysis of the causes of this backwardness of the masses, ascribing their "failings" to blind adherence to a faith "corrupted" to serve the needs of political stability.

al-Kawakibi openly preaches, and he defends his theories against those who attempt to obstruct any reform, clinging to the status quo in order to maintain their own privileged positions. Throughout his arguments, he seems to believe that political justice requires political reform and that the '*ulamā*' themselves, almost by definition, lack the capacity to ensure it. It is here that most of his criticisms find their place. The next main point in his argument is to ask what role the '*ulamā*' are supposed to play in the community. As his theory of reform depends upon the liberalization of an established tyranny, he recognizes that such a process will be both long and difficult. He argues that tyranny is not only confined to the abuse of political power, but extends into every aspect of cultural life, so that control of the religious, educational, and economic life of a community is essential to its maintenance and continuity. It is from this point of view that he looks at the various manifestations of established authority. In his position as a theologian, he fearlessly attacks his fellow-religious leaders "the turbaned who are more harmful to religion than the devils" <sup>13</sup> who support any type of unjust and arbitrary authority.

In fact, the caliph's autocracy, in whatever form it may express

itself, does not make the caliph a lawgiver. Islamic law is expressed through the consent of the community and not the will of the caliph. But in fact Islamic law never ceases to be the victim of violation, and it is never difficult for the authority of the state to be upheld by the hand of the law through a legal interpretation from the theologians, in which they are but servants of the rule. It is natural that this development should have disastrous effects upon Islam itself, producing a fertile field for the development of fanaticism and hypocrisy in its institutions. Any relaxation of authority, such as an extension of the tolerance shown to those of other religions, is likely to provoke *fitnah*. The *‘ulamā’* combine political manipulation with religious teaching and dispense justice in conformity with the stern tenets of Ottoman policy. Under such conditions community life is tense and stifling, and cultural contacts which might ease the situation do not exist. It is easier to follow the course of al-Kawākibī's criticism of the theologians in this context.

Emphatically al-Kawākibī rejects the view that backwardness can be ascribed to outside forces. He finds the causes of breakdown in the corruption of the *shaykhs* and *imāms* who, over the centuries, have tolerated their rulers' use of royal titles and certain holy names which were normally only attributed to God.

The powerful feeling of the absolute monarchy of God is one of the most pervasive elements of Islam, and it contributed towards making the caliphate into an absolute rule.<sup>14</sup>

In this manner, the unfortunate populace was seduced by corrupt, self-seeking religious leaders into believing that any opposition to their blasphemous edifice would be an attack on Islam and an affront



to God himself. In Islam, for example, there are ninety-nine names reserved to the Creator. According to al-Kāwakibī, the Turkish sultans used these names in order to impress their subjects. By this means they used religion as a political tool of oppression.

While al-Kawākibī's theories may not particularly revolutionary to the modern reader, they, nevertheless, remain important stepping stones in the slow progress towards a liberated Arab culture.

al-Kawākibī regards the period under the Turkish rule, between the end of the Golden Age of the Arab caliphate and the beginning of the modern epoch, as a time of social inequality and tyranny that was opposed to any progress and caused the estrangement of the Arabs from their cultural heritage. In *al-Ṭabā'ī*, he gives an idealized picture of early Islamic Arab society at its highest stage of social development. He then proceeds to demonstrate how this heritage has been slowly eroded over the years by foreign usurpers so that only a shadow of the old Arab culture remains.

It is true that the despotism of some the Ottoman Sultans contributed to the decay of Arab culture, but the seeds of dissolution and the germs of decay were present even at the beginning of the 'Abbasid era.

Underlying all of al-Kawākibī's theories is his fundamental belief that, by returning to a pure and uncontaminated form of Islam "a straight, firm, correct, well-founded religion which is not surpassed, and not approached by any other religion in wisdom, in order, and in solidity of structure", there will be, as a natural consequence, an eventual revival and acceptance of basic Islamic justice for all. This, in turn, will open the minds of the people to the necessity for making further improvements of a liberal type that will benefit Arab society as a whole. He maintains that this can only take place after

the removal of the usurping power and the re-establishment of an Islamic government which is based essentially on the ideal models associated with the Golden Age. His theories of reform are based on the premise that Turkish rule will be ended and be replaced by a Pan-Islamic confederation, including Turkey, and that its leadership should be drawn from the Arabs. Thus, the ideal vision that he holds for the future is based on a consultative government in which the Caliphate is returned by the Turks to the legitimate custodians, the Arabs, who will be truly representative of Islam. The Arabs, will then rule all other Muslims in a just state. Even when he goes beyond this concept, he returns to it repeatedly; he adds to it, but never deserts it. The rift between Arabism and Ottomanism had long been hidden, but events now demanded a choice.

Pursuing the problem further, and like other reformers of this period, influenced by Western political tradition, al-Kawākibī believes in constitutional monarchy as the best form of government, "the mean between the two extremes, despotism and republicanism." In this model, religious leaders, who also speak for the people, work on an equal basis with the ruler to achieve ordered government. al-Kawākibī compares this form of "Consultative Government" to the Western parliamentary system of the nineteenth century. This is the same sort of argument as we have encountered in al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn.

In his written analysis of the structure of the ideal consultative government for the Arabs, al-Kawākibī examines every aspect in minute detail to ensure that his theories will be workable in every conceivable situation. He examines in detail various types of government but is fully aware that even a constitutional government may operate in such a way that it may abuse its authority and create

situations of injustice :

the forms of despotic government 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 a 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.<sup>15</sup>

To prevent any possible abuse of authority in the future, he made one of his principal objectives the fostering of public spirited political awareness to such an extent that it could be used as an instrument of pressure by the people against any misuse of power. He defines tyranny as "the acts of individuals or collectivities relating to the rights of others without fear of responsibility or respect for laws, human or divine."<sup>16</sup>

His writings contains material of many different kinds related to politics. Sylvia Haim, whose contributions to al-Kawākibī scholarship are numerous and renowned, holds a rather negative view of him and has questioned both his importance as a philosopher and the originality of his ideas. Haim maintains that al-Kawākibī liberally plagiarized large sections of the work Della Tirannide by the Italian philosopher Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803), which was published in Italy in 1800, and also from the pro-Arab scholar, traveller, and poet Wilfrid Scawen Blunt<sup>17</sup> as well as from the

nineteenth century French socialist philosopher Charles Fourier (1772-1837). This claim has served Sylvia Haim as the principal subject for a number of treatises,<sup>18</sup> in particular her Ph.D thesis.<sup>19</sup>

Around this assertion has arisen one of the most interesting disputes among modern Arab and orientalist historians and critics alike. Although it is undeniable that Haim has worked extensively on al-Kawākibī, it is difficult to agree with her statement about al-Kawākibī's plagiarism. There is no strong evidence for this claim except perhaps in the writings of the Egyptian writer, Aḥmad Amīn, the source used by Haim.

Nevertheless, if this was the case it must have presented many difficulties to al-Kawākibī, as he knew neither English nor Italian. Haim maintains that he acquired his knowledge of these writers by possibly listening to translations of passages of these works by way of a Consul or other foreign dignitary capable of making a basic verbal translation.

Sylvia Haim also accuses al-Kawākibī of plagiarising Fourier's theories on the role and status of women in society. For Fourier, women constitute an economic burden on men, whose extent varies among bedouin, rural and urban societies. While such an account may be based on fact, it is important to note, however, that if al-Kawākibī's theories in this regard are perceived to lack originality, then so were Fourier's. His theories had been produced centuries earlier by Plato and Averroes. As an indication of just how complicated this claim is supposed to be I give below a quotation from Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic on the position of women, Averroes wrote :

Yet, in these states the ability of women is not

known, only because they are being taken for procreation alone therein. they are therefore placed at the service of their husbands and [relegated] to the position of procreation, for rearing and [breast] feeding. But this undoes their [other] activities. Because women in these states are not being fitted for any of the human virtues it often happens that they resemble plants. That they are a burden upon the men in these states is one of the reasons for the poverty of these states. For, they are found in them in twice the number of men while at the same time they do not support any (or: carry on most) of the necessary [essential] activities, except for a few, which they undertake mostly at a time when they are obliged to make up their want of funds, like spinning and weaving. All this is self-evident.<sup>20</sup>

On this theory, Erwin Rosenthal has commented:

It is the more surprising that this realistic criticism of the position of women in Islam and its bad effect on the economic health of the nation should have gone unnoticed, together with his repeated critical remarks about the contemporary Muslim state as a whole and of its prominent classes.<sup>21</sup>

A reasonable hypothesis, by B. Lewis, holds that al-Kawākibī's work was influenced by:

Abdullah Jevdet's Turkish translation of Vittorio Alfieri's Della Tirannide. Entitled simply *Istibdād* (Despotism), it was first printed in Geneva in 1898.<sup>22</sup>

In relation to al-Kawākibī's concept of a return to a form of government based on the re-instatement of an Arab caliph and the

revival of a just system of consultative government, it seems quite likely that the idea of returning to the basic justice and order of the Golden Age of Islam, which was a natural ideal, was not have been unique to himself. Indeed, it may be said that many Arab intellectuals of his day must have wished nostalgically for such a situation to occur.

Norbert Tapiero, who read al-Kawākibī's works, says little of his sources, but suggests that al-Kawākibī may have learned from the principles which were formerly laid down in Montesquieu's L'Esprit des Lois:

Si l'on peut penser que ce sont les circonstances politiques et les épreuves subies à Alep dans l'exercice de fonctions variées et importantes, qui ont conduit Al-Kawakibi à écrire cet ouvrage [ *Taba'ir* ], il est une autre source que l'on doit signaler et que l'on sent tout le long du livre: c'est *L'Esprit des Lois* de Montesquieu.<sup>23</sup>

al-Kawākibī's concept of the ideal state was, therefore, founded on a consciousness of his own Islamic heritage and a knowledge of Western ideas. His famous contemporary, the scholar Wilfrid Blunt, an advocate of the Arabs and of Islamic culture, also saw this Golden Age as the core from which the Arab world had developed, had come to fruition and had then subsequently declined. He saw, like al-Kawākibī, that it was only by returning to the ideals of this period that Arab culture and society could be revitalized and reborn.

Turkish rule was seen by al-Kawākibī as a rather lengthy interruption in the national evolution of the Arab people. But this interruption was of a complex kind and even al-Kawākibī himself needed several pages of close argument to persuade his Arab audience that this was in fact what his theory was all about. Here again, he

claims, history bears out and reinforces his contentions. He conceives the ideal types of governments in history as being those experienced during the Second Roman Republic and the period of the First Four Caliphs.

His concept of the "just state" is one in which the executive is accountable to the legislature, which in turn is accountable to the people, and in which a person is secure:

In his life, possessions and property, in his physical and mental enjoyments; assured of his personal, intellectual and religious freedoms, as though he were alone in the world with no one to stand in his way; assured of his power to do what is beneficial to his *ummah* (Nation); confident in his uprightness of the judiciary; confident that he will have the honour - as is prescribed by the law - to come to the defence of the nation by shedding his blood. All these freedoms are secured for the individual in civilised nations by his government which watches over him and supplies all his needs. In a state where these conditions are fulfilled, the individual lives in the world the life promised to him in paradise by religion, as though he were eternal in his nation and Fatherland.<sup>24</sup>

As al-Kawākibī conceives it, loyalty to a *waṭan* is never a mere tribal emotion, it is social. The European idealization of the nation in which its subjects would devote all their energies and even their life blood to it in a time of crisis - that is, the feeling for the fatherland, became transposed by him into the concept of the *waṭan*. He is thus in the same difficulty as al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn were when he formulates his concept of fatherland.

Arabic culture was originally created by nomadic tribesmen. These had conquered the greater part of the known world and were

forced, for the first time, to come to terms with the indigenous cultures of the conquered peoples, such as the Persians and the Greeks. They devised a political system inspired by elements from those indigenous cultures. It was such a fusion of cultures that was responsible for the creation of Islam's specific character and identity, extending beyond the limits of a desert environment with its simple culture. The concept of loyalty to the family, to the tribe and to Islam was, of course, already firmly embodied in the minds of the Arab people. Thus, it was a task for al-Kawākibī to promote his Western based idea of "nation" as a truly original Arabic expression and a unifying national force: "a man established governments to serve him. However, despotism changed that and made the subjects servants of the rulers", "despotism used the power of people which is the power of the government against their interests."

Thus, al-Kawākibī combined all these foreign ideas into a new synthesis in which the concepts of *umma* and *watan* became a part of the political discipline:

The most beneficial stage reached by mankind was that in which organized government was established as a dam against despotism... and by setting no power and influence above the power of the law ... and in investing the legislative power in the hands of the "*umma*" ...and the "*umma*" will not agree on an error ...and by making the "*umma*" vigilant in supervising the course of its government.<sup>25</sup>

Like many others both before and after him, al-Kawākibī's thesis emphasises the role of the people themselves in a manner similar to the views held by contemporary European thinkers:



An *umma* is the sum of the individuals with a common ancestry or *watan*, language or religion, just as a building is a collection of stones. When one member of the umma progresses or degenerates, the totality of that umma will be affected, just as a flea, standing on the side of a great ship, will weigh it down and make it lean sideways, although the movement cannot be felt by the senses.<sup>26</sup>

al-Kawākibī believes also that politics is defined as "the wise administration of public affairs". It therefore follows that the prime study of politics concerns tyranny, i.e. the wilful and arbitrary conduct of public affairs without fear of retribution or punishment. The unjust state and the behaviour of tyrants were, as we have stated, a subject to which al-Kawākibī devotes much of his literary effort. The main purpose of his opposition to despotic government is not merely to show that such a situation can occur, for al-Afghānī and his disciples and followers have already claimed to demonstrate this, but also to show that this phenomenon can be realised, and that what supports a tyranny is not a divine ordinance but merely a handful of human exploiters, who, consequently, may be reasonably disposed of. He considers that government may become tyrannical if not bound by any revealed law or tradition or the will of the people. He also goes on to show that whatever its type - whether a democracy or a monarchy, limited or absolute - government can only be excluded from the class of the tyrannical when it is under meticulous supervision and uncompromising control. Every government, no matter how just, becomes tyrannical when the nation is not vigilant.

Undoubtedly, he succeeds, by his comparisons and contrasts, in making various types of government illuminate each other. He

demonstrates that it is the policy of tyrants to keep the people ignorant, as their education and enlightenment would lead them to desire freedom and a better life. Once they are enlightened, he wrote, "they will realize that freedom is better than life" and "they will understand that it means that no one besides God deserves obedience or respect; and that once the subjects of tyrants understand this, they will act accordingly, and will no longer be subservient; they will give their worship and obedience only where they think they are due. He demonstrates that All tyrants are not merely as scandalously wealthy, but also that they ban the knowledge that makes social life civilized. They fear the sciences, as science itself is outside their power and authority, and scientists have greater knowledge than they do themselves, and thus constitute a threat.

According to him, although the tyrant fears "science in itself" because it has "greater power and authority than anything else, and a tyrant must be afraid of all who have more knowledge than himself", nevertheless, he adds: "the tyrant is not afraid of all sciences" ; he only fears those which broaden the mind and teach man his basic rights and give him the knowledge and means to demand and defend these. For him, the sciences which the tyrant fears are, for example:

Mental philosophy, the study of the rights of nations, politics, history and rhetoric. <sup>27</sup>

But he does not fear

the theological sciences because he believes that they do not lift the veil of ignorance but are only a pastime for those who are enthusiastic for science. <sup>28</sup>

It is clear then that there is a constant battle between tyranny and science, a battle where both sides aim at drawing the mass of the people to their cause, because, if these are ignorant, they are afraid, and if they are afraid, they give in. Contrariwise, once they have learnt, they will speak, and once they have spoken, they will act.

The tyrant, according to al-Kawākibī, is in great fear of any theologian who gains eminence among the masses; he uses every means to attract the theologians to his side, in order to corrupt them and use their work to bolster his own tyrannical regime. Like Abduh, al-Kawakibi finds it difficult to keep silent on what appears to him only hypocrisy. Like his contemporary thinkers in the West, he demonstrates that beneath the authority of a tyrant there stand certain lesser authorities, who seek power and false honours. But between the two kinds of authority there lies this fundamental difference; that whereas the authority of a tyrant is absolute, under which all other authorities exist to serve it, that of the '*ulamā*' on the other hand, is a dependent authority, and may easily be withdrawn or taken from them. These people are outwardly free and wealthy but they are, in fact, just as much slaves to the power of tyrants as the masses. They are used by him in order to further his own tyrannical schemes. Merchants, bankers and landowners who maintain considerable wealth by supporting tyrants are, of course, other pillars on which they build their edifice of violence, hatred, fear and suppression. It is all of these that al-Kawākibī feels he must struggle against.

The masses he considers as "the food on which the tyrant lives; they are his livelihood and his power." At the same time, they constitute a continual danger:

But the fear of the tyrant lest his subjects should avenge themselves is undoubtedly greater than their fear of his might. His fear results from knowledge and theirs from ignorance. He fears just retribution and death, and they only their helplessness and the loss of a few mouthfuls of food and the motherland which they will quickly learn to replace.<sup>29</sup>

The culmination of al-Kawākibī's *Umm al-Qurā* comprises the exposition of his theories on a reformed and revitalized Arab caliphate. This book shows that already he was confident of having prepared the ground sufficiently to apply the principles embodied in *al-Ṭabā'ī*. He discusses at great length points introduced in *al-Ṭabā'ī*, elaborating them and drawing out their particular implications. Indeed, his *Umm al-qurā* comprises a fascinating dialogue based on a hypothetical secret society. So realistic is his description of the workings of this body (which had many suggestions for the improvement of Arab society) that some of his critics believed it actually to exist.

Having refuted the principle of Ottomanism, as he supposes, he gives us his own principle. The process of Arabising, in his opinion, is a condition for any reformist scheme in the Ottoman Empire.

So that even the Ottoman Renaissance, in all its branches, was anticipated in Egypt and borrowed from there. In fact, as informed persons know, Egypt preceded the Sublime Ottoman state by some steps in the field of civilization only because she was thrust by the hands of the late Muhammed 'Ali and Ibrahim...<sup>30</sup>

Denying that Ottomanism and arbitrary authority can ever be justified politically, al-Kawākibī claims that the Arabs are well

suites to the purpose of forming a new Islamic society. By contrast, the Ottoman Sultans, despite their obvious power, do not possess the essential qualities held by the Arabs:

They have often supported Islam only for the sake of power, and it is impossible for them to prefer Islam to power because of the situation of their empire. Their kingdom is made up of different countries, professing different religions, divided into numerous sects, and their ministers are drawn from these different nationalities. The most that can be expected of the Ottomans is, then, that they should support the movement of Islamic union; more than that they are not fit to do.<sup>31</sup>

al-Kawākibī has no illusions about this view: "religion is one thing, and sovereignty another, and the sultan is not the whole of the state".<sup>32</sup> In such statement he shows himself to be close to the spirit of late nineteenth century thinking, and also an astute observer of the liberalism of the West.

Any summary of the argument is bound to be misleading, but the heart of the matter is this: the caliph is to be chosen from among the *Quraysh* and installed at Mecca, rather than Constantinople. A Council of Consultation is to be established as a special body with the power to supervise the appointment of the Caliph and to act as his advisers. The caliph's authority, however, is to be restricted to the Hijaz; he has no power to interfere in the political or administrative affairs of the sultanates and emirates that owe him allegiance. His influence is limited to approving the appointment of the sultans and emirs.

The central theme now clearly emerges. The Caliph's position is

regarded essentially as that of a spiritual figurehead, or in C. Ernest Dawn's words:

Not as a successor to the historical caliphate, but as a means of facilitating the reform of Islam and the formation of the great Pan-Islamic federation.<sup>33</sup>

The caliph is not to employ a standing army; his name is to be mentioned in the *Khutbah* before those of the other rulers, but it is not to appear on coins. This last is to prevent any suggestion that his powers are like those of a temporal leader. Two or three thousand soldiers, drawn from all the emirates, are to constitute a guard to protect the Hijaz, and both this army and its generals are required to take orders only from the Council. An additional General Islamic Council is to be formed with the Caliph as its head, consisting of more than 100 members nominated by the various emirates and sultanates. Its function is to act mainly on matters relating to religious policy. The Caliph is to be elected every three years whilst the Council itself is to meet every year for two months at Mecca or Ta'if, prior to the the *Hajj* season.

If this Council were concerned exclusively with the supervision of religious practices, even though it is independent of the Caliph, it would be of comparatively little importance. However, it is to be concerned also with the political side of the *Ummah*. Its powers are to be extended to consider the effect of current events on the life of the *Ummah* and to adapt Islamic legislation in order to take account of this. This is to be done by means of *Ijtihād*, the gates of which, in al-Kawākibī's view are not closed, whatever may be the orthodox view.

He goes so far as to encourage a thinking obedience to a just government - even if it is not Islamic - and actively to discourage blind obedience to anyone, even someone as just and wise as 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.<sup>34</sup>

al-Kawākibī's concept of the constitution of his *Ummah* owes something to Western ideas as represented by the federations of Germany and America; it owes more, however, to the treatise by Wilfrid Blunt, The Future of Islam:

At the present day nobody with any instruction doubts that Abd el Hamid and his house might be legally displaced by the first successful rival, and that the only right of Constantinople to lead Islam is the right of the sword. As long as the Ottoman Empire is maintained and no counter Caliph appears, so long will the Sultan be the acknowledged head of religion ; but not a day longer. The Caliphate, for one alien as Abd el Hamid is to Koreysh, must be constantly maintained in arms, and on the first substantial success of a new pretender his present following would fall off from him without compunction, transferring to this last their loyalty on precisely the same ground on which Abd el Hamid now receives it. Abd el Hamid would then be legitimately deposed and disappear, for it is unlikely that he would find any such protector in his adversity as the legitimate Caliphs found in theirs six hundred years ago. So fully is this state of things recognized by the Ulema, that I found the opinion last year to be nearly universal that Abd el Hamid was destined to be the last Caliph of the House of Othman.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, in this period of the awakening of the Arabs to the need for a just form of government, the essential model found was, in fact, a revision of Western ideas and values.

At first, it seems clear, al-Kawākibī was concerned exclusively

for the Arab *Ummah*. Later he appears to have modified his stance on this and acknowledged that there was a place in his scheme for non-Arab Muslims as well, even for his old enemies, the Ottoman Turks. Furthermore, he took account of the characteristics of these non-Arab peoples and assigned to them functions appropriate to these characteristics. The Turks he sees as diplomats, the Egyptians as administrators, the Afghans and the North Africans as soldiers.

He claims that the non-Arab Muslims will accept Arab suzerainty for religious reasons. It is for these reasons, too, that the Caliph's capital should be Mecca. The other advantage of having the capital there is that it is remote. For any intending usurper it would be difficult to enter the Arabian Peninsula; he would be almost impossible to manoeuvre an army there, as it would be severely restricted by the desert. The soldiers of such an army would lack enthusiasm for a venture such as this, which would produce little booty, owing to the poverty of the local terrain.

al-Kawākibī was fully aware that, although poor, the people of the Arabian Peninsula were custodians of a pure Arab-Islamic heritage, since they were the first converts to Islam, had the greatest knowledge of the *hadiths* and possessed a devoted loyalty to the Prophet. He also claims that the bedouins represent the purest and richest expression in Arabic language and literature amongst all of the (then) 100 millions that speak the language of the Qurʾān.

Thus, al-Kawākibī concludes that only the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula can effect a union of all Muslims, including these whose native tongue is not Arabic. It is only through such a "confederation", in which all Muslim peoples are represented, that any reforms can be attempted. The poverty and military weakness of the Arab people at that time made him realize that political stability could only be



achieved and maintained by the spiritual unification of all Muslim peoples through a great religious and cultural renaissance; the bedouin were seen as "the sole medium for religious unification".

al-Kawākibī undoubtedly believed that the European movement towards emancipation through science and technology, as represented by the Great Powers, was more dynamic than anything to be found within the hide-bound traditionalism of the Arab provinces. But the the European Imperial Powers such as England, Russia and France were advised by him to consider that Muslims can never be converted to Christianity and certainly not in an age when Christians were abandoning their own faith.<sup>36</sup> No such conversion should be attempted, out of a misplaced fear of Islamic fanaticism, associated with the adventurism of Barbary pirates. "The Christians", he argues, "did not make progress in the arts and sciences until the advent of Protestantism, which is similar to true Islam".<sup>37</sup> European statesmen were advised to consider the trustworthiness of the Arab people, to acquaint themselves with the teachings of the Qur'an and to pay no heed to the rantings of fanatics.

With considerable lucidity, he proceeds to explain to the Europeans the various true meanings of the concept of *Jihād*, which evoked horrific visions of fear and strife in their minds. His approach is not to moralize this concept but to analyze it from the standpoint of the function it played in the political system. He warns the Western and the Arab world alike of a truth which they have ignored. He points out that the concept of *Jihād* had a wider meaning originally than is recognized by the modern Western world. To support this view, he produces three pieces of evidence.

With regard to the concept of *Jihād*, two verses in the Qur'an : "*fa-ṣḍa' bimā tu' mar*"<sup>38</sup> (Obey what you are commanded) and "*wa*

*jāhidu fī sabīl Allah*"<sup>39</sup> (Fight for the sake of the Lord), refer to idolaters only, and not to "People of the Book", who were given full tolerance under Muslim rule. al-Kawākibī states - something extremely rare in a theologian of those days - that none of the 'ulamā' would restrict the concept of jihad to fighting non-Muslims. They consider it also to apply to the daily battle of every man to maintain his life and family. *Jihād* gradually became applied to war and conquest during the Crusades<sup>40</sup> which were initiated by Christians.

He maintains that if Europeans examined history they would see that for seven centuries the Arabs made no war in the name of *Jihād*. Attacks on North African vessels or Christian merchantmen were the work of pirates beyond the control of the state just as European pirates were wont to operate elsewhere beyond the control of the authority of the countries from which they had emanated. "The best proof" al-Kawākibī adds "that Islam is not intolerant, and that Arabs understand the meaning of the Qur'ān and submit to its religious commands, is the fact that they have taken no part in the Armenian massacres." As for "Turks, who claim the authority of religion, they are only moved by political ambitions, and try to make people submit to their rule, and to frighten Europe, by invoking the caliphate and Muslim public opinion." <sup>41</sup>

Not all Arab writers and orientalists who have dealt with the work of al-Kawākibī have realized the full significance of his writing relating to the concept of *Jihād*. They have been content to regard him as the precursor of Arab nationalism commenting only upon his definition of the Arab nation:

O people !! mean all you non-Muslims who speak Arabic.

I ask you to forget malevolence and hatred and what your fathers and grandfathers reaped. What this has already done at the hands of agitators is enough. I have more respect for you than to think that you will not be guided by the means of unity, since you are the first of the enlightenment ones. Behold the nations of Austria and America have been guided by knowledge to different paths and firm principles of national secular unity, racial rather than religious harmony, political rather than administrative cohesion. So why do we not follow one of these paths or something like it? and why do our intellectuals not tell those foreigners and aliens who stir up hatred: leave us alone and we will manage our own affairs. We will speak *fusha'* together, we will be like brothers and share each other's joys and sorrows. Let us take care of our secular life and leave religions to rule in the hereafter only. Let us unite with the same motto: long live the nation, long live the country, long life to us, free, and strong.<sup>42</sup>

They fail to realize the true message that al-Kawākibī was attempting to convey through his explanation of the concept of *Jihād*, which is of no less significance than his definition of the Arab nation. We see how he cleverly distinguishes the Arab people from the Berber pirates of North Africa who abused the *Jihād* in order to justify their piracy against Christian merchantmen. He demonstrates that, in doing so, they distorted and abused beyond recognition the justice and purity of this great Islamic concept, and not only in the eyes of the Western Christian world. In other words, what he wants to emphasise is that these unholy Berber pirates who ravaged the North African coast were not Arabs but a separate race who were linked only by religion and not culture. Again, he raises the same point, but this time with another non-Arab Muslim people:

The yardstick of the nature of a nation's relationship to slavery or freedom can be found in an investigation of its language, and whether it contains only a few expressions of exaltation, like Arabic or many expressions of humility like Persian. <sup>43</sup>

It may be mentioned, in passing, that al-Kawākibī's contempt for religious leaders and his hatred of Turkish rule sometimes so colored and warped his judgement that he was incapable of objective thought when Arabism was concerned. At times, his distortions of historical events are appalling:

This Sultan Muhammad, the Conqueror, the best of the Ottoman Dynasty, put the realm before religion. He secretly made an agreement with Ferdinand the Spanish king of Aragon and his wife Isabella, to support them in destroying the rule of the Banu al-Ahmar, the last of the Arab states in Spain. <sup>44</sup>

We gain further, if somewhat confusing, information concerning his views on the governing of his Arab nation from a rather more accurate reflection on history:

Disparity in character between rulers and subjects is a matter of great importance, as becomes clear to anyone who examines the histories of nations. It is apparent that the greatest and most successful kings and conquering leaders, like the two Alexanders [?], 'Umar, Salah al-Din, (may God be satisfied with them), Chingiz [Khan], al-Fatih, the German Sharlakan [Charlemagne], Peter the Great, and Bonaparte, only succeeded in their magnificent affairs due to their own sound resolve in complete accord with the manners and customs of their subjects and their armies. Thus, they were the real heads for the bodies, not like the head of a camel on the

body of an ox or vice versa. Only this accord makes the nation consider its ruler as its head, and sacrifice itself to protect him and to maintain its independence. Otherwise, a nation will never succeed, as the wise al-Mutanabbi said: People are led by their kings; how can Arabs succeed if their kings are non-Arabs? <sup>45</sup>

The Lebanese scholar George Antonius has shed further light on the debt that the Arab world owes to al-Kawākibī as a pioneer of the concept of Pan-Arabism. As a scholar, he was primarily concerned with that part of the Arab world known as the Fertile Crescent. He found that al-Kawākibī had ably presented a feasible plan for Arab unity and political development which could be used in that region. Such was his enthusiasm for al-Kawakibi's teachings that he considered :

The doctrines preached by Kawakebi contributed, as was inevitable, to the gradual transference of the leadership in the Arab movement to Moslem hands. Far from being inspired by prejudice, his campaign was on the contrary a plea against sectarian dissension; and his writings contain passages in which he pleads for equality between the creeds for the sake of national solidarity, with fervour and unmistakable sincerity. <sup>46</sup>

Another Lebanese scholar Khairallah T. Khairallah, (1880-1930) in his book entitled "Le Probleme du Levant" <sup>47</sup> has described the various secret societies of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire and demonstrated how they were to influence the writings of scholars and "revolutionary thinkers". al-Kawākibī is considered by the progressively minded Khairallah as one of the founding fathers of Arab nationalism, on the basis of his Western orientated philosophy.

This hinged on the promise that the secular and religious aspects of life should be considered on separate bases. As Khairallah points out:

Al-Kaouakebi réalisa la création d'un comité secret, dont il avait esquissé le dessin dans Om-ol-Cora, et l'on peut dire que cette association fut comme L'Alma Parens de toutes celles qui se sont constituées pour servir la cause Arabe.<sup>48</sup>

The teaching of al-Kawākibī may have been of the greatest interest to the Arabic speaking world; on the other hand, Sylvia Haim states "it must be stressed that these ideas are not of his own invention, but are a foreign importation". In emphasising this claim, Haim makes several comparisons between al-Kawākibī and Blunt and reaches this conclusion: "All these desirable results are claimed by al-Kawākibī to follow from the programme he sketches in *Umm al-qurā*. The mode of election of this spiritual caliph is the same in both writers." Haim goes beyond this point "*Umm al-qurā* is in debt not only to Blunt, but to other European ideas such as those of the Freemasons."<sup>49</sup> Haim, may, in turn, be criticised. Even allowing for some lack of originality on the part of al-Kawākibī, it may be said that his original manner in adapting, modifying, and extending these Western influences resulted in a refreshingly vibrant Arab philosophy which, in turn, may be said to be Arab thought. His very efforts to demonstrate a substantial similarity between socialism and both Islamic and Christian doctrines are a proof of his Arab character.

On the question of resistance to despotism, al-Kawākibī occupies a somewhat ambiguous position. In one place, he presents a fiery polemic against tyranny and tyrants, in another place, he lays down that "despotism must not be fought with violence. It must be fought

gradually and with gentleness.", which is nearly the position of the school of al-Ghazālī and al-Māwardī and within its rules and philosophical tradition. And thus, in the way in which his proposed "revolution" may be achieved, he belongs rather to the intellectual conservative reaction. He avoids, as far as possible, the appearance of an innovator, while being so in the truest sense of the word. When he attacks an old dogma it is not by a daring march to face it, but rather by a quiet process of sapping the foundations. He disposes also of traditional principles not by direct attack and by replacing them with new proofs and reasoning, but by calmly ignoring them. Thus he reaches the conclusion that:

We can scarcely find two neighbouring regions or two districts within one region or two villages within one district or two houses within one village, the inhabitants of one of which are Muslims and those of the other non-Muslims, but that we find that the Muslims are less active and organized than their neighbours in all vital matters, whether private or public.<sup>50</sup>

al-Kawākibī cannot, intellectually, concede the idea of an actual physical revolution against Ottoman rule, holding that the concept of reform that he strives to fulfill is not the result of a priori conceptions, nor can he countenance a military coup d'état. What must be done instead is to work on the reform of religious and social institutions. He enlarges on this theme, pointing out that:

The nation, the majority of whose members do not feel tyranny, does not deserve freedom, the nation which has been struck with vileness and poverty to the extent that its members have become like animals or worse, does not ask for freedom. It might avenge itself on the

tyrant, but only for the sake of taking revenge on his person, not in order to get rid of tyranny. This will not benefit such a nation at all, but will replace one disease by another, which is like exchanging constipation for a headache. Or it might fight the tyrant by another tyrant; should it succeed, the new leader will wash his hand in the water of tyranny, and it will not benefit anyone, but it will be an exchange of a chronic disease for an acute one. Such a nation might perhaps attain freedom by chance, but it will again not benefit from it, and this freedom will soon turn into an unsettled form of tyranny which is worse still, as a setback after a convalescence is worse than the original malady.<sup>51</sup>

Of course, his stand-point is influenced by the Western political and philosophical tradition, and also by his contacts with the circle of ʿAbduh; when he speaks against tyranny, in effect, he subconsciously lays the foundations of a socio-political change which can only be achieved through revolution. To many Arab writers of his day, the idea of comparing political conditions with states of health or disease was quite common, even al-Afghānī following this tradition: "Muslim society is sick and its salvation lies in Islam". "Every Muslim is sick, and his only remedy is in the Qurʾān."<sup>52</sup> In al-Kawākibī's hands this metaphor is pursued and developed with vigor and lucidity.

On an abbreviated scale, the following may be taken as an example of his style of argument. From the assumption that every disease has a cure, if no immediate remedy can be found, one has to continue by experimenting until such times as a suitable cure is discovered. The cure, in this case, namely the introduction of his ideal polity, will be new and untried. Political institutions, in themselves, are neither good nor bad. They are neutral and can never be adequately expressed in fixed formulae, because politics itself is part of the stream of



history. It may be well used or ill used, depending on the motives - and the skill - of those who use it. But, like wealth, it carries with it great temptations, and great opportunities for misuse - so great that the experience of mankind has concluded that human nature is too frail to be entrusted with uncontrolled power. That is why so much of the political thinking of the past has been directed towards discovering how to place checks on power without interfering with its efficient use. Thus, if tyranny is indeed a disease, the only remedy is to experiment with alternatives until it is removed painlessly.

al-Kawākibī is obsessed with the concept of a peaceful transition to a more democratic governmental system for the Arabs. To this end, he again and again addresses the matter in his writings. He places repeated emphasis on the "cure" and the durability and incorruptibility of his alternative system. His great fear is that the removal of a tyrant will not of itself make alternative authority less tyrannical. It is well known that in this life a tyrant can often simply be replaced by a weak system of government which, in turn, leads to the assumption of control by another tyrant, often worse than the previous one was.

The history of one tyrant's replacing another in Islam is almost as old as that of Islamic rule itself. This process went on without any major popular protest. The idea of the right of active resistance against an unjust caliph was never clearly defined by any Islamic doctrine. The issue remained ambiguous. al-Kawākibī is, of course, aware of this situation and must have considered it carefully before settling on his basic principles in matter. He deplures the fact that obedience and submission to a ruler have, over the centuries, become a habit. The rules that men obey may often enchrine great wisdom,

but they no longer know why they obey them. He advocates the questioning of this habit by the people and encourages them to give expression to their natural desires, for it is this expression that provides the only real means of political and social change. In this respect, he distances himself considerably from al-Ṭaḥṭāwī and Khayr al-Dīn.

During her discussion on al-Kawākibī's alleged plagiarism, Haim raises an interesting point regarding al-Kawākibī's praise of the bedouin and his view of them as the pure Arab race. Whereas all Arab scholars see the bedouin as "rough" and failing to practise the tenets of Islam, he subscribes to the rather romantic view of them put forward by Blunt. To Haim, this serves as proof of al-Kawākibī's plagiarism. However, this may be, it illustrates an essential aspect of al-Kawākibī's Arab nationalism, in that he seeks to distinguish a pre-Ottoman Arab culture, personified by the bedouin, from a culture dominated by "foreign" values. Perhaps the influence of Rousseau's "return to nature" may be such here.

al-Kawākibī saw modern governments as elected bodies, commanding the loyalty of free reasonable men, as long as they enacted just legislation, and, at the same time, accountable to them. His writings sum up centuries-old discontent with traditional institutions. Unfortunately al-Kawākibī himself contributes to this confusion, for his own formulations are at times ambiguous and unclear. Commentators on al-Kawākibī are often confused as to his attitude to Arabism, nationalism and Ottomanism. His argument for the concept of Arabism is manifested through a scathing critique of Ottomanism, rather than through a systematic analysis of the concept as such. For him, it was easier to define Arabism in terms of the ideas it opposed than in terms of the ideas it supported.

Sharabi appears to recognize this:

...His anti-Ottomanism derived from his opposition to Hamidian tyranny, and his position was based on Islamic revival. Though classified as a secularist, Kawakibi was somewhat vague about the problem of separating church and state, as he was about his political conception of Arabism.<sup>53</sup>

al-Kawākibī's real interest, however, was not in the negative task of refuting Ottomanism, but in the positive one of replacing it by a sound political theory of his own. His theory is not altogether easy to follow. He seems to be obsessed with the desire to win for it a place equal to that already accorded to older and better-established political theories. His writings, in their organization of already existing material, and in their offering of numerous original suggestions, prove themselves a distinct contribution to the new Arab political vision. An interesting example is to be found in his differentiation between *majd* [honour] and *tamajjud* [the receipt of honours].

*al-Tamajjud*, a characteristic of despotic administrations, takes a practical form in the appointment of such as courtiers and governors, and a virtual form in the conferring of titles such as Duke and Baron and those addressed as *Rabb al-'Izzah* and *Rabb al-Sawlah*, or those awarded medals or those presented with neck-chains. *al-Tamajjud* is inherent in despotic administrations. This is because a free government, which represents the feelings of the nation, totally rejects the upsetting of the balance of equality among individuals, except for real distinction. It promotes the individual only in a symbolic way, while he is engaged in its service (...) In the same way, God raises some people

above others, in degrees of love rather than of rights.<sup>54</sup>

In spite of his concept of the state's being entirely idealistic and essentially unrealizable, a number of his political ideas have since borne fruit. His strength in manipulating words and concepts is at times his weakness. Fascinated by the structure he is building, he has a tendency to strain or modify facts so as to make them fit into a particular niche in his system. His impulse towards rhetoric often leads him also into extravagant forms of expression where the subject requires quietness and precision, for example, his statement: "with the exception of America, liberty has not reached its target".<sup>55</sup> So keen is al-Kawākibī's sense of the importance of guarding against any of impositions on man, that he rejects even the respect felt for religion.

He also has the distinction of being the first Arab writer to transcend the limitation of locality; the audience of his predecessors was limited to the region from which they came. He was the first to achieve a receptive audience throughout the entire Arabic speaking world. There is, indeed, scarcely a later Arab thinker on Arab nationalism who is not either directly indebted to al-Kawākibī, or who does not find himself anticipated in some of his ideas and views.

Some of the views expressed in al-Kawākibī's writing reflect the confusion of his time. An example can be found in his severe condemnation of the military institution as one of the central causes of the nation's deterioration,<sup>56</sup> while, on the other hand, declaring that if he had an army he would remove the authority of Sultan Abd al-Hamid within a few hours.<sup>57</sup>

It is said that his attitude towards the Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II and his court was so openly hostile that the Sultan's agents broke

into his house in Cairo and stole the manuscript of two books which he was about to publish. One of them was called *Sahāʾif Quraysh* (The Pages of Quraysh) and the other was called *al-ʿAzamah lil-Allah* (Greatness is God's). Furthermore, certain historians believe that al-Kawākibī was poisoned at the hands of agents acting on the orders of the Sultan.<sup>58</sup>

Not a shred of evidence exists to substantiate the claim that he was poisoned. This dramatic version of his death can be viewed only as a reflection of the general psychological state of the Arab masses at the beginning of the twentieth century. During this period, rumours of poisoning as a result of the conspiracy of despots were likely to be accepted by the common people as factual. There are many recorded instances of mass hysteria throughout the Arab world during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In order to pander the appetite of the general populace for sensation, a number of writers presented aspects of the biographies of famous individuals in an appropriate manner. The untimely end of al-Kawākibī was presented by some of his biographers not being due to natural causes but to poison. Sudden death does not necessarily imply a conspiracy to murder or anything of that nature, and indeed another case may be cited, that of al-Afghānī, whose death was also alleged to be the result of poison. However, we know, from the work of various reliable historians of the period that al-Afghānī suffered from cancer of the jaw for a considerable time and that he had undergone three surgical operations in an attempt to remove the fatal tumour. What is the purpose in poisoning someone already dying of cancer? This false story may have been encouraged or even created by anti-Ottoman historians and the myth surrounding al-Kawākibī's death may have been meant to arouse the anger of the masses against the

supposed murderers. On the other hand, it would have appealed to the fantasy of the masses that national leaders and reformers should die at the hands of despots and not in their beds. Evidence against the conspiracy is provided by the letter that al-Kawākibī himself wrote to his son promising that he would ask Abū al-Hūda al-Sayyādī, Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's adviser, to act as an mediator in his son's ambition to enroll for medical studies in Constantinople.<sup>59</sup> This seems an odd symptom of the alleged hostility between al-Kawākibī and al-Sayyādī.

al-Kawākibī's political vision was not however, entirely novel. In Lebanon, several years earlier, Buṭrūs al-Bustānī's thinking had proceeded in a similar direction, and his fellow countryman, Najib al-'Azūrī, began to develop ideas which ran parallel to those of al-Kawākibī in a number of ways. This is only to say that al-Kawākibī, al-Bustānī, and al-'Azūrī all participated in the nineteenth and early twentieth century revolt against the simpler, perhaps too simple, world of Fakhr al-Dīn, 'Abd al-Wahhāb, and Muḥammad Ālī. What their contribution was, is a question has been addressed in the previous chapters; clearly al-Kawākibī carried his theoretical analysis much further than any other Arab writer.

In fact, after his first brilliant definition of the concept of Arab nationalism, al-Kawākibī did not adhere closely to the implications of this definition; in fact, he returned to conservatism, and, by so doing, provided problems for subsequent scholars. The interest in Arabism which he had awakened, however, survived and spread and could no longer be ignored.

Notes to Chapter Six.

1. See : al-Kawākibī, ʿAbd al-Rahmān. al-Aʿmāl al-Kāmilā li-ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Kawākibī maʿ dirasa ʿan ḥawāṭirihī wa-āthārihī . ed. Muḥammad ʿAmarah, Cairo, 1970.
2. *al-Manār* , V, p. 278.
3. Antonius, G. p. 96.
4. al-Mighrabi, A. al-Bayyināt . vol., I, pp. 150-1.
5. ʿAmarah. al-Aʿmāl... p. 22.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
8. Tapiero, Norbert. Les Idées Reformistes d'al-Kawakibi. Paris, 1956, p. 8.
9. Sayyādi, Muḥammad Abū al-Hūdā's most important works: Daʿi al-rashad li sabil al-ittihād wa'l-inqiyād . Constantimople, n.d; Tanwīr al-absār . Cairo, 1888-9.
10. Tapiero, p. 3.
11. *al-Hilal*, 9 (1900), pp. 367-368.
12. al-Kawākibī. Umm al-Qurā . p. 233.
13. al-Kawākibī. Tabāʾiʿ . p. 263.
14. Partner, Peter. A Short Political Guide to the Arab World, London, 1960, p. 11.
15. al-Kawākibī, Tabāʾiʿ . p. 136.
16. *Ibid.*, 136.
17. On the works of Blunt, see : Assad, Thomas J. "Three Victorian Travellers: Burton, Blunt, Doughty". London, 1964, pp. 53-94.
18. See, for example her articles "Alfieri and al-Kawakibi." Oriente Moderno, 34 (1954), pp. 321-334; "Blunt and al-Kawakibi", in the same periodical, (35) 1955, pp.132-143.
19. The title of her thesis is "The Ideas of A Precursor: ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Kawākibī (1849-1902) in Relation to the Trend of Muslim-Arab

Political Thought. Presented as a doctoral thesis to the University of Edinburgh, in October 1953.

20. Averroes. Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic. Edit. E.I.J. Rosenthal, Cambridge, 1956, p. 166.
21. Rosenthal, Erwin. J. "The Place of Politics in the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd". B.S.O.A.S., 15 (1953), pp. 246-278.
22. Lewis, B. Islam in History. p. 279.
23. Tapiero, p. 13.
24. al-Kawākibī. Umm al-qurā. p. 213-214.
25. Ibid., p. 270.
26. Ibid., p.198.
27. Ṭabā' i. p. 157.
28. Ibid., p. 153.
29. Ibid., p. 365.
30. Umm al-Qurā, p. 352.
31. Umm al-qurā. p. 361.
32. Ibid., p. 361.
33. Dawn, C. Ernest. From Ottomanism to Arabism : Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism. University of Illinois Press, 1973, 140.
34. Ibid., p. 365.
35. Blunt, W.S. The Future of Islam. pp. 93.
36. Umm al-qura. p. 367.
37. Ibid., p. 310.
38. Ibid., p. 367: al-Qurān, Sūrat al-Hijr: 94.
39. Ibid., p. 367: al-Qurān, Sūrat al-Baqarah: 218.
40. The period of Crusades lasted between 1096 and 1291.
41. al-Kawākibī. Umm al-Qurā. p. 368
42. Ṭabā' i. pp. 207-208.
43. Ibid., p. 157.
44. Umm al-qurā. p. 362.
45. Ibid., 323.



46. Antonius, George. The Arab Awakening. London, 1945, p. 98.
47. Khairallah, K.T. Le Probleme du Levant. Paris, 1919.
48. Ibid., p. 26.
49. S. Haim. "Blunt and Kawakibi." p. 142.
50. al-Kawākibī. Umm al-gurā. p. 246.
51. al-Kawākibī. Tabā'ī' p. 222-223.
52. See : al- Makhzumi, Muhammad. Khātirāt Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī al-Husaynī [Thought of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī], Beirut, 193, p. 88.
53. Hishām Sharabi. Arab Intellectuals and the West: the Formative Years, 1875-1914. Baltimore and London, 1970, p.118, f. 22.
54. al-Kawākibī. Tabā'ī' p. 160.
55. Ibid., p. 160.
- 56 Ibid., p. 137.
57. 'Amarah. al-A'māl al-Kāmilā. p. 106.
58. Ibid., p. 31.
59. Ibid., 384.
56. Ibid., p. 384.

## CHAPTER SEVEN.

Later Lebanese Intellectuals

Shiblī al-Shumayyil (1860-1917) was born in Kafr Shima, a Lebanese town with a noteworthy intellectual tradition, the habitat of many great writers and poets such as the Bustānī, Yāzījī and Taqla. In an exposition of Shumayyil's early career, it needs to be noted that his education and family fell within a cultivated setting: both his brother and cousin held posts of great importance; his brother Amīn (1828-97),<sup>1</sup> was a lawyer who founded in Egypt the first specialized law journal in the Arab speaking countries, called *al-Huqūq*, while in 1896 his cousin Rashid (1855-1928), founded a daily newspaper in Alexandria, called *al-Bashīr*. The fame of Amīn and Rashīd has however been overshadowed by that of Shiblī.

al-Shumayyil's life follows a similar pattern to that of other members of his family: he himself, in 1886, founded his own periodical *al-Shifā'*, a monthly medical journal which lasted for five years, and led a life quite as eventful as his brother and cousin. al-Shumayyil was an early graduate of the medical school of the Syrian Protestant College (The American University of Beirut). At a later stage in his career, he took the degree of Doctor of Medicine in Paris before settling in Egypt. At the same time, while preparing the materials for his doctoral dissertation on "The Evolution of Animals and Mankind under the Influence of Climate, Nutrition, and Culture", he was stimulated into philosophical enquiry concerning the validity of the idea of progress. Paris greatly interested

him, and he proved a keen observer of the principles of the French Revolution, and of Hegelian philosophy, as his later works demonstrate:

"The French Revolution was the end of great revolutions concerning the separation of religious interests from secular ones."<sup>2</sup>

As a student of medicine in Paris, he became familiar with Darwinian literature from the original texts and soon became an enthusiastic student of this doctrine, which was to take a powerful hold on him. No Arab thinker living in nineteenth century France could fail to be influenced by its liberal culture. It would be surprising if some of these Arab scholars, given the opportunity of becoming aware of Rousseau's and Montesquieu's country, had not reacted against their own culture in the same radical manner. al-Shumayyil's reflections had a special appeal to those who wished to know more of the latest fashion in socialist and evolutionist theory. He raises an important point, subsequently dropped from all references dealing with his work; he argues that Darwinian doctrine does not actually imply that man has his origin among the primates.<sup>3</sup> This interpretation of Darwin's theory seems to have resulted from an effort by certain individuals and groups reacting against the liberal implications of evolutionary doctrine. Referring to these individuals and groups' criticism:

It is a weapon forged by the opponents of this Doctrine, designed to discredit it.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps al-Shumayyil's criticism refers to such writings as al-Afghānī's *al-Radd 'alā al-dahriyyīn*, along with 'Abduh's writings concerning the latter's claim that al-Qur'ān implied the principles of

Darwinism. This defence of Darwin's theory was for him the logical step before setting out his own philosophy in any detail. As this latter depended, to a great extent, on principles that simplify things so as to make them comprehensible to ordinary people in the hope of making them give up mythological interpretation and adopt a more scientific approach to life.

With the advent of al-Shumayyil and some of his contemporary scholars such as Yáq'ūb Şarrūf and Farah Antūn, the theologians ceased to monopolize the intellectual circles. He manifested an optimistic faith in science as the instrument towards human progress but unlike most of his contemporaries he claimed that "in some circumstances"

violent revolution was necessary, because in no other way could poison be expelled from the system.<sup>5</sup>

But on the other hand, he was also convinced that

on the whole the only reforms which could succeed were those which sprang from a change in the general will and aimed at the general good<sup>6</sup>

Depending on this view, and on others of a similar nature, he does not consider the products of the French Revolution as a final answer to the universal needs of various societies and countries. Rather he sees this fateful event as only the passage to something even more significant, as the French Revolution, in turn, was much more significant and radical than the Lutheran Reformation. Thus, he maintains, successive revolutions can only find their highest attainment through socialism:

In my opinion, if it had not been for the religious revolution which arose from the doctrine of Luther, one can only guess what level the intellectual decline in Europe would have reached. The Lutheran doctrine imposed less doctrinal restraints than the other doctrines did. If we were to investigate the reasons for the French Revolution, which projected the world forward generations into the arena of progress, one would have to say that it was the Lutheran Revolution which was responsible for paving the way, through stimulating ideas, facilitating thought, examining philosophical principles, observing the physical universe and emancipation from the ancient teachings. The conclusive proof and decisive evidence is provided by the nation which embraced this doctrine, that is, the English nation, which among other European nations, rapidly advanced so as to reach a pre-eminent position in the world, still held today, despite its difficult geographical position-contrary to the other European nations which have been constrained by doctrinal adherence.<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, in al-Shumayyil's new philosophical perspective, philosophy is a matter of judgement and he makes it perfectly clear that he is no longer giving an account of that truth which can be demonstrated by logical reasoning - the questions about knowledge, history, and so forth, which had claimed to be more fundamental than those about Darwinism, will, according to al-Shumayyil, for their part, remain without foundation if the origin of knowledge, the origin of history, and so forth, is not to be questioned - but that for him empirical observation or experiment is the one and only mode of reality whose functioning provides the first principle and ultimate foundation from which all validity, certitude and value must in some

way be derived :

The mind is not really free, but operates according to rules which are the source of its motion. However, operating under these laws does not imply a restriction, except in its relation to the natural laws of the universe. It changes under the requirements of necessity and the result of this change is improvement.<sup>8</sup>

From this viewpoint, he goes on to define in a concrete and radical manner the knowledge that can be derived through reason, and dares to call in question not only this or that philosophical opinion, but the future of philosophy itself as a discipline, anticipating its loss of its own particular identity :

Even if philosophy still has some meaning at this present point in time, it eventually will become invalid. The future will be for science but only applied science.<sup>9</sup>

Here we come to one of the central features in the thought of al-Shumayyil. He was just one of a handful of Arab scholars who combined the adoption of Darwinism with certain principles of Socialism. He did not hesitate to borrow freely from other writers, both Western and Arab to promote his ideas. al-Shumayyil's position in Arab philosophical thought is similar, in many ways, to Kant's in Western thought. Both were first in the attempt to reconcile the conflict between rationalism and empiricism concerning the role of experience.

al-Shumayyil appears to be trying to complete an endeavour which he saw initiated in the writings of Darwin. However, he was not seeking what was wrong in the prevailing intellectual trends of his age,

but rather striving to show how truth might be acquired by a new intellectual process :

Concern with metaphysics is a waste of time and without benefit, and one who occupies himself with knowledge of what is above him will suffer from what is below him.<sup>10</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that al-Shumayyil had little interest in most of the general literature of his own culture which, in his view, had not really broken with the past. The ties to the past had to be broken, not simply loosened. Old ideas could not be refined; they must be discarded altogether:

Read a chapter of al-Ghazālī's *The Refutation of Philosophers* and *The Refutation of The Refutation* by Averroes and tell me what you understand. Then turn your attention to sterile dialectical discussions based on logical issues, and tell me if it is possible for this to emerge from sound minds. Then try if you can to read massive volumes on trivial matters relating to what is impossible or permissible or prohibited. And tell me if that differs from babbling.<sup>11</sup>

Despite a strong affinity with such reformers as al-Bustani and Khayr al-Dīn, al-Shumayyil had no specifically intellectual interest in them. Still, he provides extensive suggestions for how to read the Western philosophical tradition. He turned to a study of Greek philosophy and history, which appealed to his scientific turn of mind. Such an approach is characteristic of his work. No matter what subject he wrote about, he did not simply jump into it and indulge in expressing unsubstantiated

views. Instead, using logical methods as a model he first of all composed a detailed history of the subject and then presented his case. He admits that Darwin's doctrine does not present a comprehensive system. He tried to stimulate interest in Darwin not by adapting him to make him relevant, but by showing that contemporary concerns are best understood in the permanent light of Darwin's teaching. He felt that some additional concepts were needed to complete Darwin's theory, and for al-Shumayyil, these are found in the works of Büchner and Haeckel. These could explain how Darwinism provided laws which answered the problem of the changing nature of the world and why such a viewpoint is relevant. The result is found in his *Falsafat an-nushū' wa-al-irtiqā'* (The Philosophy of Evolution and Progress) published in Cairo, 1910, a work whose lofty philosophical tone brought its author (al-Shumayyil) warm praises from almost every liberal circle of the Arabic-speaking world. Drawing upon such works, he undertook the task of demonstrating the usefulness of his approach by applying it to a specific field through his translation of Büchner's commentary on Darwin's work. We must, at the same time, not forget that the translation had a value of its own in Arabic, as al-Shumayyil not only translated it but interpreted and extensively augmented the ideas contained in it in a series of scholarly annotations on the Darwinist school in general:

Stranger than what has already been said is that Darwin himself, although he was the founder of the theory of evolution, failed to draw from it all the clear results that it entailed. This is either because he could not or would not do so, being so greatly influenced by the prevailing theories or because he was unwilling to defend himself from the opposition of the advocates of



Creation by Species because of the difficulty of providing scientific proof for Spontaneous Creation. However, the conclusions that Darwin did not draw or was unwilling to declare, were drawn by the followers of his theory immediately it was disseminated, and was applied by them to the whole of nature.<sup>12</sup>

Early Arab thinkers, perhaps with the exception of Averroes and al-Māʿarri (973-1058), whom al-Shumayyil quotes so often in *Falsafat*,<sup>13</sup> as far as we know, made no attempt to base their picture of the universe upon an materialist system, or to defend it by materialistic argument:

When I began to disseminate the principles of this doctrine amongst us, and especially what has been built on it since 1876, it had neither followers nor literature in Arabic. Even in Europe itself the followers of this doctrine could be counted on one's fingers.<sup>14</sup>

Before writing *Falsafat*, al-Shumayyil had already attempted a large scale exposition of his doctrine, when he became a frequent contributor to the periodical al-Muqtataf. Later in 1886 he was to establish his own periodical *al-Shifāʾ*.<sup>15</sup> And even earlier when he was still a student in the Syrian Protestant College he had shown an interest in this doctrine as a result of his reaction to one of his instructors of natural sciences of this college, when the latter implied in his statements some element of Darwinism. In addition, he contributed a variety of important articles demonstrating his belief in the unification of force and matter, which appeared in the periodical *al-Jinān*.<sup>15</sup> al-Shumayyil may be said to have been the product of more than one

philosophical school. Nevertheless, the Darwinist spirit, which runs through all his writing, is quite apparent. It might be presumed that secularism received its systematic formulation in the modern Arab culture through its raising unrecognized problems in the field of ideology and politics in general.

There is no trace of religion in him:

If we compare peoples, nations and governments today in the inhabited world, we find wide disparities apropos these matters. We also find that wherever theological sciences and related theories have been disseminated, natural sciences declined and man degenerated and social conditions worsened—and Vice Versa.<sup>16</sup>

His whole conception of the intellectual and social life of his time is based on objective and rational analysis of previous cultures and religions and their significance in the formation of the social order in various countries:

Paganism created masterpieces in the art of sculpture as its purpose was to set up statues of its Gods. It established great temples for them and placed in them these splendid idols. Christianity was skilled in the art of painting because it wanted to personify the events of its religion and depict its saints. It has left us inimitable works of art.<sup>17</sup>

The trend of his argument could be considered radical revolutionary:

Religious teachings separate a man from the world to the extent that he is no longer familiar with it,

although nothing actually separates him from it, even death. Cultural life portrays him much beyond his reality, as it imagines him and not as he is. Thus it increases his innate weakness and makes his life dissimulation and hypocrisy.<sup>18</sup>

The concept of the elite and the masses, which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages of Islamic-Arabic culture, placed a barrier between the elite as the privileged class, and the masses as its supportive social structure. al-Shumayyil was at some pains to demonstrate that the constituent members of this supportive structure were not allowed to exercise their political rights and their only duty was to offer the appropriate symbols of submission before the ruler. This distinction between the elite and the masses was one of great importance and an essential tradition in Arab culture, and perhaps deeper and longer lasting in its influence than has generally been realized, and we can trace it even in the works of Arab philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Averroes.<sup>19</sup>

With al-Shumayyil's philosophy, we witness the emergence of a special interest in the concept of the elite and the masses, with the stress being placed on the importance of the political will of the masses as a criterion in determining the type of government. al-Shumayyil presented the problem of the Ruler and the Ruled in its sharpest and clearest form to Arab thinkers such as Salāmā Mūsā (1887-1958),<sup>20</sup> and Niqūla Ḥaddād (1870-1954)<sup>21</sup>:

The Law should be received from the hands of men rather than from the hands of gods. This means that it should not be derived from the mouths of rulers and princes, but from the condition of paupers and beggars,

so that it is closer to humanity, that is, to the establishment of proper justice, than it is to the gratification of selfish inclinations and objectives.<sup>22</sup>

But not content with this, he set himself the task of trying to show that:

By theocratic laws leaders are generally raised above the people; they arrogate to themselves privileges by which they render the obligations of that people very numerous, to the extent that it struggles against austerity, and its rights very limited, to the extent that it has no self-respect.<sup>23</sup>

As we know, the fundamental division between the elite and the masses was to remain in existence and was not substantially to alter even on a theoretical level. Even in recent times, we meet with this state of affairs. al-Kawākibī's concept of the "masses" drew attention to the masses' potential importance, which he thought, would place the despotic rulers in permanent fear of them. However, he did not elaborate upon this point, and retained a largely traditional view.

Apart from Darwin's works and followers, Huxley,<sup>24</sup> Haeckel,<sup>25</sup> Spencer,<sup>26</sup> and above all Büchner,<sup>27</sup> who remained decisive for the whole of al-Shumayyil's thinking, Marx, Engels, and Hegel were intellectually determinative forces. :

If we compare the East and the West at present, we see a great difference between them with respect to the advancement of industrialization and other sources of wealth, according to the principles prevailing in the laws of each. And if we compare the condition of Europe before the Lutheran Revolution and after, we shall

realize that the Renaissance which took place in Europe in agriculture, navigation, industry, and commerce was caused only by that religious revolution which released the mind from some of its fetters and paved the way to that political revolution the benefits of which nobody, except a person blinded by the veil of his own self-interest, can deny. In this way, factories were established along with agricultural, commercial, and industrial firms. The wealth of the rising nations increased, and man's resolve strengthened, despite his weakness.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to his condemnation of "Absolutism" as a doctrine, he demonstrates that political history should no longer be merely a series of appreciative studies of rulers and their work, but should become a serious study of an explanation as to why

What benefited the Muslims at first, since it impelled them to practical living, was subsequently to harm them. It bound them to Islamic Law. While what damaged the Christians to start with, as it beguiled them and diverted them from practical living, was in due course to benefit them. Because it did not bind them to a specific code. Inevitably such laws alter along with humanity, in accordance with time and place.<sup>29</sup>

He also gave great emphasis to the eventual sovereignty of the people. This leftist tendency is also seen in his belief that the eventual triumph would come in the wake of an increasing global enlightenment emanating from Europe, which only became strong and really civilized when the Reformation and the French Revolution broke the hold of religious leaders on society.

In this respect al-Shumayyil stood as a rather lonely figure among his Arab fellow contemporaries, but his interest in the social and intellectual background of political development was shared by some important scholars of his generation. In general, however, al-Shumayyil, as a scientist, was in an advantageous position: he was able to apply his systematic knowledge to his society better than any of his contemporaries, such as Anṭūn and ʿAbduh. This was due to the influence on his thought of Darwinism, blended with those of German radicalism and the French Enlightenment :

It is clear to me that psychology, namely the science of intellect or soul, is a branch of physiology that is the science of the functioning of the organs. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider the intellect just as we do the functions of the organs, as acting materially. Any of the laws of evolution that touches and influences matter influences the intellect itself, which is simply one of the functions of the brain.<sup>30</sup>

In his understanding of the process of social life, his knowledge went beyond that of common experience and gave a new direction to Arab cultural tradition. It was no mere change of literary fashions and styles, but the proclamation of a new philosophy, challenging the jejune traditionalism of Arab culture of that time with a new conception of man and the world:

That a man may restore himself to the right path without the aid of religion is undoubtedly true. It may also be said that the condition of a nation is sound only when the force of religion is weak; and the standing of religion is strong only when the standing of the nation has

declined.<sup>31</sup>

If al-Shumayyil was dissatisfied with the type of society which prevailed during his time, his writing reveals his ceaseless pursuit of a wider knowledge in his quest to be able to influence and alter its institutions :

Because the conditions of the present age, for example, differ from those of the previous or the coming ages, it is an infringement of sacred rights to apply the laws of one age to another, when there can be no compatibility between them, naturally, culturally or politically.<sup>32</sup>

He did not depend on any argument founded on current religious beliefs (whether Christian or Islamic) as a basis for a philosophy that would mould the intellectual development of a citizen in his ideal society of the future :

A man in most of his actions and thoughts is not the son of his instincts but the product of our upbringing of him from the cradle to the grave. If he was left to his instincts he would be, in his totality, much more advanced than he now is. But how can he advance himself if we through our upbringing proceed to suppress his individuality, first as a child at home, then at school? and when it comes to involvement in social life, even if he still retains a vestige of individuality, our religious and literary books, imaginative and mythological narratives and social institutions will be guaranteed to suppress them. Accordingly, the natural man will totally vanish and nothing will remain but a man manufactured contrary to nature.<sup>33</sup>

al-Shumayyil claims that human reason can grasp the ultimate truth from which a rational metaphysics, ethics and political system, and even the human mind itself could be derived. According to him, the principles of Darwinism are the only worthy gospel for mankind. He believes that through the development of this doctrine, one may attain, without any exception, knowledge of ultimate reality. He thinks that the theory of evolution proffers a comprehensive and consistent world view that can be applied to ethics, religion, art, politics, and education :

The natural sciences are the mother of the real sciences and must be the mother of all the human sciences. They should be given precedence over everything and should be introduced into the teaching of everything.<sup>34</sup>

Gradually, it was realized by Arab scholars that the new philosophy expounded by al-Shumayyil conflicted with fundamental Christian, Muslim, and Jewish beliefs regarding man's origin. The Arabic-speaking world, through al-Shumayyil's writings, was soon to become involved in this important debate, resulting in a definite contribution to Arab philosophy. Even those opposed to Darwinism had to turn their attention to the matter and publish a number of works condemning this intrusive philosophy. al-Shumayyil, the advocate of the new scientific approach, was in turn obliged to publish many replies to his critics. This advocacy was to stimulate further developments in his own thinking:

At the present time, it [Darwinian Theory] is accepted in all its general principles and they [scientists] differ only on minor matters which as in every recognized science, are always subject to continuing clarification and



explanation. It is universal in its application in that it covers the material and spiritual, the natural [world] and that of artifacts, and the application of this doctrine to every problem whatever it is, whether social or scientific or philosophical, whether important or not, will yield the solution and the answer.<sup>35</sup>

In studying him as a writer of philosophy, one can see a constant theme: the strong desire to show how men have been shaped by their environment, and how to alter their social and political status by understanding and coming to terms with their own background. He adduces some evidence for this thesis by pointing out that

It is the governments of the Eastern countries that have contributed to the decay of character. The difference between the governments of the West and those of the East is that the former are governed by their laws, the latter by their monarchs.<sup>36</sup>

It is impossible to understand the political processes of the East, he thinks, without recognizing that important difference (and here many of his contemporaries agree with him).

He was no idealist, as we see from his description of the constitutional reforms which were taking place in some of the Eastern states in his days :

The laws have been modified in some of the monarchies of the East today, but their modification has been in form not in substance. The monarchs of the East are still above their laws.<sup>37</sup>

Here al-Shumayyil is undoubtedly hyperbolic, but his judgment contains an element of truth. His views on state and society show a profound understanding of the Hegelian concept of politics. Governments, according to him, express the differences existing between separate nations. The more a nation progresses along the path of civilization, the higher is its form of government. In trying to formulate an analytical basis for this view, he thinks:

There could be no agreement on the general good unless there was liberty, in particular liberty of thought. In a despotism, one member and his interests dominated the rest by force. Nor could there be a general will unless there was an underlying social unity, and this in its turn involved the separation of religion from political life. Religion was a factor of division: not religion itself, but the religious leaders sowed discord between men, and this kept societies weak. Nations grew stronger as religion grew weaker.<sup>38</sup>

al-Shumayyil also considers that historical evidence is lacking to sustain those who expect spontaneous reforms from governments. He takes the condition of the revolution of 1908 in Turkey as a clear indication that the real significance of revolution has been abused and distorted. His writings on social and intellectual matters show that he was facing certain nascent problems, which we still meet with today, in an enlarged form, in modern Arab culture. He clearly perceives the pitfalls surrounding all theories concerning constitutionalism. The Revolution of 1908, which al-Shumayyil at first welcomed, soon became a target for his criticism. However, it did present a number of answers, in theory at least. For him, this scrutiny reveals that

governments, regardless of time or place, are unlikely to submit to calls for reform. He questions, not without reason, whether the nations of Europe would have attained their present level of civilization simply through the efforts of their governments alone. All types of exclusive allegiance including religious exclusivity, he, rightly or wrongly, argues, are equally as dangerous to social solidarity, as they are divisive.<sup>39</sup> National fanaticism was as bad as religious fanaticism:

If religion did nothing more than restrict the freedom of thought, it would be enough to be the cause of man's misery in his world.<sup>40</sup>

By this argument, philosophy is a continuous process, although not necessarily limited to one place or one people. Knowledge, for him, cannot be confined to national boundaries :

It is as though society could not undergo a complete reform that guaranteed the removal of all trace of those methods of instruction, unless both languages and nations were unified.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, al-Shumayyil is serious about his new concept of an internationalism as opposed to a nationalism as the force which will ultimately determine the political destiny of mankind :

The obstacle which is destined to last longer than others is the obstacle to mutual understanding, that is language. But the natural sciences themselves, by making the world as though it were one city, in reducing the distances within it, will make the conflict very strong

among the languages so as to do away with most of them, which have no noticeable relationship with these sciences. It seems that, today, only three languages will survive and that the conflict for survival will be confined to them in future. These are English, German, and French.<sup>42</sup>

Hence the tendency towards nationalism, in al-Shumayyil's view, is recognized as the disaster which destroys the civilized life of man. Therefore, he thinks that if this loyalty, which is limited to *watan* (fatherland) is abandoned in favour of the *wataniyya* (patriotism) of the world, this would then create a new sense of collective social responsibility. He reminds the reader that there must be something solemn and serious about this affair. He concludes by stating :

The unification of nations and languages, the spreading of a true humanity, and the consideration of mankind as brothers, and the regarding of the world as one country can never be attained by means of this last science [theology], although it is one of its ultimate objectives.<sup>43</sup>

By taking this position, al-Shumayyil stands in direct opposition to one of the most influential trends of his day. It is not difficult to appreciate how a comparative study of different cultures would tend to conflict with, and perhaps undermine, a single, unified culture defined by its own traditions. And al-Shumayyil does not indicate how the transition from nationalism to internationalism would occur, or by what institutions it could be brought about, especially given that all the provinces of the Arabic-speaking world, in one form or another, are still under Ottoman and European domination. He does not

attempt any extended discussion of the nature of this internationalism. It is not within the scope of this study to debate the problem of a national identity versus an international one in the writing of history. He worked to rid the Arab culture of all vestiges of medieval tradition and to introduce a Western philosophical approach. But what he has to say on the subject is very brief and not at all illuminating:

The advocacy of 'socialism' (*ishtirakiyya*) by Shiblī Shumayyil in the early years of the twentieth century might be seen as an exception—until one discovers that Shumayyil's 'socialism' was devoid of economic content and referred only to state intervention and reform in education, legal organization, the press, and other fields.<sup>44</sup>

The value of his writings certainly would have been much enhanced if he had attempted a rather more serious discussion of some of the more general and fundamental questions. His thinking equates itself with the concept that man develops by the very fact that his mind is disposed towards progressive thought and innovative action. However, there is nothing within the historical process which guarantees the successful achievement of any progressive policy. This can be exemplified and substantiated by making reference to the recent history of the Lebanon, al-Shumayyil's own country. It also seems that al-Shumayyil's philosophy was, in this respect, premature. Its biggest error was its failure to appreciate the depth and complexity of the political problem of its period. We are, furthermore, again encouraged to assume that his years in France

exposed him to Marxist literature. His philosophy was that political problems could be solved within a few decades by setting up a socialist system, binding all the various peoples together in ties of common brotherhood. Furthermore, what seems the strangest point within his system was the suggestion to abolish the School of Law and Law Courts in Egypt. The possible reason for this was that it was not an international legal system. The flaw in this thinking is that it ignored the fact that this problem was part of a much greater and deeper conflict between moral ideals and political realities. These conflicts existed in the varying political relationships that occurred between the Arabic-speaking countries and the West at his time, and later. In addition to this, there were the rivalries amongst the European powers themselves that divided many countries in the world as the twentieth century progressed. It is quite true, as the historical experience of nations has proved, that in the absence of any national consciousness manifested in the geo-political unit, (the nation-state) there could only follow the incorporation of weak nation states into super-power blocs, and not, as he thought, development from the national condition towards a wider community. He appears then, to combine absolute materialism with absolute utopianism. However, it is difficult to blame al-Shumayyil, who died before he could witness the answers to questions which he had raised, at the hands of powers themselves who at one time had represented, to him, the symbol of the liberation of his people. When liberal-minded thinkers such as himself and Adib Ishaq put their trust in Europe as a means of gaining emancipation from Turkish domination, in al-Kawākibī's words, it was not in order to exchange one colonizer for another. The conclusion to which we are led is that

al-Shumayyil, like al-Khayr al-Din before him and Antun his contemporary, was drawn to philosophy not by the direct study of it, but as a result of certain questions which arose during his earlier studies of other subjects. Though al-Shumayyil does not provide a clear solution to the problem of nationalism, he does bring into focus one of the more important questions which will have to be answered in any complete portrayal of the progress of the Arabic-speaking countries. **Along with Antūn and Ḥaddād he was a founding father of the Socialist School of Lebanese philosophical thought.**

Najīb Āzūrī (d. 1916)

Along with al-Kawākibī, with whom "the Moslems begin to participate in the leadership of the liberal movement.",<sup>45</sup> Āzūrī was a pioneer of the concept of Arab nationalism. But, with Āzūrī's discourse, the situation was strikingly different from that with al-Kawākibī's. Apart from the impact of the ideas contained in his book Le reveil de la nation arabe published in 1905, he is noted for having established a society, "La ligue de la patrie arabe", in Paris, and issued, with the assistance of Eugen Jung and "of certain French writers of note,"<sup>46</sup> a monthly periodical, entitled L'Independance arabe, for the promotion of Arab nationalism in the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula, excluding Egypt: "because the Egyptians do not belong to the Arab race; they are of the African Berber family".<sup>47</sup>

We may summarize our discussion of his writing by saying that Āzūrī aimed to lead the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent away from the Ottoman Empire into a separate state. He was well versed in European culture, in particular that of France, and expressed himself fluently in French, which was the language used for his periodical

L'Indépendance arabe 18 numbers of which appeared in Paris between April 1907 and September 1908. After his graduation from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes of Paris, until 1904, ʿAzūrī held an important diplomatic post in the service of the Ottoman government under the governor of Palestine, Kiazim Bey, as an official in the provincial government of Jerusalem, before choosing to live in exile until his death in 1916 in Paris. He had been condemned to death in 1904 "for having left his job without permission and gone to Paris where he committed actions prejudicial to the existence of the state." In addition, he played an important role in several events of political importance, although there were doubts about his having received money from the French government. Along with al-Kawākibī's writing, ʿAzūrī's works and activities were the inspiration for the development of Arab nationalism in the Levant.

However, ʿAzūrī's contribution to Arab culture was more significant than that of al-Kawākibī, in that his approach was based primarily on secular philosophy: "One of the principal causes of the fall of the vast empire of the Arabs was the centralization in a single hand of the civil and the religious powers." 48

The mode of government will be a constitutional sultanate based on the freedom of all religions and the equality of all citizens before the law. It will respect the interests of Europe, all the concessions and all the privileges which had been granted to her up to now by the Turks. It will also respect the autonomy of the Lebanon, and the independence of the principalities of Yemen, Nejd, and Iraq.<sup>49</sup>

ʿAzūrī, unlike his predecessors or contemporaries, thought that the transition to an independent state would not be gradual but would involve a revolution as a single measure in order to overthrow the



Ottoman rule in the Fertile Crescent. As a theoretician, in the first place, and as member of a Christian minority without influence within the Ottoman Empire, he would more readily be able not only to call on the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent to revolt against the Turkish overlordship, but also to go so far as to encourage all other subjects likewise to revolt. He visualized a separate but simultaneously confederal rebellion of each of the provinces, with Armenians and Kurds, while retaining their own distinctiveness, joining in to form one combined military unit, with the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent. However, there is a certain inconsistency in 'Azūrī's thinking in that he did not hesitate to propose the idea that a member of the Khedivial family should be elected caliph over the new state which he wished to create.

However, the importance of 'Azūrī's theoretical contribution was hindered by the fact that his writing was presented in French and not in the language of his people; therefore, it did not answer the intellectual needs of the mass of people of his day. There was still a long way to go before it gained political force. About this point in time, Antonius points out :

Its main value [Azouri's campaign] in this history is that it provides an example of the extent to which, as a result of foreign education, certain advocates of the Arab Revolt had strayed from the sources of its inspiration.<sup>50</sup>

Although he stimulated many minds, 'Azūrī did not generate an important and fruitful school of thought, unlike al-Bustānī or al-Kawākibī or al-Shumayyil. It is true that the task which faced him and other Christian scholars- was less difficult than that which confronted the Muslim al-Kawākibī, who was in danger of disgracing his religion by advocating secular reform, whereas Christians did not.

have the same immense burden that confronted and restricted freedom of expression. For Āzūrī:

Islamic doctrine, as such, had little to do with Arab nationalism. The struggle was a matter between Arabs and Turks that could only be settled with the support of European powers. His appeal, although in a political and revolutionary framework, was much like al-Bustani's, for it was an appeal to Arabism and was not directly concerned with placing an interpretation on Islam and its meaning with regard to Arabism.<sup>51</sup>

51. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17; see also pp. 357-358.

53. See, for example, pages 49, 51, 63.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

55. See the article 'al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth' (On the Tradition) in *al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth* (The Tradition) by al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth, *al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth* (The Tradition) (Beirut, 1982), pp. 5-6-815.

56. See the article 'al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth' (On the Tradition) in *al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth* (The Tradition) by al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth, *al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth* (The Tradition) (Beirut, 1982), pp. 5-6-815.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 341.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

60. *al-Fuḥūḥ* (Arabic) *al-Fuḥūḥ* (Arabic), Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1985, edited by George F. Hourani, p. 11.

61. See also: 'al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth' (On the Tradition) in *al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth* (The Tradition) by al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth, *al-ḥadīth al-ḥadīth* (The Tradition) (Beirut, 1982), p. 5.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

Notes to Chapter Seven.

1. See: *Hilal* vol. 6, 1897-98, pp. 307-310.
2. *Falsafat al-nushū'wa'l irtiqā'*. (The Philosophy of Evolution), Cairo, 1910, p. 361, footenote 2.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
4. *Falsafat*, p. 26.
5. al-Shumayyil. *Majmū'a*. (Anthology) II. p. 40.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
7. al-Shumayyil. *Falsafat* ..., pp. 53-54.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
9. *Ibid.*, p. *dal*.
10. *Ibid.*, p.55.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 350.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, see also, pp. 357-358.
13. See, for example, pages: 49, 51, 63.
14. *Ibid.*, p. *jim*.
15. See his articles: "*Fi al-kahraba'iyyah*". (On Electricity), *al-Jenan*, 1971, pp. 94-96, 161-164, 200-201; "*Kitāb al-tawdih fi uṣul al tashriḥ*" (The Book of Clarification on the Origins of Anatomy), pp. 516-518, in the same periodical.
16. *Falsafat*. p, 345.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
19. Ibn Rushd (Averroes). *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl*. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1959, Edited by George F. Hourani, pp. 30-37.
20. See: Haim, Sylvia "Salama Musa: an Appreciation of his Autobiography". *Die Welt des Islam*, N.S.2, II (1952-53); Peterlmann, M: *MEJ*, vol.,II, pp. 279-285.
21. Dāghir, Yūsuf. *Masādir al-dirasah al-adabiyah*. Vol. 2, pp.

304-309

22. *Falsafat* ..., p. 58.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.
24. Huxley, Thomas (1825 -1895), English biologist.
25. Haeckel, Ernst (1834 -1919), German zoologist and evolutionist.
26. Spencer, Herbert (1820 -1903), English sociologist and philosopher.
27. Büchner, Ludwig (1824 - 1899), German physician and philosopher.
28. *Falsafat* ..., p. 56.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 353, footnote 3.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
35. *Ibid.*, p. *jim*.
36. al-Shumayyil, quoted in Jamil Jabr, 1970, "*Hawla makatabahu al-Lubnāniyyūn fī diyār al-ighterāb*", al-Machriq vol. 64, p. 664.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 664.
38. *Falsafat* . p. 81. Quoted from Hourani's Arabic Thought. p. 251.
39. *Falsafat* ..., pp. 360-361.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 361-362.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
44. Kerr, Malcolm H. "Notes on the Background of Arab Socialist Thought". Journal of Contemporary History, 3 (1968), pp. 145-159.
45. Hitti, Philip K. "The Impact of the West on Syria and Lebanon in the Nineteenth Century." Journal of World History, 2 (1954-55), p. 628.
46. Antonuis, George. The Arab Awakening. p. 98.
47. 'Azūrī, Najib. Le Reveil de la nation arabe. p. 246.

48. Ibid., pp. 246-247.

49. Ibid., p. 245.

50. Antonuis, p. 99.

51. Lavan, Spencer. "Four Christian Arab Nationalists: A Comparative Study." The Muslim World, 57 (1967), pp. 114-125.

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this thesis we examined several political and historical factors which brought Arab culture face to face with Western influences at the close of the eighteenth century. Such an encounter brought about, consciously or unconsciously, tensions in the fabric of Arab culture as a whole. These tensions produced a variety of reactions among Arab intellectuals. The intellectuals under discussion, however, in general, perceived their mission as one of abandoning a host of obsolete institutions. They were in favour of a transition from the theological authoritarianism of the Middle Ages to the liberalism of Modern times. European institutions had become such a dynamic for change worldwide that their adoption had become in reality requisite for cultural survival for those countries in direct contact with them.

Most Arab and Western historians concede that nineteenth century colonialism was essentially based on the desire to increase both export trade and the import of cheaply priced goods from the Arab world to Europe, as has been shown by Khayr al-Din. The absence of any industrially-based economy in the Arab world, and the lack of reforming movements able to effect the fundamental elements of Islamic culture, need to be considered in making any comparison of its development with that of the West. Western European countries were mostly heavily industrialized and had experienced several religious and cultural revivals, which combined to produce the political and moral atmosphere of European society during the nineteenth century.

Once the Arab world, or parts of it, had been in contact with the West, European political and commercial interests began to penetrate

the fabric of Arab culture, and often sadly with an, eventually, negative effect.

At first, Arab scholars remained awe-struck before the masters of modern culture - the Europeans and the Americans. Their naive approach and friendly trust had begun to fade away by the second half of the nineteenth century. Through the influence of French culture, a number of Arab scholars were inspired to adopt a specifically European set of cultural values, and it was this that began to generate a series of cultural conflicts, either explicit or implicit, depending upon the degree and type of contact with Europe.

The modernisation of the Arab World in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries proceeded alongside the development of its relationship with Europe. The "Arab discovery of the West", through European colonialism, initiated what was regarded as a great era, which heralded increasing emphasis upon freedom and political justice. This was largely a result of the failure of prevailing Arab ideology to cope with change or to provide an alternative. This dilemma - the choice between abandoning Arab culture for European culture or clinging to the former at the expense of the latter - is reflected in the works of nineteenth century Arab thinkers: al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, for example, whose works, besides mirroring these conflicts, also suggest compromise solutions which were profoundly to affect Arab thought. These thinkers sought parallels and contrasts between European and Arab institutions, whether political, sociological or economic; and treated these as models for the re-interpretation and study of the past. Sometimes this was done directly, sometimes indirectly, in their reconsideration of classical Arabic texts and their researches into the history and political literature of the Middle Ages. Much of their political thinking was

directed towards discovering how to place checks on power without interfering with its efficient use, how to keep the ruler in check under a constitution, without interfering with his initiative. These difficulties had faced rulers and their subjects from the beginning of organized political life, but they had greatly intensified in recent times. This intensification was due to two causes.

Firstly, the Arabic language became a vehicle for the transmission of newly-introduced cultural values. Thus, the works of earlier scholars began to be re-understood in the period of the Awakening when similar conditions resulted in a growing affinity between the men of the two different ages. The problem between 'Abduh and Anṭūn, for example, was a symptom of this state of affairs.

Admittedly, philosophy in the technical sense, and as now conceived, did not exist in the earlier period of Arab Awakening. It achieved its first great success during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and has come to fruition only during the last fifty years. A further complication the modern thinkers faced was that of giving the "Christian" West a new image, so as to contrive that different institutions should be judged not by the identity of their founding but by their suitability for a given time and place. The rise of Western Orientalism coincided with the thrust of European expansion into the Orient; the contributions of Western scholars, missionaries, and men of enlightenment to Arabic culture are a fact well established and beyond contention.

Secondly, whatever Western ideas caught their fancy, Arab scholars wished to utilize traditional ideology and blend it with these in a subtle way, so that it would become acceptable to all members of the Muslim-Arab communities. Within the framework of their "campaign" of reform



we have seen how various attempts, albeit slowly and hesitantly, at education and change, were made by these intellectuals as well as by a few enlightened rulers.

The nature of Arab thought, then, began to alter, slowly at first, under these influences. By the end of the nineteenth century, it had entered a critical formative stage, challenging the authority of tradition and assailing inherited beliefs. Although it was not to be expected that Arab thought would alter completely overnight, through the pioneering work of these men, the stage was set for a period of change, and for the slow process of modernization which is still continuing.

All these scholars are part of our nineteenth-century legacy - our inheritance from an age which, more than any other, believed in ideas, and in change and reform through the power of ideas. The culture into which they were born largely ignored social questions, and looked on intellectual revolution as a substitute for social and economic change. From the second half of the nineteenth century, Arab scholars set to work to defend and develop Arab culture by adapting Western traditions to their own.

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