The Expansion of International Civil Society: the Case of Tunisia

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to examine the role of collective social and political agency in international relations through an elaboration of the category 'international civil society'. It does so by adopting a distinctly modern understanding of collective agency associated to the concept of civil society, then to argue that the social movements operating within this domain have displayed international characteristics from their inception. Specifically, the study considers the way in which modern social and political movements (trade unions, socialist and nationalist parties) emerged and developed in Tunisia from the turn of the century through to independence in 1956, as a result of this country's interaction with the international system. Hence, the thesis is primarily concerned with the mechanisms responsible for the extension of modes of social and political organisation across national, ethnic and religious boundaries. In doing so, however, it also seeks to uncover practices of transnational solidarity among social movements and to evaluate the relevance of such practices for our understanding of international society. In short, the central purpose of the thesis is to illustrate how the concept of 'international civil society' can serve on the one hand as an analytical tool for the study of international political agency and its impact upon international relations; and on the other hand, as a normatively charged category, capable of recovering the past history of internationalist political activity and illuminating its future potential.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This aim of this thesis is to argue for the relevance of collective social and political agency in international relations. The term 'civil society' is initially adopted to describe that social domain where modern collective political agency takes shape. From this premise, I go on to argue that the social movements operating within civil society have displayed international characteristics from their inception, thus warranting the introduction of the term 'international civil society' as a category capable of explaining the dynamics and consequences of collective social and political agency at an international level. The historical and sociological implications of deploying this concept will be considered with specific reference to the case of Tunisia. I shall examine the way in which modern social movements emerged and developed in Tunisia between the turn of the century and independence in 1956, due fundamentally to the country's interaction with the international system. One of the central concerns of this thesis, therefore, is the examination of the mechanisms responsible for the reproduction of modes of social and political organisation across national, ethnic and religious boundaries. The aim of such an exercise is to uncover and recover for the study of international relations, the practices of transnational solidarity among social movements and to evaluate the relevance of these practices for our understanding of international society. In short, the central purpose of the chapters that follow is to illustrate how the concept of 'international civil society' can serve on the one hand as an analytical tool for the study of international political agency and its impact upon international relations; and on the other hand, as a normatively charged category, capable of recovering the past history of internationalist political activity and illuminating its future potential.

These broad objectives raise two immediate questions to be addressed in this introductory chapter. The first set of considerations relate to the choice of Tunisia as case study: what is relevance of this country for the expansion of international civil society?; and can the conceptual tools derived from the European experience be applied to the study of a north African society? A second, and perhaps more

important question concerns the novelty of the idea of international civil society: in what ways does this category contribute to or depart from existing approaches to International Relations (IR) with similar concerns? This introductory chapter seeks to answer these questions explicitly, but the responses provided here will hopefully also be implicit throughout the rest of the thesis.

The chapter is organised in the following way: a first section will briefly defend the universal currency of categories derived from modern social science and highlight the reasons for considering the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia as an instance of this validity. The remaining sections aim to distinguish my own treatment of questions such as agency, transnationalism and civil society from those prevailing within the discipline, thereby placing the concept of international civil society within the wider debates in IR. One important reason for these differences, I maintain, lies in the broadly-defined historical-sociological method adopted in this study. The concluding section of the chapter is therefore dedicated to the definition and justification of such an approach.

1.1 The Universal and the Particular: Tunisia as a Case-Study

One of the central aims of this thesis is to highlight the universality of modern forms of social and political agency under capitalist modernity. The claim here is that the distinctly modern forms of political engagement that developed in Europe from the seventeenth century onward were eventually replicated across many parts of the world, essentially as a result of the global reproduction of capitalism. Such modes of social and political agency were plainly not homogenous: positing a universality of form does not preclude accepting a diversity of content. In other words, the broad range of modern social movements that have operated internationally over the past three centuries are by no means uniform; the historical and geographical context of their development has given many such movements a very specific cultural, political

and sociological imprint. Acknowledging this specificity, however, is perfectly compatible with the recognition of certain universal traits in the language, organisation and activity of modern social movements. Thus, for example, though national liberation movements such as the Nicaraguan FSLN and the Mozambican FRELIMO clearly display features particular to their concrete socio-historical setting, their organisational structures, ideological orientation and methods of mobilisation can be said to be analogous.

This seemingly straightforward contention (that modern forms of political agency have a universal purchase) is nonetheless far from uncontroversial. Indeed, much of recent scholarship on the international dimensions of social movements is concerned with highlighting the sharp differences in the modes of political engagement across the world, often associating the 'modernity' of any given social movement to foreign impositions. It is with these arguments in mind that Tunisia has been chosen as a case study which illustrates the process of universalisation of modern political agency. As a non-European country with a strong Arab and Islamic heritage, Tunisia qualifies as one of those proverbial 'Other' societies which, some social theorists suggest, cannot be understood with the analytical tools derived from the western historical experience.[1] The idea of civil society, for example, is deemed to be inapplicable to an eastern society like that of Tunisia because it is a concept that emerged and developed in the west.

A rebuttal of such an approach to the study of Tunisia (or for that matter, any other country of the Middle East and North Africa) can take several avenues. Numerous scholars from inside and outside the region have demonstrated that geographical categories such as 'western' or 'eastern' are highly fluid when not outright unsustainable historically; that the so-called 'Muslim world' is thoroughly heterogenous and that there is nothing specifically 'Islamic' about the economic

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[1] Recent examples include B. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London and New York: Zed Books, 1997) and P. Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: a Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed, 1986).

backwardness, social conservatism or political authoritarianism so often connected to these societies.[2] They have moreover shown how many of the socio-economic and political phenomena such as revolutions, populism, military conflict or religious fundamentalism commonly associated to this part of the world can be quite readily compared to similar phenomena in other parts of the world. The arguments invoking the particularity of the Middle East and North Africa can therefore be disposed with simply by probing the historical accuracy of geographically-determined concepts and by carrying out comparative research. In the Sami Zubaida's words:

> [t]here are many Muslim societies, and the range of their variation is comprehensible in terms of the normal practice of social and political analysis like any other range of societies. Of course, there are certain cultural themes common to the Muslim lands and epochs, arising from religion and common historical reference, much like the common culture arising from Christian religion and history. It would be a mistake, however, to think that these cultural items and the entities they specify are sociological or political constants; they are assigned different meanings and roles by different socio-political contexts.[3]

In the last instance, the most convincing test of whether the categories of modern social theory are applicable outside the west lies in the plausibility of the explanations they generate. Thus, the choice of Tunisia as a case study derives both from the need

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[2] I am thinking *inter alia* of the work of Ervand Abrahamian, Talal Asad, Aziz Al-Azmeh, Simon Bromely, René Gallissot, Fred Halliday, Nikki Keddie, Val Moghadam, Roger Owen and Maxime Rodinson. In the anglophone world, the now-defunct *Review of Middle East Studies* embodied this historical and sociological approach to the region during the 1970s . The *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)* reports and the journal *Comparative Studies on South Asia, Africa the Middle East* now carry the mantle of this tradition.

[3] Sami Zubaida, "Is There a Muslim Society? Ernest Gellner's sociology of Islam", *Economy and Society* (Vol. 24, No. 2, May 1995), pp. 151-181.

to focus on a 'hard case' of a seemingly unique society, and from the conviction that it is historical explanation, and not abstract epistemological and ontological debates that determine the validity of given concepts.

This said, there are plainly numerous specific features to Tunisian history and society which will hopefully emerge in the course of the historical narrative developed below. Of the three major Maghrebi countries (the other two being Morocco and Algeria), Tunisia is the smallest both in terms of territory and population. The legacy of Ottoman rule was more enduring than in Algeria (where it technically ended in 1848 as the country officially became an administrative part of the French *hexagone*) and Morocco (which was never subjugated by the Ottomans). Conversely, the colonial penetration was in many respects comparable to that of Algeria, though without the same levels of violence nor the equivalent number of settlers than its neighbour. Moreover, as the chapters in narrative section of this thesis will indicate, Tunisian society was generally at the forefront in the development of modern forms of social and political agency in the Maghreb, if not always responsible for its most radical expressions.

Overall, therefore, the experience of twentieth-century Tunisia is broadly representative of the Maghreb at large. Indeed, at various stages during the course of this thesis, I shall consider events in Tunisia within the context of the Maghreb as a whole, due to the pronounced impact of regional dynamics on the country's historical development. Moreover, in so far as significant commonalities can be found between this historical experience of the Maghreb and that of other colonised societies in Asia, Africa and the Middle East this very specific case study of the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia aims to produce more general insights into the international dimensions of modern social and political agency in countries as diverse as Vietnam, Angola or Argentina. In other words, students of similar processes across the world will hopefully find some use in the concepts and conclusions emerging out of this study. Having presented a basic justification for the use of a case study, it is

now time to consider the essential premises of my understanding of international civil society, and how they contrast and overlap with the existing approaches within IR to similar themes.

1.2 Non-State Actors in International Relations

For over three decades, IR scholars have been contesting the predominance of 'the state' as the central explanatory category within the discipline. In their seminal collection of essays on *Transnational Relations and World Politics*, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye captured the beginnings of this reaction to state-centric IR theory - represented in the work John Burton, Mansbach *et al.*, James Rosenau and Edward Morse, among others[4]- when they insisted that, "A good deal of intersocietal intercourse with significant political importance, takes place without governmental control [...] This volume ... focuses on these 'transnational relations' - contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments."[5] The relevance of such interactions had, it can be argued, already been identified by classical thinkers of international relations from Kant and Burke through to Marx and Mill. Certainly the notion of transnationalism has been present in twentieth century IR theory, whether implicitly -as in the writings of Leonard Woolf or David Mitrany- or more explicitly in

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[4] J. Burton, *World Society* (London: Macmillan, 1972); J. Rosenau,*Linkage Politics: Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems* (New York; Free Press, 1969); E.L. Morse, *Modernisation and the Transformation of International Relations*(New York: Free Press, 1976); R.W. Mansbach, Y. H. Ferguson, D. E. Lampert, *The Web of World Politics: Non-state Actors in the Global System* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976); E-O. Czempiel (ed.) *Die anachronistische Souveränität* (Köln-Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1969) . For a good overview of the literature falling under the category of 'transnationalism' see Michael Clarke, "Transnationalism" in Steve Smith (ed.) *International Relations: British and American Perspectives* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 146-170.

[5] R. Keohane and J. Nye (eds.), *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. x.

Raymond Aron's or Arnold Wolfers' discussion of the subject.[6] Yet the transnationalist literature that emerged in the 1970s marked a substantive departure from these previous explorations in at least two respects. First, rather than being a tangential consideration within a broader analytical framework, transnational phenomena represented *the* central theoretical concern for scholars such as Burton, Rosenau or Keohane and Nye. This, of course, did not entail an outright rejection of the study of interstate relations, but it did assume that transnational relations were worthy of analysis both in their own right, and in so far as they significantly affected interstate relations. As Keohane and Nye summarised it: "[w]e believe that the simplifications of the state-centric approach divert the attention of scholars and statesmen away from many important current problems and distort the analyses of others. We have suggested a 'world politics paradigm' that includes transnational, transgovernmental and interstate interactions in the hope of stimulating new types of theory, research, and approaches to policy."[7]

Second, and following on from this, despite some important differences in their arguments, the transnationalist literature adopted a similar methodological stance: one thoroughly permeated by the prevalent behaviouralist trend in the social sciences. Briefly stated, such an approach placed great faith in the explanatory potential of data accumulation. The proliferation of transnational interactions, so the argument ran, had increased the complexity of world politics such, that only the systematic collation of data relating to these interactions could bring some semblance of order to our understanding of international relations. This enthusiasm for the possibilities of quantification was, to be sure, tempered by an emphasis on the identification of appropriate 'variables'. As one notable exponent of the

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[6] See respectively, R. Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966) and A. Wolfers (ed.), *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962).

[7] Keohane and Nye, *Transnational Relations*, p. 398.

transnationalist approach put it: "Accurate and reliable measurements are of little value unless they measure the proper variable; and, unfortunately, our speculations about changing global structures involve variables that are not readily observed."[8] Once the 'puzzlement' over variables was solved, however, the ground was cleared for empirical investigation:

> [w]e should recall that the conceptual task of disaggregating the relevant global structures so that their component parts are exposed -and thus measurable- is far more difficult than performing the empirical task of recording observations. Indeed, once these component parts are conceptually identified, it ought not to take much creativity to formulate operational measures for them that can be applied to their interaction across time and in the context of comparable cases.[9]

Transnationalism was subjected to a range of forceful criticisms in the aftermath of its rise to theoretical prominence in the 1970s. Some of these will be addressed in greater detail below. At this point, however, its is necessary to pause briefly on the role of collective social and political activity within the transnationalist framework. For one of the seemingly novel phenomena that spurred on the transnationalist agenda was the organisation of social and political movements across national boundaries. Again, the way in which the different authors associated to this approach dealt with such phenomena varied considerably. Nonetheless it is possible to identify four basic assumptions which undergirded the transnationalist treatment of social movements.

The first of these concerned the relatively recent arrival of non-governmental organisations to the international political arena. With a few notable exceptions, the

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[8] James N. Rosenau, "International Studies in a Transnational World" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 5, No.1, Spring 1976), pp. 1-20, p.8.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

classical transnationalist authors rarely extended their investigation of non-state actors beyond the twentieth century, claiming that it was the quantitative explosion of non-governmental organisations during this century that most merited the attention of IR students. The transnationalist discussions of social movements tended to link the rise of such actors with the extension of international organisations and the intensification of global economic relations after World War II. Furthermore, transnational social and political activity was explicitly portrayed as a 'pluralisation' of actors in world politics encouraged by US ascendancy in the international system. As Keohane and Nye candidly admitted: "from a transnational perspective the United States is by far the preponderant society in the world ...[this] has its origins in American patterns of social organisation and the American 'style' as well as in the size and modernity of its economy."[10]

Second, although most advocates of transnationalism were at pains to emphasise that they were not heralding the demise of the state, they did claim that non-state actors could under specific circumstances be as important, if not more, than the nation-state when explaining international relations. Hence, transnationalists granted different forms of collective social and political agency distinct ontological status in international relations. This in turn led to a third assumption closely associated to Keohane and Nye's understanding of interdependence, namely that there existed no necessary hierarchy among the plethora of actors in world politics. State and non-state actors vied for influence in the international system, sometimes in unison, other times in competition. The upshot of such activity, however, was indeterminate in so far as no one expression of power -military, economic, ideological, political- associated to these different agents could be said to predominate over the other. From this perspective the traditional, state-centric approach to international relations, with its emphasis on geopolitics and military might, was being superseded by a much more complex web of powers and interests including

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[10] Keohane and Nye, *Transnational Relations*, p. 389.

transnational organisations such as revolutionary groups, labour movements, or indeed the Ford Foundation and the Catholic Church. The latter deployed mechanisms of international influence and organisation the impact of which simply could not be ascertained through the deployment of old analytical categories such as 'national interest' or 'foreign intervention'. Instead IR scholars had to accept that the plurality of forces in world politics had created an interdependent world where structures of international interaction were constantly being re-arranged:

> We find ourselves in a world that reminds us more of the extensive and curious chess board in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* than the more conventional versions of that ancient game. The players are not always what they seem, and the terrain of the chessboards may suddenly change from garden to shop to castle. Thus in contemporary world politics not all players on important chessboards are states, and the varying terrains of the chessboards constrain behaviour. Some are more suited to the sue of force, others almost unsuited for it. Different chessboards favor different states.[11]

Last, and by no means least important, all theorists of transnationalism acknowledged, with different degrees of qualification, that theirs was a normative project imbued with the liberal-pluralist values prevalent in the US academe at the time. The transnationalist emphasis on competition among a multiplicity of actors in world politics, their belief that the outcome of such contests was not predetermined and that therefore global interdependence was creating a world where the centres of power were increasingly diffuse, all echoed the pluralist theories of democracy applied to the domestic setting by writers such as Robert Dahl or David Easton. From this perspective, the existence of multiple transnational actors was in itself a positive feature of world politics insofar as it ostensibly made the monopoly of power less

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 379

likely. More interestingly perhaps, in a language reminiscent of their 'utopian' and functionalist forebears in IR, many of the transnationalist theorists attached a privileged role to transnational social and political movements in the promotion of international cooperation, inter-cultural understanding and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

This brief overview of the early transnationalist literature will have hopefully provided some sense of how non-state actors, and social and political movements in particular, were originally incorporated into mainstream IR theory during the 1970s. Much of the later investigation into social movements within IR owes a great deal to this pioneering work. Yet at the same time, the transnationalist literature displayed a number of analytical and normative shortcomings that require closer critical scrutiny.

The first of these relates to the overall descriptive nature of the transnationalist agenda. For all their boldness in announcing a shift from a state-centric toward a 'world politics' paradigm, students of transnationalism remained surprisingly coy about the explanatory power of this new category. As Michael Clarke has astutely observed, "In itself [transnationalism] certainly does not constitute a theory; it is rather a term which recognizes a phenomenon, or perhaps a trend in world politics, a phenomenon from which other concepts flow."[12] With very few exceptions, the authors investigating transnationalism seemed content with identifying non-state agents and describing their intercourse with other actors in world politics. The task at hand was not so much to consider how these interactions might help to *explain* world politics, but simply to recognise their existence and register their impact upon interstate relations. The closest transnationalism came to acquiring explanatory status was in the conclusions to the volume edited by Keohane and Nye. Here, the two editors surveyed the uses which their colleagues' 'findings' could be put to when studying international relations, US foreign policy and international organisations,

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[12] Michael Clarke, "Transnationalism", p. 146.

respectively. Yet, again, the prospect of a paradigm shift giving rise to an improved explanation of international relations failed to go beyond a hesitant and promissory declaration of good intent premised on the descriptive paucity of state-centrism:

> Transnational actors sometimes prevail over governments. These 'losses' by governments can often be attributed to the rising costs of unilateral governmental action in the face of transnational relations. For a state-centric theory this is represented as the 'environment'. But it is theoretically inadequate to use exogenous variables of the environment to account for outcomes in the interaction of various actors in the world politics. State-centric theories are not very good at explaining such outcomes because they do not describe the patterns of coalitions between different types of actors described in the essays [of this volume]. We hope that our 'world politics paradigm' will help to redirect attention toward the substances of international politics...[13]

One important reason for the limited explanatory power of transnationalism is that it lacks any theory of agency. For transnationalists, the 'actors' in world politics become so simply by virtue of their pursuit of self-professed goals. There is no attempt in the transnationalist literature to distinguish between different types of agency, nor to situate the latter in an adequate historical and sociological context. Thus, any form of organisation that operates on a non-governmental basis across interstate borders automatically qualifies as a transnational actor. Why such an organisation emerged in the first place, or what motives may lie behind its activities, are not relevant issues for the fundamentally *descriptive* approach endorsed by transnationalists. However, if our aim is to *explain* international relations, it seems imperative to identify and distinguish between different modes of transnational

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[13] Keohane and Nye, *Transnational Relations*, p. 386.

collective agency. This is essential not only for the purposes of creating some hierarchy of agencies, where actions adopted by some organisations become more relevant than others, but also so as to provide a sense of direction to these actions. A s I shall try to indicate below, these questions have been the mainstay of sociological theory for almost two centuries. In recent years, they have finally found their way into IR theory, thus providing a long overdue corrective to the explanatory paucity of transnationalism.

The transnationalist failure in adequately explaining collective agency uncovers a third important limitation of this approach, namely the absence of any clear notion of society. Characteristically, the bulk of transnationalist literature assumes that the actors in 'world politics' operate within a neutral and pre-existing international space they interchangeably term the 'international system', 'world society' or 'international society'. Yet, clearly, the historical and structural characteristics of the existing international system are in many important respects unique. Specifically, once modern international society is understood to be a by product of the advent and development of capitalism, the structural features of this society and the nature of the agents that act within it become associated to particular interests and specific hierarchies. For example, in the transnationalist account, multinational corporations (MNCs) are simply identified as another private actor in world politics, this time confined to the private sphere of 'economics'. But the kind of agency that informs the workings of an MNC is plainly different to that which motivates, say, an international trade union organisation. Furthermore, in so far as both these forms of collective agency are part of 'world politics', they tend to represent opposing interests and generally interact along a hierarchical axis. All this does not mean that both MNCs and international labour organisations are not equally relevant for our understanding of international relations. On the contrary, it is to suggest that in order fully to appreciate the nature and import of their role in international relations, it is necessary to investigate their historical provenance and the interests that motivate their actions. One way of

achieving this is by reference to the structures and agencies engendered by capitalism. But this, unfortunately, is something that eludes transnationalist theories. Because most of the transnationalist literature is oblivious to the broad concerns of sociological theory, it has been unable to develop any analysis of social relations -be these capitalist or otherwise- beyond that of describing the selective interaction among specific transnational actors.

There is a last facet of transnationalism worth criticising in this context; this time relating to the state. One facile objection often levied against transnationalist theories is that they overemphasise the relevance of non-state actors in detriment to that of the state. Indeed, one notorious critic of transnationalism ascribed its failings to a particular 'American illusion': "The curious delusion about the imminent demise of the nation-state has affected Americans throughout their history ... No matter that the assumption of American politicians and 'analysts' about the demise of the nation-state has been proved wrong time and again."[14] Aside from misrepresenting the transnationalist agenda, criticisms of this nature impoverish the debates over transnationalism by reducing the disputes to an either/or outcome ie. either states are the most important actors in international the international system or transnational actors are. Yet, as I shall argue in the rest of this thesis, a more fruitful, and arguably more accurate approach to the question involves concentrating on the interaction, as opposed to the contrast between state and non-state actors, or more precisely between state and civil society. Theorists of transnationalism rarely announced 'the demise of the nation-state' but rather sought to highlight the role of social forces outside the immediate control of the state. In their more sophisticated expressions (eg. the work of Keohane and Nye) the transnationalist literature aimed to gauge the impact of transnational activity upon the interstate system, and not to set one class of actors against the other. Unfortunately, such investigations into the dialectic between state

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[14] Fred Northedge, " Transnationalism: The American Illusion", *Millennium* (Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1976), pp. 21-27, p. 25.

and civil society were pitched at the ahistorical, positivist level geared toward calculating the 'sensitivity' or 'vulnerability' of states vis-a-vis the activities of non-state actors. The approach adopted below, however, seeks to probe the interaction among state and non-state actors from a historical-sociological perspective, emphasising the mutual construction of these entities through time. Such a focus upon the historical relations among the agents of state and civil society, I argue, manages to transcend the crude dichotomy between state and non-state actors without thereby obscuring their distinct existence and internal dynamic.

Classical transnationalism then, is flawed on five major counts: it is essentially descriptive; it has no clear notion of agency; it has no comprehensive theory of society; it fails to consider the interrelationship between state and society; and consequently, it cannot account for the hierarchies and structures in world politics. The sections below will try to illustrate how these shortcomings can be corrected without thereby foregoing some of the important insights into international relations provided by the transnationalist literature. Indeed, the rest of this thesis can be read as a contribution toward an historical and sociological understanding of transnational relations. In so doing, subsequent chapters will place considerable emphasis on two concepts which in the past decade have been widely discussed among IR theorists: civil society and agency. While the discussion of these two broad categories allows us to go some way in redressing the sociological paucity of classical transnationalism, significant problems still remain with the prevailing understanding of agency and civil society in IR. It is to these questions, and how my own usage of the categories differs from the existing ones, that I now turn.

1.3 Civil Society and International Relations Theory

The idea of 'civil society' has been all-pervasive in the social sciences over the past two decades. Partly a response to the role of collective agency in toppling dictatorial

regimes, partly a reflection of the retreat from the language of class or revolution among the left, the portmanteau concept of civil society has been invoked in a wide range of contexts, generally with reference to that arena of our social and political lives that stands outside the control of the state. The limitations of such an approach to civil society will be dealt with at greater length in chapter two. Here the aim is to outline the ways in which IR theorists have incorporated this category into our discipline, and to identify the analytical and normative shortcomings of such usages.

In essence, 'civil society' has been deployed within IR in three basic ways. First, there are those authors such as Ronnie Lipschutz[15], Matin Shaw[16] or M. J. Peterson[17] that resort to the concept in order to retrieve much of the classical transnationalist concerns with non-state actors and what they perceive as a new stage in global interdependence, usually presented under the rubric of 'globalisation'. These authors generally consider this renewed activity among transnational actors in world politics as a possible source of progressive politics, and in this sense, they represent a continuity in the tradition of liberal internationalism under a different guise. For both these reasons, I have labelled them the 'new transnationalists'.

A second cluster of authors shares much of the empirical diagnosis of the new transnationalists, acknowledging a qualitative shift in the nature of world politics, but displaying considerable scepticism as to whether such changes bear the promise of new transnational social and political coalitions. Scholars like R.B.J Walker[18] and,

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[15] Ronnie D. Lipschutz, "Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, (Vol. 21, No.3, Winter 1992), pp. 389-420.

[16] Martin Shaw, "Global Society and Global Responsibility: The Theoretical, Historical and Political Limits of 'International Society'" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, (Vol. 21, No.3, Winter 1992), pp. 421-434.

[17] M.J. Peterson, "Transnational Activity, International Society and World Politics", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, (Vol. 21, No.3, Winter 1992), pp.371-388.

[18] R.B.J. Walker, "Social Movements/World Politics", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* Vol. 23, No. 3, 1994, pp. 669-700, p. 699.

outside our own discipline, Michael Hardt[19], can be seen to represent this view of the overlap between civil society and international relations. Because most of their critical energies are directed against the 'modernist' readings of international civil society, these scholars can be said to defend a post-modernist approach to the issue.

Last, there are those IR theorist that fall under the category of 'Neo-Gramscians' or the 'Italian School' who have applied Antonio Gramsci's conception of civil society to the domain of international relations. According to this school, civil society is associated to the capitalist market and the contest between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces that arise from this 'private' sphere of social relations. In so far as the neo-Gramscians apply a Marxian understanding of civil society, their analysis is of global or international civil society closest to that deployed in this thesis.

All three contributions to the question of civil society and international relations have enriched our understanding of the phenomena arising out of this juxtaposition. Each approach emphasises different aspects of civil society (social movements, market relations, its relation with the state) which lend support to the arguments in favour of taking this concept seriously within IR. Yet despite these significant advances in bringing civil society into the domain of the international, reservations must still be raised as to the way this manoeuver has been effected. In other words, while being entirely sympathetic to the *ends* pursued when incorporating civil society into our discipline, I would like to raise some objections as to the *means* employed to do so.

The main targets of critique are what I have termed the new transnationalists. The work of Martin Shaw and Ronnie Lipschutz has been at the forefront of the debates on civil society and world politics. Through their contributions to the 1992 special issue of the journal *Millennium* -dedicated to exploring the terrain 'Beyond

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[19] Michael Hardt, "The Withering of Civil Society", *Social Text* (Vol. 14, No. 4, Winter 1995) ,pp. 27-44.

International Society'- these authors provided the first sustained discussions of civil society and international relations (or their derivations, global civil society and international civil society). These themes have been followed up with monographs that apply such concepts to specific issues of world politics like the environment or the impact of media on humanitarian crises.[20]

The first major fault of these approaches lies in their adoption of an ahistorical and socially disembedded understanding of civil society. Much like their transnationalist forerunners, international or global civil society on this account is identified as a space populated by transnational forces such as international non-governmental organisations and pressure groups that float autonomously within this sphere. Thus for example, Lipschutz considers global civil society to be represented by "[p]olitical spaces other than those bounded by the parameters of the nation-state system"[21], while Shaw suggests that a global civil society, "[c]an be seen at work in a variety of developments: the attempts by global ecological movements to make the state system respond to demands for global environmental management, the attempts by pressure groups to ensure that human rights and democracy are judged by a global standard and the demands, fuelled by media coverage, to make respect for human needs and human rights effective principles in international conflicts."[22] There is, again, little attempt in these writings to situate the purported agents of civil society within an historical and sociological context capable of identifying the origins of such organisations and the interests they seek to further. The currency of the term 'civil society' is therefore devalued by referring rather blandly to any transnational phenomena beyond the strict domain of interstate politics. Global or international civil

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[20] See respectively, R. D. Lipschutz (with J. Mayer) *Global Civil Society and Global Environmental Governance: the Politics of Nature From Place to Planet* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996) and M. Shaw *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence* (London: Pinter, 1996).

[21] Lipschutz, "Reconstructing", p. 392.

[22] Shaw, "Global Society", p. 431.

society simply replaces the old-fashioned term 'transnational activity' in its descriptive account of world politics.

It should be noted that Martin Shaw somewhat modified his usage of global civil society in a later contribution to *Millennium*. In the 1994 special issue of this journal dedicated to 'Social Movements and World Politics', Shaw recognised that the crucial interaction between states and civil society yielded a dynamic process where non-state actors simultaneously undermine and reinforce the international system: "The emergence of global civil society can be seen both as a response to the globalisation of state power and a source of pressure for it ... [it] in fact corresponds to the contradictory process of the globalisation of state power, and the messy aggregation of global and national state power which comprises the contemporary interstate system."[23] Similarly M. J. Peterson's contribution to the debates on international civil society emphasised the need states and civil societies have for their mutual survival.[24] Such qualifications went some way toward charging the prevalent interpretation of global or international civil society with some explanatory power. Yet they still remained silent on the origins and development of the forms of collective agency which operated within this space, and more importantly, continued to ignore the hierarchies and interests which conditioned their interactions, both among the non-state actors themselves and in the latter's interactions with the states-system. In short, the new transnationalists failed to draw out the full theoretical and historical implications of using the term 'civil society', preferring instead to employ it as a generic category useful in updating the catalogue of transnational activity in world politics for the 1990s.

A second set of commentators on civil society and international relations have proved to be more mindful of the concept's lineage and the historical and political

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[23] Martin Shaw, "Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 23, No.3, Winter 1994), pp. 647-67, p. 651.

[24] Peterson, "Transnational Activity", p. 387.

baggage it has accumulated. Arguing that the term 'civil society' is inextricably tied to modern conceptions of the social and the political, such approaches focus on the limitations inherent in using modernist discourses under the post-modern condition. R.B.J Walker has defended this view most ardently within our own discipline. In a recent assessment of the different invocations of civil society within IR, Walker recognises the value of bringing this concept into the discipline, if only because it unearths the aporias buried within modernist 'meta-narratives':

> The current popularity of claims about a global civil society can thus be read as a partial response to the dearth of ways of speaking coherently about forms of politics that transgress the bounds of the sovereign state. As such, it is sometimes quite illuminating. Nevertheless, as an attempt to extend to the global context a concept that is so historically rooted in the historical experiences of states ... it is a concept that also expresses distinct limits to our ability to reimagine the political under contemporary conditions.[25]

In a similar vein, although coming from a different perspective, Michael Hardt suggests that we replace 'civil society' with 'postcivil society' as a more adequate tool of analysis for societies which have "[r]ecently experienced a passage from a disciplinary society to a society of control."[26] Here again, the sources of this shift in modes of dominance are explicitly associated to global transformations: "Mobility, speed and flexibility are the qualities that characterize this separate plane of rule."

What emerges from these 'post-modern' explorations of global civil society therefore is an uneasy recognition of the relevance for world politics of those social movements operating within civil society, qualified by a strong scepticism toward the modernist foundations of their outlook and action. In other words, scholars like

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[25] Walker, "Social Movements/World Politics", p. 695.

[26] Hardt, "The Withering of Civil Society", p.36.

Walker appear to concur with the new transnationalists on the relevance of non-state actors in international relations, but argue simultaneously that labelling this phenomenon global or international civil society simply reinforces the historic association of civil society to the bounded politics of the sovereign state.

The post-modern musings on the overlap between civil society and international relations have the merit of clearly identifying the historical roots of this conjunction. Walker's commentary on the global civil society literature corrects the latter's historical myopia not only by hinting at the predecessors to contemporary transnational social movements but more importantly, by associating the advent of civil society to a distinct historical epoch, namely capitalist modernity. This in turn opens up the possibility of anchoring our analysis of collective social and political agency at the international level upon a specific understanding of society ie. that characterised by the structures of the capitalist market. Somewhat paradoxically perhaps, the post-modern approaches to global civil society are allied on this point with the neo-Gramscian writings we shall be exploring in a moment, and indeed with the definition of international civil society adopted in the rest of this thesis (to be expounded further in chapter two). The real difference between the post-modernist and the modernist treatment of international civil society lies in the contemporary validity accorded to this category. While for the post-modernists, international civil society and its cognates are at best a relic of the past and at worst, modernist constructs which in Walker's words "[s]imply affirm the limits of their ambition", the view defended in this thesis (and therefore falling squarely into the modernist camp) is that international civil society is the term that best captures the dynamics of collective agency obtaining internationally today. Far from experiencing a shift toward modes of domination and contestation that transcend capitalist modernity, the present international conjuncture is characterised precisely by the affirmation of modern claims to state sovereignty, democracy, citizenship rights, civil liberties and by the deployment of modern forms of agency through political parties, trade unions

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and other comparable organisations. As long as these modes of social and political engagement remain the predominant sources of resistance across the world, reference to civil society and its international ramifications would appear to be the most adequate way of exploring the role of collective agency in international relations.

It is this general appreciation of the contemporary international system that has informed the usage of civil society among several Marxist scholars in IR. More specifically, it is those IR theorists who, inspired by Robert W. Cox's pioneering work, that have incorporated Gramscian categories such as 'civil society', 'hegemony' and 'historical bloc' into the discipline. In essence, the neo-Gramscian references to civil society extrapolate the Italian communist's usage of the term in the domestic setting onto the international stage. In a variation on the 'domestic analogy' the neo-Gramscians suggest that the associations, institutions and collectivities that Gramsci identified as forming a civil society distinct from the state within bourgeois democracies can also be seen to operate at the international level, thus warranting reference to a global or international civil society. Following Gramsci and Marx, the authors associated to the 'Italian school' identify civil society with the 'private' sphere of the capitalist market, to be distinguished from the 'public' domain of the state. Thus, global civil society is on this account synonymous with the global capitalist market. Such a conceptualisation represents a significant improvement on the transnationalist understanding of global civil society in that it roots discussions of the subject on the concrete socio-economic relations that govern our social lives. Moreover, the neo-Gramscian approach highlights the contestation that takes place within civil society by making reference to the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic interests that play themselves out within this sphere. In these two respects, the neo-Gramscian discussions on global civil society address the key criticisms levelled above at the new transnationalists: the lack of a notion of hierarchy and interests within civil society, and the consequent absence of a sociological and historical grounding of the concept.

These strengths however, are overshadowed by a number of weaknesses in the neo-Gramscian conception of international civil society, not least in its imprecise usage. As we have seen , all the authors associated to this school equate civil society with the capitalist market. Yet on some accounts global or international civil society additionally refers to a set of "private, informal transnational apparatuses, such as the private international relations councils"[27] that sustain the international ruling class consensus and foster the ideological consent among subordinate classes necessary for the maintenance of world hegemony. On this reading, global civil society also encompasses the activity of transnational class coalitions identified in Kees van der Pijl's classic study on *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*.[28] Although these shifts in the meaning of global civil society are not necessarily contradictory, they do beg the question of what is specifically useful about this category: if global civil society simply represents the global capitalist market, why not stick to the latter term? ; if the concept aims to describe the forging of a transnational ruling class, how does reference to civil society clarify the object of study?

A more substantive problem in the neo-Gramscian discussion of global civil society relates to the place of the state in this domain of world politics. Although one of the major contributions of this school to IR is their insistence on the centrality of the historical interaction between states and civil societies when explaining international relations, it is not altogether clear how these two spheres inter-relate once they are projected onto the international realm. In a recent critical appraisal of the new Gramscians, Randall D. Germain and Michael Kenny put the point thus:

> In the end, the concept of a 'global' civil society cannot claim a Gramscian

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[27] Stephen Gill, "Structural Change and Global Political Economy: Globalizing Elitesand the Emerging World Order" in Y. Sakamoto (ed.) *Global transformation: Challenges to the State System* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1994), p. 173.

[28] K. van der Pijl's *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class* (London: Verso, 1983)

lineage except in relation to some kind of 'international' state ... [a]ny specifically *Gramscian* reading of civil society requires a corresponding structure of concrete political authority in order to become genuinely hegemonic in the sense used by Gramsci. It thus requires an account of a global 'political society' along the lines questioned here. Put in another way, we challenge the new Gramscians to show just how far Gramsci's justly famous equation can be refashioned to read: 'international state = global political society + global civil society'.[29]

The challenge presented by Germain and Kelly is posed in rather stark terms: it *is* possible to conceive of a global civil society that operates at the transnational level but comes short of producing a countervailing international state. Indeed, one of the major arguments of this thesis is that the social movements that form international civil society simultaneously undermine and affirm the legitimacy of the modern states-system. This notwithstanding, Germain and Kelly are right to point out the difficulties inherent in a self-professed 'Gramscian' view of global civil society that fails to adequately define the latter's relationship to the international society of states. For all their suggestive references to the way in which the reproduction of global capitalism and the transnational class alliances that it generates slowly forge a global civil society, the neo-Gramscians remain elusive about the place of the state and the system of states in the unfolding of this sphere of world politics.

This section has sought to offer a brief overview of the different uses the term 'civil society' has been put to within IR. As we have seen, our discipline has not been immune from the frustrating practice of attaching various, often incompatible meanings to the concept and its derivatives, global or international civil society. All three of the approaches outlined above agree on the usefulness of the term 'global

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[29] Randall. D. Germain and Michael Kenny, "Engaging Gramsci: International Relations Theory and the New Gramscians", *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 24, No.1, January 1998), pp. 2-21, p. 17.

civil society' when describing the transnational interactions in world politics and, furthermore, appear to include the world capitalist market within this domain. While the new transnationalists remain at this descriptive level, the post-modernist and neo-Gramscian theorists probe the explanatory potential of the concept. The former emphasise the inherent ontological limitations in explaining an ostensibly post-modern world with reference to modernist categories like civil society. They are primarily interested in discussing global civil society as part of a broader campaign against the disciplining schemas of modernist discourse. The neo-Gramscians, on the other hand, seek to demonstrate the continuing validity of the term civil society, applying the analytical and strategic insights of Antonio Gramsci's writings on the subject to the contemporary international system. From this perspective, global civil society is seen as a domain of transnational class agency capable of engendering hegemonic blocs that sustain successive historical world orders. Occasionally, this sphere also appears as a an arena of counter-hegemonic contestation, although the neo-Gramscians tend to pay lip-service to this aspect of global civil society more than exploring its full implications for the study of international relations.

The conception of international civil society to be developed in the rest of this thesis plainly overlaps with many of the perspectives outlined above. There are, however, two important departures from the existing theories of international society worth flagging here. First, in contrast to the new transnationalists and following the neo-Gramscians, I seek to ground the idea of international civil society historically and sociologically by associating its origins and development to the reproduction of global capitalism. International civil society is therefore treated in this thesis as a domain of social and political activity subsumed under the broader dynamics of capitalist social relations. Unlike the neo-Gramscians, however, I understand the modern state, and by extension, the international system to be a necessary component of any definition of international civil society. As we have seen, one of the defects of the neo-Gramscian understanding of global civil society is that it fails to grant the

sovereign state and inter-state relations any clear role in the development of this sphere of international relations. The chapters that follow, on the other hand, aim to emphasise the centrality of the international system of states in the formation of international civil society. Secondly, my own understanding of international civil society focuses very specifically on modern forms of political and social agency as the constitutive element of this international domain. Contrary to both the new transnationalist and neo-Gramscian approaches to the subject, the question of agency -and particularly the collective agency of subaltern classes- figures very prominently in the considerations on international civil society that follow. The last section of this introduction will therefore address the issue of agency and how it relates to the perspective on international relations offered in this study.

1.4 Agents and Structures in International Relations

One of the major arguments arising out of the preceding discussion is that using the term international civil society necessarily assumes an historical and sociological understanding of international relations. In recent years, this basic premise has gained increasing weight in the theoretical debates within IR. Specifically, the sociological problematic of agency and structure has acquired its own currency within the discipline. As was stated at the outset, this thesis can in some ways be read as a contribution to an historical-sociological investigation of transnational social and political agency. In this respect, it also represents an engagement with the agency-structure literature in IR. The aim of this section therefore, is to clarify status of the term 'agency' as it is employed in the rest of this study. In essence, the standpoint adopted here is that collective social and political agency is the expression of class antagonisms arising out of capitalist social relations. I understand class as a phenomenon that emerges out of definitive historical relations of production which engender a self-conscious antagonism of interests and values between different social

groups. This clash of interests explains the rise and development of most modern forms of social and political agency, although, naturally, the existence of class struggle does not in itself guarantee the emergence of such agency. As I hope to indicate below, adopting a Marxist perspective on collective agency offers two advantages over other approaches to the subject: it provides an historical and sociological account of agency, and it manages to reconcile the artificial division between structure and agency. Before contrasting this view of agency with those prevailing in recent IR theory, it is necessary to consider briefly the assumptions behind an historical-sociological approach to international relations.

Any sociological understanding of human life must start by explaining the relationship between human agency and social structures. As Philip Abrams put it: "All varieties of sociology stress the so-called 'two-sidedness' of the social world, presenting it as a world of which we are both the creators and the creatures, both makers and prisoners; a world which our actions construct and a world that powerfully constrains us."[30] What is distinctive about a *historical* sociology is that it seeks to explain this relationship between agency and structure as one forged through time:"The two-sidedness of society, the fact that social action is both something we choose to do and something we have to do, is inseparably bound up with the further fact that whatever reality society has is an historical reality, a reality in time."[31] The key insight here is that social structures like, for example, civil society are the product of historical *processes*. Likewise, the possibility of recognising social *structures* arises from our capacity to identify a specific logic to these processes. The task which a historical-sociological approach sets itself, therefore, is to explain our social world by identifying the historical interaction between structures and processes. Ernest Gellner once used the analogy of a chess game to elucidate what might be distinctive about this method. Suggesting that our social life be seen as a sequence of

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[30] P. Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Shepton Mallet: Open Books, 1982), p. 2.

[31] *Ibid.*, p.2.

moves on a chess board, Gellner argued that a sociological history would seek to "elicit and specify [...] the shared set of rules which connect one move with the next."[32] Thus, for Gellner, "A sociological account ... is analogous to explaining the story to someone, say a child, who is unfamiliar with the rules of chess: the rules must be specified, and it must be explained why some moves are mandatory, others preferable, some forbidden, some allowed but disastrous".[33] The way of establishing what these "rules" of social interaction are is through reference to history; we can only understand our social world by identifying the changes and continuities in the structures and processes of social life *through time.*

From a Marxist perspective, the principal agency behind historical processes is class struggle. On this account, in order to explain structural transformations in the course of human history it is necessary to make reference to the conscious and unconscious antagonism of interests and values between, and sometimes among, social classes. This is, of course, an oversimplified statement of the Marxist view of historical change. For one, it obviates the important Marxist debates on the relative weight of the forces and relations of production, respectively, in effecting social change. Gerry Cohen, to take but one example, famously argued that the level of development of the productive forces in any given society takes precedence over class struggle in the explanation of social change. Furthermore, as a summary statement it cannot delve into the complex philosophical considerations regarding the nature and classification of epochal shifts, nor the historical difficulties involved in the identification of class antagonisms. At this stage, however, it seems unnecessary to elaborate on these points. Instead, while acknowledging the contested character of the position, I would like to press on with an illustration of how a class-based understanding of historical change challenges the prevalent notions of agency and

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[32] E. Gellner (edited with a preface by I.C Jarvie and Joseph Agassi), *Contemporary Thought and Politics* (London and Boston: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1974), p.116.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

structure in international relations.

For almost six decades since its emergence as an academic discipline, IR has been oblivious to the sociological problematic of agents and structures. IR theorists have certainly employed these terms in the past, for instance in the transnationalist appraisal of non-state 'actors' examined above, or in Kenneth Waltz's notorious defence of the need to develop the 'systemic' level of analysis in international relations. Yet none of these usages engage with the "two-sidedness of the social world" mentioned earlier: at best, agents and structures are treated in isolation from one another (as in the neo-realist celebration of 'structure'); at worst, they are stripped of any explanatory power (as in the transnationalist notion of 'actor' discussed above). It was in response to this sociological naivety that several IR scholars turned to meta-theoretical considerations on structure and agency from the mid-1980s onwards. Although many of the insights associated to what later became known as the agency-structure debate in IR had arguably been articulated earlier in the work of Robert W. Cox, Ekkehart Krippendorff, John Maclean or Ralph Pettman, it was Alexander Wendt's 1987 *International Organization* article that set the parameters of later discussions.[34] In this piece, Wendt set off from a critique of neo-realist and world-system theory, arguing that both these approaches "[r]eify system structures in a way which leads to static and even functional explanations of state action."[35] For Wendt, reducing international relations to either the agency of states (as the neo-realists do) or the structures engendered by the world-capitalist system (as in the case of world-systems theory) impoverishes our understanding of both the character of these entities and their dynamic interaction. A more fruitful approach, according to the author, involves focusing upon the interdependence between agents and structures in international relations and probing the interconnected nature of their

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[34] Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory", *International Organization*, (Vol. 41, No.3, Summer 1987), pp. 335-370.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 348.

identity. Taking his cue from Anthony Giddens' work on 'structuration', Wendt argued that

> The structurationist approach ... tries to avoid what I shall argue are the negative consequences of individualism and structuralism by giving agents and structures equal ontological status [...] This conceptualisation allows us to rethink fundamental properties of (state) agents and system structures. In turn, it permits us to use agents and structures to explain some of the key properties of each as effects of the other, to see agents and structures as 'co-determined' or 'mutually constituted' entities.[36]

The consequences of this methodological shift for IR were twofold. One the one hand, state agents and international structures were presented as dynamic, historical entities that are shaped through time as a result of their mutual interaction. Secondly, and following on from this, neither agents nor structures were given ontological priority when analysing international relations. The research agenda arising out of these premises was summarised as follows: "The core of this agenda is the use of structural analysis to theorize the conditions of existence of state agents, and the use of historical analysis to explain the genesis and reproduction of social structures."[37]

Wendt's contribution had the virtue of laying down rigorous terms of debate on an issue that plainly struck a chord among theorists of IR at the time. By challenging the meta-theoretical assumptions of both the neo-realists and their world-system contenders, Wendt opened up a space for a critical sociology of agency and structure *ie.* a sociology that problematises the very categories employed in the debate. Yet though Wendt should be praised for his sense of opportunity, the novelty of his argument must be questioned. Indeed, the accusation of 'reinventing the wheel'

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 365

levelled at his theoretical mentor, Anthony Giddens, can also be applied to Wendt's work.[38] Although Wendt's points on the 'mutually constitutive' nature of agency and structure are well taken (particularly in the context of theoretically stunted discipline like IR), it is not necessary to take on board Giddens' own theory of structuration in order to arrive at this conclusion.[39] On the contrary, as was suggested above, the basic insights of structuration theory have been the mainstay of much of this century's historical sociology, and were arguably encapsulated in the first place within Marx's conception of *praxis*.[40] In the words of one Marxist theorist not known for his sympathies to Giddens' work: "[a]t the level of their most general presuppositions, there is no necessary antagonism between Giddens' structuration theory and historical materialism."[41]

A Marxist understanding of agency, then, concurs with the more sophisticated discussions on agency and structure in IR, both on the need to emphasise the necessary interaction between agents and structures (or subject and object), and on the requirement to do so historically *ie.* to consider this interaction through time and place. This said, there are plainly a number of significant differences between Wendt's structurationism and the Marxist approach adopted in this study.

First, whereas Wendt appears to focus almost exclusively on the agencies and structures generated by states -only making cursory references to other social forces toward the end of his paper- the arguments to be developed below identify *classes* as

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[38] Derek Sayer, "Reinventing the Wheel: Anthony Giddens, Karl Marx and Social Change" in J. Clark C. Modgil and S. Modgil (eds), *Anthony Giddens: Consensus and Controversy* (London, New York and Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1990), pp. 235-250.

[39] Wendt himself concedes as much when making reference to Thrift's classification of Philip Abrams, Roy Bhaskar, Pierre Bourdieu and Derek Layder as 'structurationists' (albeit often despite themselves).

[40] See R. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action* (London: Duckworth, 1972). For a discussion within the context of IR see Christian Heine and Benno Teschke, "Sleeping Beauty and the Dialectical Awakening: On the Potential of Dialectic for International Relations" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 25, No.2, Summer 1996), pp. 399-423.

[41] Sayer, "Reinventing the Wheel", p. 236.

the major force behind the production and reproduction of structures and agents in international relations. Second, for all his criticism of the static and instrumentalist character of existing treatments of agency and structure in IR, Wendt failed to provide any theory of socio-historical change. State-formation and the reproduction of the international system are, for Wendt, explained as dynamic historical processes, yet nowhere in his contribution was there a consideration of how we might identify structural transformation on a world scale, nor which agents might be responsible for such change. A Marxist approach, on the other hand identifies the rise and expansion of capitalist social relations as the defining feature of the historical epoch we have come to know as modernity. The structures engendered by the global reproduction of capitalism in turn generate modern forms of collective agency organised around antagonistic class interests. Thus, put very crudely, on this account capitalism is seen as the ordering structure of collective class agency responsible for change in the international system. Without foregoing the dialectic relationship between structure and agency, such an approach is at least able to chart the transformations in successive world orders and explain the sources of their dynamic.

In the chapters that follow, the expansion of international civil society is explained as an historical process characterised precisely by this interaction between the agents and structures produced by global capitalism. The historical analysis of the origins and development of Tunisian civil society to be carried out below focuses upon forms of collective agency such as trade unions and political parties which emerged out of the class relations imposed by imperialist penetration. French colonialism certainly introduced new socio-economic and political structures into North Africa; yet not only were these in themselves the product of specific forms of class agency (eg. those articulated by capitalist entrepreneurs and state officials) but, furthermore, they generated novel forms of social and political resistance. Tunisian interwar history can therefore be interpreted as the outcome of this complex interaction between structures (such as colonial capitalism) and agents (such as

modern social movements). Once we accept that such a history was itself a part of a wider international context, a category like international civil society allows us to identify the concrete dynamics which - underpinned by the reproduction of class conflict in the Maghreb- defined the international relations of the region.

1.5 Conclusions: Toward a Historical Sociology of International Political Agency

The aim of this introductory chapter has been to set out the differences between the uses of 'agency', 'transnationalism' and 'civil society' as they are employed in this thesis from those developed in other theoretical frameworks within IR. It has been argued that the existing discussions within our discipline on issues pertaining to international political agency are unsatisfactory on a number of counts. The early literature on transnational relations in world politics had the virtue of identifying and exploring the relevance in international relations of actors other than the state. Thus, transnational political agency was ascribed to entities such as multinational corporations, religious institutions, pressure groups, trade unions and so forth. Yet, as we saw above, such a literature failed to move beyond the merely descriptive, presenting a canvass of international relations that was broader in its incorporation of previously marginalised non-state actors but that ultimately lacked explanatory depth. Almost a generation later, several IR scholars sought to retrieve the transnationalist concern for non-state actors, this time cloaking the theoretical poverty of their predecessors through references to the concept of 'civil society'. Though generally alert to the conceptual richness of the term 'civil society', those authors employing the category within our field have inexplicably shied away from exploiting its full historical and sociological potential. The same conceptual pitfalls that bedevilled the original transnationalists emerge in the work of theorists of global civil society like Martin Shaw or Ronnie Lipschutz: the absence of a notion of agency; the refusal to

consider hierarchical aspects of civil society; the lack of a clear examination of how global civil society might interact with the international system of states. In order to address these issues, an altogether separate debate on agency and structure in international relations has to be resorted to: that dealing with the more meta-theoretical concerns of structuration theory. As mentioned above, though helpful in exploring questions of agency and structure in a more rigorous fashion, Wendt's structurationist approach to agency in international relations paradoxically returns the discipline full circle to an almost exclusive discussion of agency and structure in relation to the behaviour of *states*. Thus, social and political agency mediated through, for example, social movements escapes the purview of Wendt's analysis.

The combined effect of these developments has been that, while questions of collective social and political agency in international relations have arisen in different guises within our discipline, no overall theoretical category capable of explaining international political agency and its impact upon the international relations has emerged to date. It is the aim of the rest of this thesis to develop a notion of 'international civil society' that is capable of meeting such a challenge. Although a full discussion of the meaning of international civil society is the subject of the following chapter, I will now briefly outline the main features of this concept with reference to the preceding discussion.

International civil society refers to a domain of international relations generated by the global reproduction of capitalism where modern social movements pursue their political goals. Modern social movements are characterised by a historically specific form of agency with four basic components: a universalist ideology; an open membership; a secular or 'disenchanted' vision of social and political action; and a reliance of printed media and novel forms of mobilization such as strikes, demonstrations or electoral rallies. Chapter two will elaborate on this definition of modern social and political agency. For the moment, however, it may be sufficient to simply point out that such an understanding of collective agency

differs from the existing approaches outlined above in two respects. First, contrary to the ahistorical conceptions of collective action in world politics, the idea of international civil society emphasises the historical specificity of modern political subjectivity. This not only involves tracing the origins of international social movements back to the eighteenth century, but more importantly, suggests that we 'moderns' engage in collective social and political activity in radically different ways to our 'pre-modern' forebears. Secondly, in contrast to most contemporary understandings of agency and civil society, I consider the latter as an equivalent, in the Marxian sense, of 'bourgeois society'. In other words, international civil society is treated in this thesis as an arena plagued by the social and political antagonisms inherent to capitalist social relations. On this account, civil society is by no means a necessarily benign sphere of social and political action, but rather a hierarchical space where clashing interests play themselves out through analogous but unequal modes of collective agency.

Aside from a distinct understanding of collective agency, the idea of international civil society presented in the following chapters also offers a novel interpretation of the impact of such agency upon international relations. International civil society is certainly viewed as a domain inhabited by international social movements that organise and act across national, ethnic or religious boundaries. Thus, much of the historical narrative on the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia will focus on internationalism as a principle and a practice of transnational solidarity (whether it be premised on class, religion or ethnicity). As already mentioned above, in this respect the thesis forms part of a broadly-defined transnationalist agenda. Recognising forms of international politics that fall outside the domain of inter-sate relations does not, however, mean rejecting the existence of an international society of states. Indeed, this study will continually emphasise the need for an analysis of the historical *interaction* between states and civil societies in the construction of the international system. In short, from this perspective

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international civil society represents a domain of international political activity which, though distinct from the system of states, is in constant interaction with the latter.

These, then, are the basic characteristics of international civil society as it will be developed in the rest of the thesis. The category aims to offer a novel understanding of social and political agency in international relations by reformulating the use of the term 'civil society' within IR. Furthermore, it seeks to demonstrate the explanatory value of such a concept when interpreting the nature of contemporary international relations, both past and present. Last, underlying this conceptual reworking of the term international civil society is the aspiration of retrieving past experiences of international social and political agency among ordinary activists, and illuminating future possibilities for a progressive world politics premised on transnational political solidarity. The next two chapters will consider in greater detail how these aspirations can be realised with reference to the notion of civil society and international society, respectively. Chapter two offers an extended account of the ideological and historical development of the concept 'civil society', and argues further that the numerous international dimensions to the category merit a leap toward the analysis of an *international* civil society. Chapter three considers the manner in which this new category -international civil society- fits into the broader and more orthodox concerns of IR theory such as sovereignty, nationalism or the norms and values of international society. It will be argued there that the traditional notion of international society is inherently incapable of accounting for social forces other than state elites in the explanation of international relations, and that the idea of international civil society can remedy this flaw while simultaneously retaining some of the relevant insights on the nature and workings of international society provided by the authors associated to the 'English school' of IR. In conjunction, these two chapters should prepare the ground analytically for the remaining narrative chapters of the thesis, where the historical unfolding of the expansion of international civil society will be illustrated with reference to Tunisia.

Chapter Two

Civil Society: The Challenge of the International

2.1 Three Components of Civil Society

Among the concepts of classical political theory used in contemporary political and social discourse, civil society is probably the term which has staged the most dramatic come-back. Since its medieval retrieval via William von Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, the term passed through the hands of virtually every significant western political philosopher, culminating in Hegel's magisterial re-working of the idea of civil society and its subsequent critique by Marx. After a long absence initiated at the turn of the century (briefly interrupted by Gramsci's work), the concept of civil society has returned with a vengeance, claiming a newly found legitimacy through its association with the overthrow of dictatorial regimes in Latin America, southern Europe, east Asia and most recently in eastern and central Europe. The power of collective action in the struggle against the all-encroaching state was reflected in a number of novel formulations of civil society either sociologically as a 'public sphere', anthropologically as a 'condition of liberty' or as the political space where new social movements operate.[1]

Paradoxically, this close relationship between the restitution of civil society as a concrete historical phenomenon and its employment as a political and sociological category has occasioned the loss of some of the concept's analytical sharpness. The prevailing definition of civil society refers to that sphere of public life beyond the state's control. This is the sense which politicians, journalists, activists and no few academics ascribe to the term when they speak of 'civil society' standing as a bulwark

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[1] I refer to three contemporary approaches the idea of 'civil society' which have proved especially influential: J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); E. Gellner, *The Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); A. Arato and J. Cohen, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992). Two excellent collections of essays on the subject are J. Keane (ed.), *The State and Civil Society: New European Perspectives* (London: Verso, 1988) and J. Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

against 'the state', or when they defend it as the realm of freedom. It is also the way in which IR scholars have adopted the term when examining transnational and international nonstate actors.

Clearly, this understanding of civil society has some analytical purchase, demonstrated amongst other things in the way that it has captured the imagination of such a broad public. Yet if it is placed under closer historical and sociological scrutiny, the simple identification of civil society with all social activity which escapes the control of the state gives rise to a rather crude dichotomy which impoverishes the concept in at least two respects.

In the first place, when viewed historically either as a concrete sociological phenomenon or as a theoretical category, civil society appears inextricably linked to the modern state. The analytical distinction between two spheres need not imply their separation as two historical entities. The conceptual power of the term civil society lies precisely in its capacity to make this distinction while simultaneously revealing the complex interaction between its two parts. Second, by delving into the historical roots of the sociological and ideological distinction between civil society and the state, the door is opened to an explanation of how and why this distinction was effected in the first place. This avoids the static and ahistorical definition of civil society as a constant; everywhere and always defined as a counterpart to the state. One of the basic claims of this thesis is that civil society needs to be understood as a historically variable social space. Civil society is not a given, but a concrete sociological sphere which is made and unmade by collective human agency, and which is susceptible to the same historical and social forces which operate upon other parts of our social life.

This double manoeuvre -giving civil society a historical and sociological content- recovers the complexity of the category, thereby reinstating its analytical and explanatory power. In what follows, I will attempt to reconstruct the conceptual richness of the term by addressing three general phenomena which help to define it: the imagination of society; the emergence of capitalist social relations; and the birth

of modern collective agency. Once the general parameters of this redefinition of civil society are made clear, I shall turn to the basic claim of this chapter, namely that an historical and sociological evaluation of civil society reveals a number of international factors in its genesis and development. This challenge of 'the international' warrants, I suggest, a further conceptual leap toward the realm of 'international civil society'.

The Idea of Society

In Europe, the word 'society' was associated with vernacular notions of 'companionship' or 'fellowship' until well into the second half of the seventeenth century.[2] During the course of that century thinkers like Hobbes and Locke began to use the term scientifically, but it was generally deemed to be a word devoid of any theoretical or analytical pretensions. By the eighteenth century, however, the concept had taken on a new dimension as leading theorists of the time such as Ferguson, Montesquieu, Hume, Rousseau or Smith made the origins and nature of 'civil society' the mainstay of their philosophical inquiries. For all the diversity of their positions and methods, one general preoccupation could be said to be common to all these philosophers: to examine the conditions under which men could escape the state of nature and enter into a contractual form of government based on the rule of law ie. a civil society. Thus, an essential component of this novel deployment of 'society' was its contrast to a real or imagined 'state of nature'; the term 'civil society' denoted a new stage in the evolution of government among the human species.

Initially, civil society was synonymous with the state. As was noted above, the Latin translation of *koinonia politike* as *societas civilis* meant that the term retained much of its Aristotelian inflection. It was defined as a political community -usually

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[2] See R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, 1976), p.293 and D. Frisby and D. Sayer, *Society* (New York: Ellis Horwood, 1986), p. 17.

the *polis*- rooted in the principles of citizenship. In this respect, civil society was seen as a model of government. Yet underlying this predominantly political understanding of civil society was a deeper sociological claim about the nature of human relations. Although couched in a language still distant from that of modern sociology, what thinkers like Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau or Ferguson were initiating in their ruminations on the origins and development of civil society was the actual imagination of a systematic set of relationships between human beings which gradually became to be known as 'society'. As Keith Tester has emphasised, "[c]ivil society is perhaps best identified as a specifically, and also fundamentally, sociological problem [...] as an idea by which the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth-century philosophers tried to explain how society was possible."[3]

Thomas Hobbes was probably the first among the modern political philosophers to have posed the question of the origins of society in a systematic fashion. Although his earlier works, *Elements of Law* and *Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society* (the English translation of *De Cive*) already addressed the idea of society, it is in *Leviathan* that Hobbes presents most starkly his theory on the origins and characteristics of this concept. Hobbes did this by introducing two seemingly innocent and commonsensical assumptions about human nature which laid the foundations for future definitions of civil society.

The first of these assumptions was that human beings constitute individual and comparable entities whose actions are governed by laws of motion similar to those of other physical bodies. Hobbes opened *Leviathan* with a discussion of the physiological and psychological traits common to all human beings, suggesting that "[w]hosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does *think, opine,*

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[3] K. Tester, *Civil Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 6. This point is also made by Marvin B. Becker who suggests that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "[F]or the first time in the history of the West the word *society* defined an entity both distant and abstract." *The Emergence of Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century: A Privileged Moment in the History of England, Scotland and France* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.2.

reason, hope, fear, &c, and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know what are the thoughts, and Passions of all other men [...]"[4]. Under the consecutive headings of 'Sense', 'Imagination', 'Speech', 'Reason and Science', and 'Passions', Hobbes discovered the motivations which he considered to lie behind all human action, thus underscoring his methodological empiricism and individualism.

From these initial premises, Hobbes went on to present his famous account of "the Naturall Condition of Mankind" where the human disposition toward competition, diffidence and glory gives rise to a "time of warre, where every man is Enemy to every man [...] and the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."[5] As C.B. Macpherson has underlined, Hobbes' conception of the 'state of nature' was derived from the experience of his own contemporary 'civilised society': "'Natural' for Hobbes is not the opposite of social or civil."[6] Nonetheless, it was clearly essential for Hobbes' argument to posit a *distinction* if not an *opposition* between the state of nature and civil society in order to justify his defence of the Leviathan or Commonwealth as the expression of a free covenant between rational men. Hobbes made this explicit in chapter 17 of *Leviathan* when, in response to the hypothetical claim that like bees and ants, humans could "live sociably one with the other ... and yet have no direction" he retorts that, "... the agreement of these creatures is Naturall; that of men, is by Covenant only, which is Artificiall."[7]

Although perhaps not immediately obvious, the two aspects of *Leviathan* highlighted above -its methodological individualism and the distinction between civil society and the state of nature- provide the rudimentary basis of a theory of society.

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[4] T. Hobbes (edited with and introduction by C.B Macpherson), *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), p.82.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[6] C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: From Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 25.

[7] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p.226

By envisaging an abstract individual endowed with a set of universal physiological and psychological motivations, Hobbes prepared the ground for the future imagination of society as the sum of interactions between individual human beings. In fact, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes puts this imagination to work by describing how civil society or the Commonwealth is born, "[w]hen men agree amongst themselves, to submit to some Man, or assembly of Men, voluntarily, on confidence to be protected by him against all others."[8]

A second and more controversial implication of Hobbes' discussion of civil society is its normative identification with a higher stage of human development. Despite the ambiguities in his exposition, Hobbes effected a distinction in *Leviathan* between civil society and the state of nature which has since represented a central tenet of most theories of civil society. This distinction rests on the familiar but nonetheless conclusive argument that our human capacity to reason allows us to escape the natural predicament of other animals and enter into the higher realm of civil society. As we shall see below, this has important consequences for the two other relationships which I claim define civil society: that between nature and production and that between human agency and history. For the moment, however, it may suffice to simply register that without this rational component it is impossible to imagine society, let alone realise the ethical life of which it holds promise.

In his impressive conceptual history of civil society, Manfred Riedel suggests that Hobbes was instrumental in the shift from a natural to an historical conception of civil society; from civil society understood as a natural community to civil society as the artificial product of separate individuals joining together in a commonwealth :

> In den Systemen des 17. Jahrhunderts kommt das einzelne, das Individuum, vor dem gesellschafltichen Ganzen. Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft hat hier kein

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

ursprüngliches ("natürliches") existenz sondern ein abgeleitetes Dasein; sie ist ein posterius und nicht ein prius, das Resultatt eines Prozesses, der beim einzelnen Individuum beginnt. [In *De Cive*] formuliert Hobbes den entscheidenden Grundsatz, der Gattungsbegriff der klassischen Politik aus der ihm Geshichlosigkeit herausholdt; *daß die Natur der Dinge und des Menschen kein Mögliches Prinzip der Vereinigung zur societas civilis ist. Natur und Geschichte des Menschen, die in der klassischen Tradition der Politik eine Einheit bilden, treten jetz.*[9]

The pervasive influence of Hobbes' formulation of civil society as outlined above is exemplified by the work of Locke and Rousseau on the subject-matter. To be sure, these three thinkers derived political conclusions from their examination of civil society which were very different, when not plainly at odds with each other. Yet the retention of the abstract individual and the imaginary state of nature as the two building-blocks in the definition of civil society betrayed a continuity in the basic theoretical parameters laid out by Hobbes. In this respect, the work of Locke and Rousseau can be interpreted as a further elaboration on a version of civil society which contained deeper sociological claims about the nature of modern society.

Locke opens his *Second Treatise on Government* with a discussion of the state of nature. Unlike Hobbes' bleak vision of man's natural condition, Locke suggests that "the *State of Nature* has a Law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one: And Reason, which is that Law, teaches Mankind, who will consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his Life, Health, Liberty or

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[9] Manfred Riedel, "Gesellschaft, bürgerliche" in O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1975), p. 736-737. Italics added.

Possessions."[10] But this benevolent picture is transformed in the subsequent chapter into a state of war. Contradicting his own advice against confusing the state of nature with the state of war, Locke goes on to insist that "To avoid the State of War ... is one great *reason of Mens putting themselves into Society*, and quitting the State of Nature."[11] Thus, the origin of civil society is boldly situated in the contract made by free and rational men seeking to preserve their life, health, liberty and property:

> Wherever therefore any number of men are so united into one Society, as to quit every one his Executive Power of the Law of Nature, and to resign it to the publick, there and there only is a *Political or Civil Society* ... And this puts *Men* out of a State of Nature *into* that of a *Commonwealth*.[12]

About half a century later, Jean-Jacques Rousseau echoed this contrast between the state of nature and civil society in order to come to terms with the new form of social relationships which he observed around him. In the *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality of Mankind* Rousseau emphasised from the outset that his depiction of the state of nature was not based on historical evidence but was premised rather on "mere conditional and hypothetical reasoning."[13] In fact, Rousseau happily admitted that his invocation of the state of nature follows in the tradition of other theorists who have derived this category from their own contemporary experiences: "The philosophers who have inquired into the foundations of society, have all felt the necessity of going back to the state of nature [...] Every one of them ... has

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[10] J. Locke (edited with introduction and notes by P. Laslett), *Two Treatises on Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 271.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.282.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[13] J-J. Rousseau (translation and introduction by G.D.H Cole), *The Social Contract and the Discourses* (London, Melbourne and Toronto: Everyman's Library, 1979), p.44.

transferred to the state of nature ideas which were acquired in society; so that, in speaking of the savage, they described the social man".[14]

According to Rousseau, man's natural condition is so blissful and benign that "he can have departed from it only through some fatal accident."[15] Such misfortune, Rousseau contended, was brought about by the institution of private property. I shall explore the significance of this explanation of the fall of natural man for the idea of civil society in a moment. At this stage, however, it is more important to note that the introduction of private property gives "rise to a horrible state of war" which leads property-owning men to

> conceive[d] at length the profoundest plan that ever entered the mind of man:
> [...] 'Let us, in a word, instead of turning our forces against ourselves, collect
> them in a supreme power which may govern us by wise laws, protect and
> defend all members of the association ... and maintain eternal harmony among
> us'.[16]

The attributes of this "supreme power" were of course expounded in *The Social Contract*. Here, Rousseau deployed the contrast between natural and civil society most forcefully by suggesting that "The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality he had formerly lacked."[17] Thus, just like his English predecessors, Rousseau came to identify civil society with the moral advancement of the human species; civil society becomes the realm of justice arrived

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

at through the rational contract among free men.

In exploring the usage of civil society by these three prominent political thinkers, I have attempted to stress the *sociological* insights offered by what are generally deemed to be *political* theories. I have suggested that the positing of the abstract, rational individual as the foundation of civil society and its contrast with the state of nature opened the way for the modern understanding of society as the systematic interaction between individuals. The observation which Keith Tester reserves for John Locke is, in this context also valid for Hobbes and Rousseau:

> At the very threshold of modernity, Locke used the imagination of civil society to explain how society was possible [...] Locke understands civil society to be the association of individuals beyond the family which are ... based on the symmetric reciprocity of strangers. [Civil society] involves the reciprocity of strangers who equally and individually give up the state of nature in order to enter into a society.[18]

While the methodological tools applied by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau to their studies of civil society were broadly similar, there is one crucial variable, already alluded to above, which differentiates Hobbes' account from the other two thinkers, namely the role of private property in the forging of a civil society. As was briefly pointed out above, Rousseau was unequivocal about this; the second part of the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* opens with the thundering affirmation: "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying 'This is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society."[19]

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[18] Tester, *Civil Society*, p. 40.

[19] Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the Discourses*, p. 76.

Locke, on the other hand, presented a vision of civil society plagued with ambiguities regarding the place of private property in the genesis and later development of civil society. These contradictions were at the root of C.B. Macpherson's celebrated thesis of Locke (among others) as a political theorist of 'possessive individualism'. Essentially, Macpherson identifies two discrepancies in Locke's account: one pertaining to the difference between the state of nature and the state of war; the other referring to the property requirements for membership of civil society. The first of these, briefly mentioned above, involves Locke's inconsistency in separating the state of nature from the state of war in one chapter of the *Second Treatise*, only to conflate them in the following one. In the second instance, Locke is guilty of shifting his definition of property from the more restricted one of "life, liberty and estate" to that including goods and land. In both cases, Macpherson argues, the contradictions can be explained by situating Locke within the context of a 'possessive market society':

> [Locke] had in his mind at the same time two conceptions of society, which although logically conflicting, were derived from the same ultimate source. One was a notion of society as composed of equal undifferentiated beings. The other was the notion of society as composed of two classes differentiated by their level of rationality -those who were 'industrious and rational' and had property, and those who were not [...] Locke would not be conscious of the contradiction between these two conceptions of society, because both of them ... were carried over into his postulates from his comprehension of his own society.[20]

The connection Macpherson makes between theories of civil society and the

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[20] Macpherson, *The Political Philosophy of Possessive Individualism*, p. 243.

emergence of a capitalist market society can be buttressed by a wealth of historical evidence. In his study *John Locke and Agrarian Capitalism*, for example, Neal Wood identifies the exact intersection between Locke's language of 'improvement', 'commonwealth' or 'labour' and the incipient agrarian capitalism characterised by the process of enclosure, the establishment of wage relationships and the extension of the legal mechanisms necessary for its operation. This, according to Wood, indicates how Locke "[w]as indisputably a theorist of landed men and property but also of a society beginning to be transformed by agrarian capitalism, bringing with it changes expressed in his thought".[21]

It was precisely this transformation which encouraged the growing identification of civil society with the distinct analytical and practical category of the 'economic' during the following decades. By the mid-seventeenth century, the association of civil society with a capitalist market society was accomplished through the emergence of the new science of 'political economy'. In the writings of Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and a century later, in those of Karl Marx, civil society became inextricably linked to the division of labour, the mass production of commodities and the extension of market relations characteristic of modern capitalism.[22] In this respect, it is necessary to explore the origins and development of this new productive system and the attendant rise of the distinct sphere of the 'economic' as a second constitutive element of civil society.

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[21] N. Wood, *John Locke and Agrarian Capitalism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984), p.113.

[22] This is what Charles Taylor denominates the 'L-stream' within civil society. He uses this short-hand term with reference to a picture of civil society first represented in John Locke: " [a] picture of society as an 'economy', that is, as a whole of interrelated acts of production, exchange and consumption which has its own internal dynamic, its own autonomous laws." Charles Taylor, "Modes of Civil Society", *Public Culture* (Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 1990), pp. 95-118, p. 107.

Civil Society as Capitalist Market Society

The debates over the origins and consequent periodisation of capitalism mirror similar disputes among the historians of economic ideas regarding the genesis of political economy. Most commentators situate the beginnings of political economy in seventeenth century England with William Petty's 1662 *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* as its founding text.[23] Others cite the economic tracts produced in Tudor England and Renaissance Italy as evidence of the earlier origins of modern 'economics'.[24] Despite the important differences which separate the economic thought of these three periods, a number of conceptual and practical innovations introduced at the turn of the fifteenth century marked the beginning of a new approach to wealth and its relationship to society at large.

The first of these features was the intense preoccupation with the accumulation of data relating to all aspects of commercial and productive life. While not an entirely new phenomenon, the scale and scope of these empirical investigations into rents, prices, money flows and in the case of England, the amount of land enclosed or the number of poor in each municipality signalled the emergence of a particular domain of the 'economic'. Price, value and interest had previously been explained with reference to a wider moral philosophy like scholasticism or natural law theory. By the seventeenth century, however, these phenomena were increasingly associated with an independent economic system, the logic of which could be expressed in abstract quantities. The systematic collection of statistics was therefore seen as the key in

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[23] See for example, T. Hutchison, *Before Adam Smith: The Emergence of Political Economy, 1662-1776* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988) and J. O. Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[24] N. Wood, *Foundations of Political Economy: Some Early Tudor Views on State and Society* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994). See also N. Wood and E. Meiksins Wood, *A Trumpet of Sedition: Political Theory and the Rise of Capitalism, 1509-1688* (London: Pluto Press, 1997).

understanding the fluctuations in prices, population, wealth and so forth.

It is important to highlight nevertheless, that this wealth of empirical data was used to sustain political arguments about the state of the nation. In his survey of what he describes as 'Tudor reformers', Neal Wood emphasises that "[they] did not collect such data for its own sake but for the purpose of discovering the causes of the depressing scene they witnessed and as the basis for recommending changes in governmental policy."[25] The ongoing public debates about what to do with the nation's poor or how to increase the Kingdom's wealth -expressed in countless tracts and pamphlets- were clearly part of the wider political struggles among the ruling classes. Nonetheless, it is significant that the language employed in these debates already betrayed a distinction between technical matters pertaining to the domain of the 'economic' and the more subjective 'political' questions. Joyce Oldham Appleby makes this point particularly forcefully in her discussion of the early seventeenth century economic thinker Thomas Mun. According to Appleby, Mun's pamphlets indicate how, "For the first time economic factors were clearly differentiated from their social and political entanglements ... In differentiating essential economic relations from contingent ones, Mun gave expression at the same time to the idea that the system of exchange was autonomous."[26]

Thus, well over a century before Ferguson and Smith began to make the connection between capitalist market society and civil society, English intellectuals were preparing the way for this marriage by separating out the 'political' from the 'economic' spheres of public life. This differentiation, however was not merely the child of a scientific revolution occasioned by a paradigmatic shift in the way wealth

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[26] Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology*, p. 41.

was conceived and quantified.[27] The pre-classical economists were describing, and in some cases endorsing the gradual replacement of old social relations with those characteristic of capitalism: wage labour, separation from the direct means of subsistence, production geared toward the generation of exchange-value. Much of the new economic language of 'profit', 'improvement' or the 'advancement of private persons', for example, was derived from the ongoing process of land enclosure. Similarly, changing attitudes toward usury reflected the growing importance of credit in commerce and industrial or agricultural investment.[28]

In sum, the new discourse of political economy which developed in parts of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth century was the product of three inter-related transformations. First, a scientific revolution which lent authority to the idea that the systematic collection of empirical data could explain the logic behind fluctuations in prices, wages, population or interest rates. Second, an intense political debate -mainly fought out in England- surrounding the question of poverty and wealth which for the first time linked the fate of a particular state to the operation of an autonomous social sphere known today as 'the economy'. Third, and perhaps most important, the emergence of capitalist relations of production which underpinned these two developments by gradually separating whole populations from their immediate means of subsistence in order to create a society of individual wage-earners dedicated to the mass production of commodities. These were the transformations which engendered the type of society which Ferguson, Smith and a century later, Marx encountered when analysing civil society. It is now time therefore to examine the relationship between capitalist market society and civil society in the work of these thinkers.

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[27] This is an interpretation favoured by José Manud Naredo in his otherwise excellent introduction to economic thought *La economía en evolución: Historia y perspectivas de las categorías básicas del pensamiento económico* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1987).

[28] *Ibid.*, chapter 3.

The approach of the Scottish Enlightenment to the idea of civil society is best summarised in the title of Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767). History, Civility and Society took on very particular meanings in the work of Ferguson, Smith and their contemporaries. In the first place, the idea of man's inherent sociability was firmly entrenched in the world-view of the Scottish Enlightenment. Far from intuiting or implicitly recognising the notion of society as Locke of Hobbes had done, Ferguson and Smith openly endorsed Montesquieu's dictum that "Man is born in society, and there he remains". The question therefore lay in explaining how and why societies differed historically and geographically.

This entailed the adoption of a distinctive philosophy of history. The understanding of history as a progression of humanity through various stages became central to the differentiation between modern civil society and previous forms of society.[29] This modern idea of history -derived from Vico and again, Montesquieu- suggested that in order to explain the present type of society it was necessary to examine its *evolution*, thus imputing a particular logic or dynamic to history. Ferguson, for example, opens his *History* by drawing a parallel between man's development and that of other living matter:

> Natural productions are generally formed by degrees. Vegetables grow from a tender shoot, and animals from an infant state. The latter being destined to act, extend their operations as their powers increase; they exhibit a progress in what they perform ... This progress in the case of man is continued to a greater extent than in that of any other animal. Not only does the individual advance from infancy to manhood, but the species itself from rudeness to

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[29] Ronald L. Meek examines what he labels as the 'four-stages theory' in *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). He deals with Ferguson and Smith in chapter 4.

civilization.[30]

Although Ferguson is careful to point out the contingencies attached to historical development, his account of how certain societies progress from a "rude" to a "polished" state is ultimately rooted in an evolutionary view of history. In line with other theorists of civil society, Ferguson situates the motor of historical change in property: "It must appear very evident that progress is a matter of property [...] it is in reality the principal distinction of nations in the advanced state of mechanic arts."[31] Different modes of subsistence -heavily conditioned in Ferguson's view by climatic factors- yield stages of social evolution which are represented in varying notions of property: "Of the nations who dwell in ... the less cultivated parts of the world some intrust their subsistence chiefly to hunting, fishing, or the natural produce of the soil. They have little attention to property, and scarcely any beginnings of subordination to government."[32] It is only in that mode of subsistence characterised by private property, the division of labour and the exchange of commodities that men come to inhabit a civil society: "[t]he prospect of being able to exchange one commodity for another, turns, by degrees, the hunter and the warrior into a tradesman and a merchant".[33] Furthermore, "By the separation of arts and professions, the sources of wealth are laid open; every species of material is wrought up to the greatest perfection, and every commodity is produced in the greatest abundance".[34]

There is hopefully no further need to elaborate the point that Ferguson, like

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[30] A. Ferguson (edited by F. Oz-Salzberger), *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 7.

[31] *Ibid.*, p.81

[32] *Ibid.*, p.81

[33] *Ibid.*, p.172

[34] *Ibid.*, p.173

his other contemporaries (most notably Adam Smith), came to identify civil society with capitalist market society. Central to this view was the idea that only the division of labour and the extension of commerce could bring about the prosperity and stability which characterised the 'polished' manners, art and polity of civil society. To be sure, Ferguson had some misgivings about the negative social and political consequences of the division of labour. The point remains, however, that the Scottish Enlightenment represented a culmination in the gradual shift from a 'political' to an 'economic' understanding of civil society.

It is therefore unsurprising to find Marx citing Ferguson in *Capital Volume I* in support of his claims about the alienation wrought by the modern division of labour. Although Marx's contribution to the idea of civil society was for the most part written in response to Hegel, his interpretation of the concept was undoubtedly coloured by the eighteenth-century theorists examined above.[35] After all, Marx's central enterprise was to mount a 'critique of political economy' and this involved accepting the analytical parameters and much of the language of the subject of critique. This becomes readily apparent when considering two basic elements of Marx's understanding of civil society: its association with the sphere of private market relations among individuals, and its historical character as the defining threshold of modernity.

For Marx, civil society is defined above all as the arena of class conflict. Contrary to Hegel's formulation of civil society as a 'system of needs' which finds sociological expression in the formal estate-system, Marx argues that "The estate of civil society .. consists of separate masses which form fleetingly and whose very

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[35] The debt owed by Hegel and Marx to Ferguson and othereighteenth century theorists is stressed by John Keane in his excellent survey, "Despotism and Democracy: The Origins and Development of the Distinction Between Civil Society and the State 1750-1850" in Keane *Civil Society and the State*, pp. 35-71.

formation is fortuitous and does *not* amount to an organisation."[36] These "separate masses" are defined in relation to the productive sphere: "[*l*]*ack of property* and the *estate of direct* labour, of concrete labour, form not so much an estate of civil society as the ground upon which its circles rest and move".[37] Hence, Marx is intent on highlighting that the stratification of civil society is defined by the emergence of two antagonistic classes -the bourgeoisie and the proletariat- whose existence hinges not on the political organisation of the estates-system but on a particular organisation of production. As Jean Cohen has suggested:

> By demonstrating that political estates and corporations contradict precisely the unique features of civil society that Hegel himself recognised -abstract right, private property, reciprocity, and exchange relations of the system of need- Marx shows that socioeconomic distinctions constitute the differentia specifica of stratification of modern civil society.[38]

What is interesting for our purposes, however, is that the "differentia specifica" of modern civil society which Marx identified bore close resemblance to that investigated by the classical political economists. For Marx, as for Ferguson and Smith, the crucial precondition for the emergence of civil society lay in the separation of a private sphere of production and exchange from the public arena of the political state. Furthermore, this private domain of production was to be characterised by a division of labour which facilitated the exchange of commodities among free and equal individuals. It is perhaps worth quoting Marx in full on this point:

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[36] K. Marx, extract of *Critique of Hegel's Rechtsphilosophie* in D. Sayer, *Readings From Karl Marx* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p.121.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 121. Italics in the original.

[38] J. L. Cohen, *Class and Civil Society: The Limits of Marxian Critical Theory* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), p.57.

Individuals have always proceeded from themselves, but of course, from themselves within their given historical conditions and relations ... But in the course of historical development, and precisely through the fact that within the division of labour social relations inevitably take on an independent existence, there appears a cleavage in the life of each individual, insofar as it is personal and insofar as it is determined by some branch of labour and the conditions pertaining to it [...] Thus, on the one hand, we have a totality of productive forces ... which are for the individuals themselves no longer the forces of the individuals but of private property [...] On the other hand, standing against these productive forces, we have the majority of individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away and who ... have become abstract individuals, who are, by this very fact put into a position to enter into relation with one another as *individuals*.[39]

Civil society is therefore associated with the private realm of relations among individuals; a social space which was slowly etched away from the state through the triumph in Europe of capitalist relations of production: "Civil society comprises the entire material interaction among individuals at a particular evolutionary stage of the productive forces ... Civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie."[40]

The emphasis on the historical nature of this transformation is another instance of the overlap between Marx's understanding of civil society and that of the Scottish Enlightenment. For Marx, civil society represents "[a]n historical advance which has transformed the *political estates* into *social* estates ..."[41]. The distinction between the

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[39] From *The German Ideology*, cited in Sayer, *Readings from Karl Marx*, pp. 114-115.

[40] *Ibid.*, p.

[41] From *A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, cited in Sayer, *Readings From Karl Marx*, p. 120

state and civil society which is hereby effected marks the beginning of the modern epoch. As Marx boldly put it: "The abstraction of the *state as such* belongs only to modern times, because the abstraction of private life belongs only to modern times. The abstraction of the *political state* is a modern product."[42] This identification of modernity with the separation between civil society and the state, therefore, mirrors Ferguson and Smith's association of civil society with the latest stage in human evolution. The historical force behind this transformation was in both cases, the expansion of capitalist market relations and the class stratification it engenders.

We have therefore seen how from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, civil society became virtually synonymous with a particular sphere of production and exchange. The modern state was gradually seen, and in some respects actually evolved as an institution separated from the 'economic' and ostensibly only concerned with the domain of the 'political'. Far from negating the actual inter-relationship between these two spheres, what the distinction between civil society and the state permitted was a clearer understanding of the dynamics of modern society. A vital component of this new arrangement was the birth of modern social movements within the ambit of civil society, a development to which I now turn.

Civil Society and the birth of modern political agency

The preceding sections have focussed mainly on the sociological and ideological dimensions of civil society. Yet the idea of civil society has always borne a great deal of normative significance. Part of this relates, as we saw above, to its association with a rational and peaceful form of government, and to its central role within an evolutionary view of history. Most of the normative content of the idea of civil society, however, has been developed during the past two centuries in relation to the

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[42] *Ibid.*, p.116. Italics in the original.

political possibilities which arise within this new social sphere, particularly for modern social movements. This section will therefore examine the key role of modern political movements in forging the space of civil society. By looking at the way in which thinkers such as Hegel, Gramsci, Habermas or Cohen and Arato identify civil society as the appropriate locus of modern political agency, I shall attempt to draw attention to the fact that civil society is also a social space marked by collective struggles for political domination and resistance.

Hegel is in many ways an inappropriate starting point for an analysis of the intersection between social movements and civil society. His own theory of civil society is an extremely original amalgam of previous ruminations on the theme, drawing on sources as diverse as ancient republicanism and Enlightenment political economy. As Cohen and Arato note: "It is by now a commonplace that Hegel attempted to unite, in a scheme that was to be both prescriptive and descriptive, a conception of ancient *ethos* with one of the modern freedom of the individual."[43] The modern, rational state, represented by a universal class of bureaucrats was to embody this ideal; a prospect which as John Keane has highlighted, "[c]onstitue[s] a very broad licence indeed for state regulation and dominance of social life."[44] It is this contradiction between Hegel's positing a realm of civil society lying between the family and the state, and his endorsement of the need for the state to intervene in civil society in order to uphold the universal interest, that has occasioned a scepticism about his relevance to a democratic theory concerned with social movements. While it is true, as Marx's critique pointed out, that Hegel had not registered the emergence of distinct socioeconomic classes as bearers of particular political interests, he did incorporate, as we saw above, the idea of estates (*Stände*) as representatives of a particularly modern 'system of needs'. The constituents of civil society -associations,

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[43] Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, p. 91.

[44] Keane, "Despotism and Democracy", p. 54.

communities, corporations- were given by Hegel a pivotal sociological and normative role in linking the individual to the wider community realised in the state. In this respect, the independent sphere of civil society, though cancelled out by the universal interest of the rational state, *is* recognised by Hegel as having an important function within the project of an Ethical Life (*Sittlichkeit*). Perhaps a closer examination of the sociological and normative elements of Hegel's theory of civil society will illuminate its relevance for an understanding of civil society as the original site of modern political agency.

Civil Society was identified by Hegel as an historically concrete space of social interaction among individuals. This interaction was conditioned by three elements: a "system of needs" (broadly speaking, 'the economy'); an "administration of justice" which protects property as the source of individual freedom; and "the police and the corporation" as regulators of these two preceding spheres. Hegel explained the functioning of these elements in the following way:

In the *system of needs*, the livelihood and welfare of each individual [*jedes Einzelnen*] are a *possibility* whose actualization is conditioned by the individual's own arbitrary will and particular nature, as well as by the objective system of needs. Through the administration of justice, infringements of property or personality are annulled. But the right *which is actually present in particularity* means not only that contingencies which interfere with this or that end should be cancelled [*aufgehoben*] and that the *undisturbed security* of *persons* and *property* should be guaranteed, but also that the livelihood and welfare of individuals should be *secured* - i.e. that *particular welfare* should be *treated as a right* and duly *actualized* [in the form of the police and the corporation].[45]

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[45] G. W. F. Hegel (edited by A. W. Wood and translated by H. B.Nisbet), *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1995), §230, p. 259-260. Italics in the

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Thus, there is a great deal of overlap between Hegel's vision of civil society and that of his predecessors. The concept of a 'system of needs' is taken directly from the Scottish political economists, while Hegel's emphasis on the idea that civil society is inhabited by right-bearing individuals echoes Locke's formulation. Furthermore, Hegel shares with the Enlightenment commentators the notion that civil society is a product of that distinct historical epoch known as modernity. What is singular in Hegel, is his recognition of the role played by social organisations in mediating the political relationship between the individual and the state. Hegel ascribes this role to Estates which, representing the corporations, associations and communities of civil society, integrate the public and private spheres of social life:

> Viewed as a *mediating* organ, the Estates stand between the government at
> large on the one hand and the people in their division into particular spheres
> and individuals [*Individuen*] on the other [...] this position means that they
> share the mediating function of the organized power of the executive, ensuring
> on the one hand that the power of the sovereign does not appear as an isolated
> extreme -and hence simply as an arbitrary power of domination- and on the
> other that the particular interests of communities, corporations and individuals
> [*Individuen*] do not become isolated either.[46]

Hegel's invocation of intermediate associations and organisations of civil society must also be seen within the context of his wider normative project. In a sense, the chief purpose of *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* is to present an ethical and political alternative to the growing individual alienation imposed by modern society. Hegel recognises the achievements of modern morality: its grounding on universal rationality

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original.

[46] *Ibid.*, §302, p.342.

and its respect for individual conscience. Yet, for Hegel, morality can only become meaningful if it operates within a community, if it is given content through the individual's involvement in public life. As Charles Taylor put it: "Morality shows human moral life ... as a purification of the will. But it cannot reach its goal of deriving the fullness of human moral duties from reason, nor realize these unless it is completed by a community, in which morality is not simply an 'ought', but is realized in public life."[47] It is at this juncture that the associative elements of civil society take on not only a representative, but an ethical role by integrating individuals into the wider community, recognising the value of their work and educating them in the virtues of civic life. The corporation, for Hegel, "[h]as the right to assume the role of *second* family for its members ..."[48]

It should hopefully be clear by now that the originality of Hegel's formulation of civil society rests on his skilful combination of a sociological and political understanding of the concept. For Hegel, civil society represented both an independent sphere of ethical life and a mediating element within the wider community governed by the rational state. Hegel was unequivocal about the state's primacy over other spheres of society, yet he also insisted on the importance of allowing civil society to retain certain autonomy from the state. For John Keane, "Ultimately, from his perspective, the relationship between state and society can be determined only by weighing up, from the standpoint of political reason, the advantages and disadvantages of restricting the independence, abstract freedom and competitive pluralism of civil society in favour of universal state prerogatives."[49]

The antinomies of Hegel's political philosophy and their wider implications need not detain us here. What I hope to have pointed out is that Hegel's theory of civil

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[47] C. Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.431.

[48] Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §253, p. 271.

[49] Keane, "Despotism and Democracy" p. 53.

society contained two important innovations. First, it made independent associations and public opinion a core component of civil society, granting them a role as political and ethical mediators between individuals and the state. Second, for all its invocation of the communal dimensions of human existence, Hegel's concept of civil society acknowledged the centrality of conscious, reflexive individuals in the construction of modern civil society.

These innovations have been taken up by a number of twentieth-century theorists of civil society. Antonio Gramsci for example adopted the Hegelian understanding of civil society in his interpretation of the failures of proletarian revolutions in Europe during the aftermath of World War I. He clearly explained the difficulties of revolutionary strategy in western societies with reference to the hegemonic role played by the independent institutions of civil society which complement the coercive rule of the state with sophisticated cultural mechanisms of consent. In order to challenge this hegemony, Gramsci contended, revolutionary forces embodied in a myriad of social movements and cultural associations- must occupy the space of civil society created by western capitalist societies. In a different but related fashion, contemporary thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas or Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato place considerable emphasis on the role of social movements in the construction of a democratic public sphere. In short, broadly coinciding with the rise of modern forms of political agency, civil society has increasingly been associated to the political activism displayed by different social movements. To be sure, this conception of civil society situates the rise of social movements within the context of capitalist modernity, and often in opposition to the encroachments of the expanding state machinery. Yet the primary impulse behind civil society according to most contemporary theorists is a particularly modern form of political subjectivity. As Cohen and Arato indicate "Modern civil society is created through forms of self-

constitution and self-mobilization."[50] Since this study shares the view that civil society is ultimately made and unmade by the collective action of conscious individuals organised around social movements, it may be worth pausing briefly on the nature and characteristics of these movements before proceeding to analyse their international dimensions.

Sidney Tarrow has neatly defined social movements as "Collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities".[51] Although social movements have, defined in this way, existed in different historical epochs, the argument of this paper is that civil society is premised on specifically *modern* forms of political agency, the nature of which can be summarised with reference to four of its general components:

1. **Secularism**: Secularism should not be confused here with atheism or even anti-clericalism. Rather, it is used in a broader sense to refer to a way of engaging in political action which emphasises human subjectivity and moral agency as opposed to Divine intervention or other-wordly determinations. In a way, it involves applying Weber's notion of "disenchantment" to the realm of collective agency[52], thus contrasting, for example, messianic forms of political protest to those built around specific programmatic demands. The organisational consequence of this is that the hierarchy of modern political movements is determined by the members themselves and not ordained by God or His representatives on earth. Moreover, modern movements secularise their epistemology by replacing theology with ideology, or in Koselleck's formulation, favouring prognosis over prophecy; philosophy of history

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[50]Arato and Cohen, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, p. ix.

[51] S. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 3-4.

[52] As presented in his essay "Science as Vocation". Reproduced in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mlls (eds.) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1991).

over the conjectures of cosmology.[53]

2. **Democracy**: Modern political movements tend to have an open membership, the sole requirement being the sharing of political world-view.[54] The notable exception to this rule were women[55], and in many cases, peoples of colour. These are, of course, no minor nor accidental exceptions and they reflect the contradictory nature of some modern social movements. Yet, in so far as the general rule of open membership for adult men marked an obvious contrast to the previously restricted forms of association, it must be maintained as an elementary component of modern agency.

3. **Universalism**: Virtually all modern social movements have a universal message, i.e. they are aware of the wider validity of their claims for other people elsewhere in the world. As opposed to pre-modern forms of agency, modern political movements rarely base their objectives exclusively on the very particular and concrete issues of their immediate surrounding. They are certainly premised on a specific source of political identity (eg 'working-class', 'women', 'black people') but the general assumption is that anybody is entitled to support the particular cause.

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[53] R. Koselleck, *Futures Past: on the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

[54] This point is made in the opening lines of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working-Class* (London: Victor Gollancz. 1963). Refering to the first of the 'leading rules' of the London Corresponding Society which claims, "That the numbers of our Members be unlimited" Thompson says: "Today we might pass over such a rule as commonplace: and yet it is one of the hinges upon which history turns. It signified the end to any notion of exclusiveness, of politics as thepreserve of any hereditary élite or property rule ... To throw open the doors to propaganda and agitation in this "unlimited" way implied a new notion of democracy, which cast aside ancient inhibitions and trusted to self-activating and self-organising processes among the common people". (p. 22).

[55] Civil society is, like most other classical keywords of political theory, a gendered concept. Yet the fact that it has been invoked by some contemporary feminists, and more importantly, that feminist critiques emerged precisely from social movements which operate within civilsociety suggests that the category *can* be useful to those engaged in feminist politics.

4. **Use of printed media and new modes of protest**: Modern political agency is strongly dependent on the use of new printed media: newspapers, journals, manifestos, programmes, pamphlets, declarations. Habermas and others have rightly underlined the importance of these media in the rise of a bourgeois 'public sphere' while print-capitalism is of course a crucial element in Benedict Anderson's account of the rise of nationalism.[56] It should also be noted that modern social movements introduced new modes of protest. As Louise and Charles Tilly have pointed out: "[t]he food riot, the tax rebellion, the invasion of fields, and the other standard ways of voicing eighteenth-century demands give way to the strike, the demonstration, the public meeting, the electoral rally ..."[57]

These distinguishing features neither exhaust the definition of modern political agency nor do they encompass all the forms of agency that come under this category. In fact, they represent an ideal-type, which always needs to be contrasted with the historical practice of social movements. This said, they do broadly capture what is distinctive about the social movements which have operated within civil society. It is now time therefore, to explore the ways in which this type of agency may be deemed to be international.

2.2 The International Dimensions of Civil Society

The foregoing brief and necessarily selective survey of the way civil society has operated as a political, historical and sociological category identifies three basic elements of its constitution. In the first place, civil society assumes the possibility of analysing the systematic interaction between individuals in a scientific fashion. In

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[56] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

[57] L.A. Tilly and C. Tilly (eds.) *Class Conflict and Collective Action* (London and Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1981), p.21.

other words, it marks the beginning of a distinctly *modern* view of society. The emergence of this new imagination of society, however, corresponds to the historical development of capitalist social relations. In this respect, civil society is rooted in bourgeois society. Third, the sociological understanding of civil society is given political and ethical content by modern social movements. Ultimately, the continued existence of civil society hinges upon the capacity of social and political movements to channel collective human agency toward specific political goals.

The claim I want to develop now is that civil society has from its inception been moulded by a number of international factors which warrant the adoption of the term *international civil society* as a more accurate category of social, political and historical analysis. Viewing civil society from a wider international perspective, I suggest, poses a challenge to the prevailing assumption that civil society can be restricted to a particular national setting. It allows us to examine the same phenomena that have traditionally preoccupied theorists of civil society, while at the same time encompassing the international aspects of its genesis.

Essentially, the international dimensions of civil society are three-fold. In the first place, civil society must be seen as a constituent of the modern system of states. Whether understood as an autonomous sphere of economic activity or as the embodiment of a distinct type of political community, civil society emerged in conjunction with the modern sovereign state -the key component of the international system. Second, defined as the expression of capitalist market relations, civil society should be seen as an international phenomenon by virtue of its global expansion. In other words, it is fruitful, as the neo-Gramscians discussed in the introductory chapter have done, to conceive of the global capitalist economy as the domain of international civil society. Last, when civil society is viewed as a political and ethical space occupied by modern social movements, the international dimensions of its operation become even more evident. The combination of these three elements produces the following definition of international civil society: *International civil society is the*

social and political space created internationally and within states by the expansion of capitalist relations of production, where modern social movements operate in pursuit of stated political goals.

In what follows, I shall elaborate on this definition with reference to the three elements of international civil society. I shall pay most attention to the last component, the functioning of international social movements, for it brings into focus the role of internationalism in reproducing international civil society. This is a concept that will figure prominently in the historical narrative that follows, and it is also of considerable relevance to the normative implications of thinking about international civil society. For these two reasons, I shall spend some time identifying the basic features of internationalism as a political principle and practice. The concluding section of the chapter will signpost the analytical and normative promises of employing the term international civil society, thereby anticipating some of the themes to be developed in the closing chapter of this study.

Civil Society and the Construction of the System of States

One of the few obvious aspects of any definition of civil society is that it necessarily assumes reference to the modern state. Although, as we saw above, the nature of the interaction between these two categories has varied through time, they have always been presented within the context of a relationship between two distinctive, if not always separable entities. The modern state being the traditional starting-point for the analysis of the international system, one would expect IR theorists to have paid more attention to the interplay between civil society and the state in the genesis of the modern states-system.

Yet it is only recently that IR theory has come to interrogate the nature of this relationship and its relevance for an understanding of the international system. In addressing the historical origins of the sovereign state, Justin Rosenberg has laid

special emphasis on the place of civil society in this process. For Rosenberg, "[t]he structural specificity of state sovereignty lies in its 'abstraction' from civil society - an abstraction which is constitutive of the private sphere of the market..."[58] Hence, the very possibility of thinking about state sovereignty -and consequently, the modern international system- only arises when the separation between the 'political' and the 'economic' (state and civil society) is effected under capitalism.

This thesis is of course far from uncontroversial. As Rosenberg freely admits, the historical evidence lends greater weight to the more conventional view that it was the rise of Absolutism which -by centralising the state apparatus, creating standing armies and marking a separation between the state's *internal* supremacy and *external* independence- paved the way for the emergence of a system of independent sovereign states. According to this view, civil society understood either as a market or as political community was inconsequential to the constitution of the modern international system. The emergence of the latter was principally the result of the landed nobility responding to the crisis of feudalism in Europe by concentrating political and economic power in a territorially defined Absolutist state. In the words of Perry Anderson: "The class power of the feudal lords was thus directly at stake with the gradual disappearance of serfdom. The result was a *displacement* of politico-legal coercion upwards towards a centralized, militarized summit-the Absolutist state"[59].

Clearly, the historical origins of the modern international system remains the subject of a complex and unresolved debate which cannot be further addressed here. For the purposes of our argument however, it may be worth pointing out that neither of the two accounts presented above, ascribes a role to the social movements within civil society in the configuration of this new international system. Anderson refers to

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[58] J. Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 123.

[59] P. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1974), p. 19.

the centrifugal resistance to the Absolutist state displayed at different times by local nobles, tradesmen or lawyers, often in combination with a rural or urban mob. Yet surely the period also witnessed the gradual emergence of social movements employing a distinctly modern language of rights, constitutionalism and even democratic governance which reinforced the legitimacy of the territorial state as a political community. In other words, whether seen as a product of capitalism or Absolutism, the modern state was given actual historical content not only by the ruling classes and their attendant systems of property and law, but also by a populace which increasingly identified this particular territorial entity as the locus of modern politics. One of the most noteworthy paradoxes of modern social and political movements, therefore, is that they operate at an international level while at the same time recognising the political salience of the sovereign state. It is in this respect that international civil society becomes simultaneously an arena of domestic and international politics. The chapter that follows will aim to illustrate in greater historical detail how looking at the emergence and reproduction of civil society can help us to understand key concepts in IR theory such as 'sovereignty', 'self-determination' or 'the standard of civilization'. It will be argued there that the notion of 'popular sovereignty' as a purveyor of self-conscious agency of collectivities has been instrumental in forging the modern states-system. At this stage, however, my aim is merely to highlight the part played by the incipient modern social movements in defining the political limits of the modern state, and hence their contribution to the construction of a modern system of states.

The Expansion of International Civil Society

When civil society is identified as an arena dominated by capitalist relations of production, the international ramifications of the concept become even more apparent. This claim can be elaborated on from two vantage points. On the one hand, seen from

an orthodox Marxian perspective, international civil society becomes synonymous with the global capitalist market; the organisations and corporations of capitalist production and exchange come to embody the 'economic' space of a borderless civil society which underscores the 'political' system of sovereign states. Thus, the relationship between the two spheres turns into a domestic analogy whereby international civil society stands in the same relation to the international system as civil society does for the state in a national setting. The position adopted here however, eschews the domestic analogy and seeks to incorporate the dynamics of the international system into a broader definition of international civil society. While maintaining the notion that international civil society is a social and historical space created by the expansion of capitalism, the claim is also that this expansion altered the very nature of capitalism as a social formation. Thus, talking of international civil society does not just involve recognising the obvious fact that capitalism expanded globally, but furthermore, that it did so in a distorted fashion. The features which had originally defined capitalism in its European birthplace became refracted through the lens of international phenomena such as sovereignty, war, imperialism or revolution. The usage of international civil society employed here attempts to convey the intricate set of social and political relations which were thrown up by this process. Perhaps the best way of illustrating this point is by way some examples.

Any analysis of international capitalism should involve an examination of European (and to a lesser degree Japanese and American) imperialism, for it was through this process that capitalist social relations were extended across the globe. The controversies over the exact nature of imperialism are of course manifold. Nonetheless, at least three key elements are common to all historical forms of capitalist imperialism. First, the imperial state is at some stage involved in the imposition of capitalist social relations, either through war and conquest, or by means of indirect coercion such as unequal trade treaties and credit arrangements. Second, imperialism involves a mode of political subjugation which, far from laying the

foundations of civil society via the establishment of a market of free labour, actually employs all its coercive powers to extract surplus value through mechanisms ranging from outright slavery to bonded labour or forced migration. Third, and not least important, this form of capitalist expansion finds legitimacy in notions of racial supremacy, so that the modes of surplus extraction are heavily conditioned by a racial, ethnic or religious hierarchies which justify unequal market relations.

If we take the case of North Africa, for example, the nature of French capitalist penetration bore all the hallmarks of imperialism just mentioned above. Algeria and later, Tunisia and Morocco were invaded under the pretext of safeguarding French financial and strategic interests. In all three cases, but particularly in Algeria, invasion was followed by violent 'pacification' and forced expropriation of land which was subsequently occupied by European settlers. The legal administrative structures erected by the invading power effectively divided the population along two categories: that of the *indigène* and that of the white *colon*. Thus the upshot of this whole process was certainly the introduction of capitalist relations of production in North Africa, ie. the expansion of international civil society. Yet because imperialism was the primary agent of this development, the form of capitalist social relations which emerged in North Africa were significantly different from those existing in Europe. The interaction between French and North African civil societies must be seen within its appropriate international context: one of imperialist domination articulated upon various racial and national hierarchies and enforced through direct state intervention.

Of course, the extension of capitalist social relations has also taken non-imperialist routes. The Meiji Restoration in Japan is typically cited as an example of state-led capitalist transformation, while in many parts of the world, most notably in Latin America, capitalism made inroads either directly through the mechanisms of the global market or through local middle-men, dubbed by some theorists as the 'comprador bourgeoisie'. There is hopefully no need to labour the point further that

world capitalism is what Eric Wolf terms a "differentiated" mode of production.[60] The relevant conclusion in terms of our argument is that the category 'international civil society' should suggest much more than an alternative formulation of the global capitalist market. It should represent an approach to the expansion of capitalism which incorporates a host of international dimensions (such as nationalism, ethnic and religious stratification, revolutions or imperialism itself), into the Marxian understanding of civil society as a private sphere of capitalist production and exchange.

International Civil Society as the Arena of International Political Agency

The foregoing discussion on the nature of world capitalism bears direct relevance to the subject-matter of this last section in two important respects. First, it is the extension of capitalist social relations which best explains the emergence across the world of the modern social movements that have been the protagonists of international civil society over the past two centuries. Most political expressions of modern civil society -be they liberal pressure groups, women's movements, nationalist parties or socialist organisations- arise out of class relations present only under capitalism. This does not mean that capitalism *necessarily* produces these forms of organisation, nor that it is the only force responsible for their emergence. It does mean, however, that historically the forms of modern political agency typical of civil society spring from the socioeconomic transformations brought about by capitalism.

Second, and not least important, the uneven expansion of world capitalism examined above engenders a variety of social and political forces which, although broadly comparable, exhibit a number of particularities. As was briefly discussed in the introductory chapter to this thesis, positing universal forms of social and political

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[60] E. R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), Chapter 10.

agency does not preclude recognising their diversity. Indeed, the historical analysis of Tunisian civil society in the chapters that follow aims precisely to demonstrate how the reproduction of capitalist social relations in the Maghreb generated modern social movements with myriad political programmes: reformist liberals; populist nationalists; socialist and communist parties and trade unions; Islamic revivalist. These movements were in one way or another the product of the expansion of international civil society; yet they simultaneously contested the social and political implications of this process, sometimes in unison and most often in competition with each other. In other words, far from generating homogenous replicas of an archetypal modern social movement, the expansion of international civil society produced very specific manifestations of universal forms of social and political agency.

Taken together, these two considerations provide the backdrop against which we can examine the normative dimension to the idea international civil society. The expansion of capitalism only opens up the sociological space of international civil society; in the last instance, however, this space is given content through the international activity of social movements. I shall now turn to the nature of these movements, how they are defined internationally and how they represent the political space of international civil society.

Taking the earlier definition of modern social movements as a starting-point, the claim defended here is that such movements have been international from their inception in at least three important respects. First, as the third of the characteristics presented above suggests, virtually all social movements are premised on some form of universal political agency. For the socialist, it is the working-class which plays this role; for the feminist, it is women which are the political agents of their own emancipation; for the nationalist, it is the imagined community of the nation which carries this burden. In all three cases, there is an explicit assumption that 'women', 'nations' or the 'working-class' exist as potential political agents in all parts of the world. To take a random but illustrative example, the People's International League,

a cross-European association established in 1847 by the Italian nationalist Guisseppe Mazzini, defined its objectives thus:

> to disseminate the principles of national freedom and progress; to embody and manifest an efficient public opinion in favour of the right of every people to self-government and the maintenance of their own nationality; to promote a good understanding between the peoples of every country.[61]

Even a cursory glance at the history of social and political movements of the past two centuries would reveal a vast number of similar tracts where the potential audience of the message is consciously deemed to be international. In short, the very consideration that a particular political discourse might be relevant outside the original national or regional context of its genesis suggests that at an *ideological* level, all modern social movements have been international from the start.

The most solid evidence in favour of the idea that modern social movements constitute an international phenomenon, however, lies in a study of their forms of organisation. Clearly, modern movements which espouse universal ideologies also attempt to realise those aspirations in practice. Thus again, an historical survey of the organisational forms of the relevant modern social movements indicates a clear international, when not overtly internationalist disposition. Consider the women's movement for example. Since the mid-nineteenth century, women have organised internationally with the intention of furthering their common interests across the globe. Emerging out of existing international associations like the Anti-Slavery League or the Socialist International, feminist internationalism took shape in the form of organisations such as the International Congress of Women (established in 1888), the International Women's Suffrage Alliance (1904) or the Socialist Women's

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[61] Cited in D. Mack Smith, *Mazzini* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p 52.

International (1907).[62] Although the general objectives of the various organisations which formed the international women's movement differed considerably, the single common denominator remained the explicit attempt at transgressing the existing national political boundaries. This aspiration was realised by a number of organisations which, although predominantly European and North American in membership, still managed to attract sympathisers in Turkey, Iran, South Africa or Argentina. Thus, by the time the women's movement re-emerged as 'new' social movement in the late 1960s, the international women's movement had a rich experience as a representative of international civil society. Similar stories could be told of the liberal, pacifist, socialist and even environmentalist movements which have been the mainstay of civil society across the world.

These various experiences fall under what in the rest of this thesis will be described as the principle and practice of 'internationalism'. The notion of internationalism arose during the latter part of the nineteenth century in response to the momentous socioeconomic and political changes that were transforming the lives of millions across the world. The emerging 'universal interdependence of nations' captured so vividly by Marx and Engels in their 1848 *Communist Manifesto* was simultaneously generating attempts at forging a corresponding 'universal interdependence of peoples'. This aspiration to create bonds of solidarity among groups of different national, religious and ethnic backgrounds was expressed first as a *principle* which celebrated the internationalisation of the world as a positive process which could facilitate the pursuit of universal political goals such as peace, democracy, equality or freedom.[63] Additionally, internationalism came to reflect a particular *practice* of social and political organisation of people across national, ethnic

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[62] See the useful summary provided by D. Stienstra, *Women's Movements and International Organization* (London: Macmillan Press, 1994), chapters 3 and 4.

[63] This summary is drawn from Fred Halliday's essay on internationalism, "Three concepts of Internationalism", *International Affairs* (Vol. 64, No.2, 1988), pp. 187-197.

or religious boundaries. In the specific case of working-class internationalism, this was realised in the form of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA) or First International formed in 1864, and later in the Second and Third Internationals, founded in 1889 and 1919, respectively. Understood in this way, internationalism becomes both cause and consequence of the expansion of international civil society: internationalist solidarities were certainly encouraged by the increasing interpenetration of societies across the world; yet at the same time, a heightened consciousness of this process among for example, the European working-class, led to pre-emptive initiatives in internationalist activism geared toward undermining the greater mobility and power of capital. The upshot of all this is that the emergence in a particular society of modern social movements typical of civil society cannot be explained with reference to 'domestic' factors alone. Historically, the principle and practice of internationalism have played a crucial role in extending modern modes of social and political action across the world. In this respect, although the expansion of international civil society should not be directly equated with internationalism, the latter has certainly been instrumental in encouraging the international reproduction of modern forms of social and political agency .

A last element in the international constitution of modern social movements is what, for want of a less overbearing phrase, can only be described as the impact of world-historical conjunctures. Even when there is no direct organisational affiliation, or a deliberate attempt at ideological propagation, social movements can emerge in a given location in response to events occurring elsewhere in the world. Revolutions provide the classic instance of this type of phenomenon. Whether one considers the Democratic Revolutions of the late eighteenth century, the socialist and radical nationalist revolutions of the twentieth, or even the Iranian revolution of 1978-79, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the demonstrative example of these events inspired the creation of social movements typical of civil society in parts of the globe where they had previously been absent. Less dramatic perhaps, but still very much

relevant, the political success of a given social movement -the civil rights movement in the US or the Latin American self-help *barrio* associations- clearly impact upon the formation of movements elsewhere without there being any formal links between groups. One interesting instance of this was the adoption by Catholics in Northern Ireland of the language and methods of their black counterparts in the southern United States during their own struggle for civil rights in the 1960s.

In each of these three respects, then, the international emerges as a key component of modern social movements which inhabit civil society. Seen in this light, international civil society represents a political space which has been constructed over the past three-hundred years by the international activity of modern social movements. By espousing and propagating universal ideologies; by providing examples of how collective action can be politically meaningful across the world; and most importantly, by organising internationally, modern social movements have for decades been extending the boundaries of political action beyond the territorial state. It is in this sense that international civil society becomes the relevant site of international politics. Taken in conjunction with the preceding arguments on the relevance of civil society when explaining the construction of the modern state and the global reproduction of capitalism, a strong case can be made for considering civil society and the phenomena it gives rise to, as being inherently international. Thinking of civil society as a social and political space that simultaneously transcends and reinforces territorial boundaries opens new normative and analytical horizons which I shall briefly outline in the concluding section of this chapter.

2.3 Conclusions: The Promises of International Civil Society

The notion of an international or global civil society gradually emerging in the aftermath of the Cold War and out of the process of 'globalisation' has over the past few years captured the imagination of numerous scholars, commentators and activists

the world over. The phenomenal growth in the number of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and their often spectacular interventions in the different parts of the globe have prompted further talk of "[c]ivil society and its transnational networks [embodying] the *universum* which competing nations have never succeeded in creating".[64] While the arguments outlined in this thesis are broadly sympathetic to this point of view, there are, nonetheless a number of important differences between the approach adopted here and that offered by the existing theories of international civil society. Considering these differences more closely may help to elucidate the analytical and normative value which I have ascribed to the notion of international civil society.

The first significant contrast refers to the historical origins of international civil society. The underlying assumption to most discussions of civil society is that it developed within a national context. Consequently, the existing literature on international or global civil society concurs on the idea that this is a space of political action which has only recently shown signs of "becoming global"[65] or which, less optimistically "is still more potential than actual"[66]. The evidence offered in this chapter has attempted to suggest otherwise. As I have tried to indicate, even when the term civil society is deployed in a more traditional sense to refer to the capitalist market or to a particularly modern form of political community, there appear a number of international dimensions to its genesis and later development. These would imply that the category 'international civil society' is applicable to the dual process of capitalist development and state formation of early modern Europe - a long shot

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[64] Paul Ghils,"International Civil Society: International Non-Governmental Organisations in the International System", *International Social Science Journal* Vol. 44, No. 133, August, pp. 417-429, p. 429.

[65] Ronnie D. Lipschutz, "Reconstructing World Politics: the Emergence of Global Civil Society" in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 21, No. 3, 1992) pp. 389-420, p. 391.

[66] Martin Shaw, "Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 23, No. 3, 1994) pp. 647-67, p. 655.

from post-modern world of 'globalisation'. When civil society is defined as a space occupied by modern social movements, however, the case for dating the emergence of an international civil society in the late eighteenth century becomes even stronger. An analysis of the expansion of eighteenth-century public culture or the various types of nineteenth-century internationalism should persuade any student of international civil society that the forms of political agency associated with this realm long predated contemporary transnationalism or 'postinternational' politics. All this does not mean that the new expressions of international political agency -be they INGOs, humanitarian organisations, 'critical' social movements or whatever- should not be considered part of international civil society. Rather, the point is to situate them in their appropriate historical setting; that is, as part of a sphere which has been developing since at least the eighteenth century.

This reappraisal of the historical origins of international civil society, however, has deeper implications than simply setting back the dates of its emergence. It retrieves two key analytical advantages in employing the term which have been overlooked by most commentators. The first of these relates to the question of modernity and the international system. With the exception of Marxists like Justin Rosenberg or Mark Rupert, no IR scholar using the term has developed the implications of civil society being associated with a distinct historical epoch (i.e 'modernity'). As Rosenberg has so eloquently argued, this is crucial in both de-naturalising the states-system and providing a richer explanation of its emergence. Yet even as nuanced a usage as Rosenberg's fails to identify civil society with the modern forms of political agency discussed above. Furthermore, there is no recognition of the international features of these new modes of political protest and organisation. If the argument outlined in this chapter carries any weight, then surely the concept of international civil society can serve as a framework for an understanding of the distinctly modern forms of political agency which have forged the present international system.

Derived from this identification of international civil society with modernity is a second theoretical advantage of the concept, namely its emphasis on the necessary interaction between the state and the social forces of civil society during this epoch. As was pointed out in the last chapter, too much of the literature on global or international civil society focuses exclusively on the transnational non-state actors in world politics without paying sufficient attention to their relationship with the state. The notion of international civil society on the other hand allows us to consider this interface without thereby losing sight of societal forces. The aim here is not be to play off a societal reading of international relations against a statist one, but rather to investigate the grey areas where these two interpretations meet. In other words, to probe the historical interaction between state and civil society within an international setting. In order to accomplish this, we could do worse than employ the concept of 'international civil society' which takes the language provided by the classical thinkers of civil society and places it within an appropriate international context.

A last discrepancy between the prevalent understanding of international civil society and the one adopted here revolves around the type of political promise which the concept holds. Few scholars interested in international civil society would disagree with Ronnie Lipschutz's remarks to the effect that "[g]lobal civil society represents an ongoing project of civil society to reconstruct, re-imagine, or re-map world politics."[67] One ambition of this thesis after all, is precisely to identify the ways in which the agents of international civil society have extended the boundaries of the political. The key question, therefore, remains what kind of shape will this world politics take?

One type of answer to this question insists on the impossibility of employing the political idiom of modernity under post-modern conditions. As we saw in the introductory chapter, authors such as R.B.J Walker -one of the few IR scholars who

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[67] Lipschutz,"Reconstructing World Politics", p. 391.

has seriously engaged with the role of social movements in world politics- recently argued that "An empirical analysis of social movements, and an interpretation of their significance for what world politics might become, does not have to be bound by the prejudices of modernity. On the contrary, these prejudices can only ensure that the fine lines separating us from them can never be transgressed."[68]

As a philosophical critique of the excesses of modernity, this kind of stance provides ready solace for those 'anti-systemic' academics disenchanted with the failure of modernist political projects. As a recipe for political action, however, it offers little more than vague invocations about the creation of loose 'networks' and spontaneous 'connections' which might bring together the 'silenced' and the 'subaltern' in world politics. When asked to produce empirical evidence of the kind of movement which might inform this alternative world politics, reference is made to the obscurantist Hindu revivalism of the *Swadhyaya* movement in western India.[69] Ultimately, the relevance of this type of political agency for world politics can only be assessed with the passing of time. The contemporary experience, however, suggests that it has been modern social movements which, through strike action, mass demonstrations, party-political activism and international solidarity campaigns have managed to effect meaningful political change in places as diverse as Southern Europe, Latin America, South Africa or East Asia.[70] Surely it is the example of these kinds of struggle -and not mystical Vedic cosmologies- that a progressive world politics should build on.

A second kind of response to the role of international civil society in world politics focuses more exclusively on the actions of INGOs and international pressure

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[68] R. B. J. Walker, "Social Movements/World Politics", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 23, No. 3, 1994) pp. 669-700, p. 699.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 685.

[70] For a recent survey of struggles for liberal democracy that incorporates a notion of international civil society, see D. Held (ed.) *Prospects for Democracy: North, South, East, West* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

groups. From this perspective -mainly connected with the field of Development Studies- international civil society represents that space occupied by associations which, although working in collaboration with the different tiers of the state and international organisations, are officially independent and ultimately only accountable to their international membership. Furthermore, since they pursue specific political goals across boundaries, they hold the promise of a new type of world politics. As Mark Hoffman has pointed out, INGOs informed by notions of 'International Citizenry' may "[p]rovide a basis for forms of intervention which seek to extend the boundaries of political community while undermining systems of exclusion".[71] In these two respects, the increasingly complex web of INGO activity often receives the label 'international civil society'.

This understanding of international civil society is plainly at odds with some of the theoretical issues raised here -chiefly concerning questions of epochal change and the relationship to the state. Yet there are two important differences regrading the political vistas opened up by INGO activities. The first, and most obvious point is that INGOs are fundamentally pressure groups which do not contest the overall legitimacy of a specific regime but merely seek to alter a particular policy -on human rights, environmental law, women's rights and so forth. They therefore eschew campaigning for grand-scale social and political change. The conception of international civil society adopted here, however, has maintained that the modern social movements have been precisely concerned with effecting such grand-scale transformations at an interstate level. Thus, international civil society is identified as a political space of the 'grand-narratives' which can still envisage the possibility of global changes in the socioeconomic and political structure of a given society. Secondly, and following on from this point, there remains a degree of ambiguity about the accountability of

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[71] Mark Hoffman, "Agency, Identity and Intervention" in I. Forbes and M. Hoffman, *Political Theory, International Relations and the Ethics of Intervention* (London: Macmillan Press, 1993), pp. 194-211, p.203.

INGOs. For the fact that INGOs are 'non-governmental' does not mean that they are 'non-political'; indeed, their activity necessarily impinges upon existing political formations. Yet few INGOs are willing to recognise the full implications of participating in a given political community - one of which involves defining the sources and limits of a group's political accountability. Modern social movements on the other hand, have accepted the political nature of their activity from the outset, thus making it very clear to whom they are accountable and in whose interests they participate within a given political community. If international civil society is to be considered as a possible site of progressive world politics, it would seem more appropriate to fix such hopes on the agency of social movements which at least enjoy some democratic legitimacy, rather than on organisations that fail to identify the sources of their political accountability.

Taken in conjunction with the foregoing theoretical discussion, these two general observations on the politics of international civil society suggest that this is still an arena dominated by modern forms of political agency. The argument of this chapter has been that understanding international civil society in this light might provide a clearer and more historically-informed picture of the way emancipatory social movements can organise internationally in the future. It has also been my intention, however, to indicate how the idea of international civil society can serve as a tool for analysing the contribution of collective political agency to the emergence and development of an international society of states. It is with issue that the next chapter is concerned.

Chapter Three

International Society From Below: The Role of Civil Society in International Relations .

For the past two decades IR theory has undergone an intense process of critical self-reflection. As the theoretical insights and preoccupations of other branches of the social sciences and the humanities have entered the discipline, the meta-theoretical presuppositions inherent to mainstream IR have been placed under close scrutiny by approaches such as feminism, historical materialism or postmodernism. Consequently, the received wisdom as to how one should go about analysing 'the international' has been contested, and in its stead, a variety of perspectives on the study of international relations now compete for theoretical dominance. This methodological explosion in IR theory has certainly affected the parameters of what should be included within the domain of the international so that questions relating to culture, gender, the environment, or capitalism are now deemed to be central to our discipline. Yet paradoxically, it has also given new lease to many of the key concepts and concerns of orthodox IR theory such as sovereignty, international society, nationalism, and the system of states. Rather than entirely replacing these categories, much of contemporary IR theory has sought to investigate their origin and changing nature, thus subjecting the conventional use of these concepts to an *immanent* critique.

It is the aim of this chapter to engage in precisely this kind of critique by investigating the notion of international society and its attendant categories - sovereignty, nationalism, the system of states and the 'standard of civilisation'- from the vantage point of the North African experience. The objective is to outline some of the theoretical parameters of the historical investigation that follows in next chapters by arguing that many of the features associated with the idea of international society emerged from the interaction with international civil society. The point, therefore, is not to reject the concept of international society *tout court*, but to uncover the social and historical content accumulated from its interaction with an expanding international civil society.

In order to develop my argument, I have chosen to focus upon the writings of the so-called 'English School' of international relations. This is for two reasons. First, and most obviously, because it is the authors associated to this school that developed the notion of 'international society' most thoroughly, and who investigated with greatest historical sensitivity concepts such as sovereignty, nationalism, or the expansion of the western 'standard of civilisation' - all of which are closely linked to the arguments of this thesis. Second, because the normative value attached to the concept of international society is crucial in understanding its interaction with international civil society. Throughout the thesis, I shall emphasise that the construction of the modern international system owes just as much to international civil society underpinning the institutions of international society, as to international society legitimizing the social movements associated to the expansion of international civil society. As I hope to elucidate below, the choice of international *society* in opposition to international *system* as the preferred term for a discussion of the theoretical purchase of international civil society, reflects the acceptance that the international is a domain permeated by a set of identifiable norms and values. That these norms and values were imposed across the world by the expanding capitalist powers does not cancel out their continued relevance in the explanation of contemporary world politics. In the same way that Marx accepted the categories of classical political economy when unpacking the fetishism of the commodity, critical IR theory has to engage with the concepts of classical international theory like 'international society' when demystifying the workings of the contemporary international system .

Given the controversial nature in IR theory of the term 'international society', the first section of this chapter investigates the meaning of the concept, thereby bringing into the discussion three issues relevant to the interface between international society and international civil society: sovereign statehood, the western 'standard of civilisation' and the 'revolt against the west'. These three areas of concern for the English School will then serve as headings for a sustained criticism of this approach

to international relations. It will be argued that the International Society perspective fails to account for the forces of international civil society in each of the domains just mentioned, and is consequently unable to consider the relevance of collective social and political activity in the expansion, consolidation and transformation of international society. The chapter will close with a general and promissory discussion of the way in which the study of the expansion of international civil society can further our understanding of international relations.

3.1 International Society: A Malleable Concept

The term 'international society' was given its contemporary meaning in the essays produced by the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics from the late 1950s onward. Since then, the concept has been the focus of much scholarly attention in IR, spawning an important literature which is often presented in the guise of the English School of IR. There has been considerable debate regarding the existence of an 'English School' and indeed, whether the term 'international society' should be exclusively associated with the authors connected to this 'school'.[1] The position taken here will be the conventional one, namely that the members of the British Committee did share a common set of assumptions about the nature of international society and its centrality in world politics, and that these assumptions have been carried through into a number of contemporary studies investigating the relationship between international society and aspects of world politics such as

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[1] For the disputes over the existence or otherwise of the English School see Roy E. Jones, "The English School of International Relations: A Case for Closure" *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 7, No. 1, 1981) pp. 185-206; Sheila Grader, "The English School of International Relations: Evidence and Evaluation" *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 14, No. 1, 1988) pp. 29-44; and Peter Wilson "The English School of International Relations: A Reply to Sheila Grader" *Review of International Studies* (Vol. 15, No. 1, 1989), pp. 101-129. Two recent helpful overviews of the English School and international society are: Ole Waever "International Society" *Cooperation and Conflict* (Vol. 27, No.1, 1992), pp. 97-128; and Timothy Dunne "International Society: Theoretical Promises Unfulfilled" *Cooperation and Conflict* (Vol. 30, No. 1, 1995), pp.125-154. See also R. Fawn and J. Larkins, *International Society After the Cold War* (London: Macmillan Press in association with Millennium, 1996) for further elaborations and re-workings of the concept.

nationalism, revolutions, decolonisation, or human rights. Furthermore, the authors registered with the English School are distinguished by their historicist understanding of the present international system and the importance they attach to normative values in explaining the emergence and consolidation of this system. In this respect, the International Society approach to IR has, through different generations, displayed both an internal consistency in terms of methodology, problematic and guiding assumptions and an external identity, built around the emphasis on the idea of international society, which distinguishes it from other theoretical perspectives in IR. At the risk of some simplification, the broad outlines of the this approach to IR can be summarised in four components of international society.

The first, and arguably the constitutive element of international society is state sovereignty. Put most succinctly by Hedley Bull, "An international society ... presupposes an international system."[2] Virtually all the writers following the International Society approach set out from the basic premise that international society is above all a society of sovereign states. This is certainly explicit in the recent contributions to the study of international society from Alan James[3], Robert H. Jackson[4], James Mayall[5] and David Armstrong[6], but it was also evident from the outset in the proceedings of the British Committee. The collection of essays on international theory published under the title of *Diplomatic Investigations*, for example, all endorsed the Realist assumption that what was under investigation in international relations was a system of states with no overarching authority, and the

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[2] H. Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* 2nd ed. (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p. 13.

[3] A. James, *Sovereign Statehood : the Basis of International Society* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

[4] R. H. Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[5] J. Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[6] D. Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: the Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

practices and institutions such as diplomacy or international law which accompanied this anarchical system. In contrast to American Realism, however, the International Society approach has always emphasised the distinctly modern nature of the present international system. Martin Wight's historical comparison of systems of states was perhaps the clearest expression of this. In his essays on 'The Origins of Our States-System', Wight is unequivocal: "The simplest speculation about the origins of the Western states-system .... is bound up with the question as to when modern history began."[7] The answer, for Wight, was 1648: it was the Peace of Westphalia which consolidated the norms of intercourse among European states that prevailed in the next three centuries:

> In retrospect, Westphalia was believed to mark the transition from religious to secular politics, from 'Christendom' to 'Europe', the exclusion from international politics of the Holy See, the effective end of the Holy Roman Empire by the virtual recognition of the sovereignty of its members ...[8]

Later investigations into international society, most notably Adam Watson's *The Evolution of International Society*[9], follow Wight in accepting that what distinguishes contemporary international society from other systems of states is the secularised interaction among sovereign political communities confirmed at the Peace of Westphalia. In short, one of the basic features of international society, according to the authors which have developed this term in IR, is the emergence during the long sixteenth century of the specifically modern entity which forms this society: the sovereign state. An investigation of how contemporary international society operates,

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[7] M. Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 110.

[8] *Ibid.*, p.113

[9] A. Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1992).

the English School maintained, requires an historical understanding of the rise and evolution of this kind of political entity.

The broad consensus over the basic unit in the study of international relations allowed the proponents of the International Society approach to open up a second research agenda, namely the world-wide expansion of this society of states. Presented in the seminal volume on *The Expansion of International Society*, the basic concern here was to provide an historical account of how the norms, values and institutions of European international society were extended across the globe, eventually to produce what Bull termed a 'Universal International Society'. In line with the English School's acceptance of European international society as a novel historical phenomenon, the contributors to this volume sought to explain how regional international systems outside Europe were incorporated into a wider global international society: "We are concerned to see how, by the flood-tide of European dominance over the world and its subsequent ebb, the one [regional systems] became transformed into the other [a universal international society]"[10] The criteria employed to determine the nature and pace of this transformation were highly legalistic: non-European powers joined the club of international society by signing up to international treaties, by engaging in diplomatic relations with other states, and by attending international conferences.[11] In a more sophisticated treatment of the process, Bull's student Gerrit W. Gong defined this combination of benchmarks as a "European standard of 'civilisation'."[12] When enumerating the features of such a standard, Gong included not only the external requirements regarding sovereignty, international law or diplomacy, but also referred to domestic arrangements such as a 'civilized' state guaranteeing basic rights to life, liberty and property, or it abolishing internationally unacceptable practices such as polygamy, slavery or

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[10] H. Bull and A. Watson, *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

[11] *Ibid*, pp 120-122.

[12] G. W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilisation' and International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984).

suttee.[13] As the author himself stresses,

> [b]y definition, it was expected that members of the same society of 'civilized'
> states would share sufficiently in fundamental, underlying assumptions about
> the world; in customary, historically proven institutions; and in ordinary,
> everyday life-styles, so as to feel part of a common society and a shared
> civilisation.[14]

This linkage between domestic and international standards of 'civilisation' when
defining membership of international society resonates, as we shall shortly see, with
Robert H. Jackson's discussion of positive and negative sovereignty in contemporary
international society. For the moment, however, it is important to note that, as Fred
Halliday has recently suggested, the expansion of international society was a process
buttressed by the increasing homogenisation of the internal socioeconomic and
political make-up of states.[15] Insofar as the nineteenth century diplomatic practices,
legal documents and international conferences reflect the universalisation of
international society, they do so as one dimension of a wider process of economic,
social and political unification across the globe, governed by the logic of capitalist
accumulation. Despite eschewing a materialist explanation of how the 'standard of
civilisation' might have become the expression of an international society of states,
Gong at least points to the interaction between state and society in the extension of
this phenomenon, thereby making explicit what in the contributions to *The Expansion
of International Society* is only implied. In this respect, he enriches our understanding
of international society by recognising, if not explaining, the vital societal forces
underscoring the diffusion of the norms, values and institutions which compose this

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[13] *Ibid.*, p. 14

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 21

[15] Fred Halliday, "International Society as Homogeneity: Burke, Marx, Fukuyama" *Millennium:
Journal of International Studies* (Vol. 21, No.3, 1992), pp. 435-461, p. 435.

society of states.

It is a mark of the English School's intellectual honesty and its sensitivity for historical change that most of the recent contributions to this theoretical approach have been concerned with the challenges to the idea of international society in the post-war period. One of the school's masters, Hedley Bull, himself led the way by considering the implications for international society of the Third World's 'revolt against the west.'[16] In his last piece on the subject, Bull recognised that international society had largely been a product of European imperial domination, and that "[a]s Asian, African and other non-Western peoples have assumed a more prominent place in international society it has become clear that in matters of values the distance between them and Western societies is greater than ... it was assumed to be."[17] The consequences of this for the concept of international society, however, were never clearly spelt out by Bull. It was left to his successors -Armstrong, Jackson and Mayall- to examine further the impact upon international society of decolonization and the revolutionary struggles of the post-war period. Although all three authors set out from very similar definitions of international society, their conclusions regarding the influence of revolutions, decolonisation and nationalism, vary considerably. In his own discussion of the 'revolt against the west', for example, Armstrong identifies the existence of four different approaches to international society after World War II. Two of these -the reformist and revolutionary perspectives- were defended by Third World states which either sought to transform institutions of international society like the United Nations into the principal agents of anti-colonialism, anti-racism and a more equitable international economic order, or those states, such as Iran or Cuba, which entirely rejected existing international society as being a product of western imperialism. The upshot of this, for Armstrong, was a profound disagreement over

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[16] See "The Third World" in J. D. B Miller and R .J. Vincent, *Order and Violence: Hedley Bull and International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) for a discussion of Bull's writings onthe revolt against the west.

[17] Hedley Bull, "The Revolt Against the West" in Bull and Watson, *The Expansion* pp.218-228.

the rules and norms of international society after 1960: "[a]lthough all four groups upheld the idea of sovereign equality, there was far less agreement amongst them in relation to other norms of international society." [18]

In a different take on the same theme, Robert H. Jackson made a distinction between an 'old sovereignty game' and a 'new sovereignty game'. Whereas the former was a product of the Westphalian system where "states historically were empirical realities before they were legal personalities" the latter reflected a decolonised world where, "rulers can acquire independence solely by virtue of being successors to colonial governments." [19] For Jackson, the anti-colonial struggles of the post-war period had substantially altered the central premise of international society by creating a new conception of sovereignty: one where ex-colonial 'quasi-states' benefited from a negative sovereignty acquired through international recognition but which was not complemented by a positive sovereignty guaranteeing a liberal democratic order domestically. Despite identifying the transition from one understanding of sovereignty to another in international society, Jackson seemed to accept that the 'new sovereignty game' would not upset the norms and institutions of the society of states, as in the last instance it upheld the principle of nonintervention. Since "Nonintervention is the foundation stone of international society" [20], it followed that quasi-states built on the concept of negative sovereignty would in the future continue to be participants in the society of states.

That the emergence of some 100 new states in the aftermath of decolonization did not substantially alter the nature of international society, was a central argument in James Mayall's study of nationalism and international society. Like Armstrong and Jackson, Mayall set off from the assumption that the anti-colonial struggles for national self-determination challenged the Eurocentric understanding of international

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[18] Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order*, p. 167.

[19] Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 34.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 192

society which had predominated over the past three centuries. Yet unlike his two colleagues, Mayall contented that the revolt was not necessarily against 'the west' but rather against the idea of dynastic sovereignty. It was the advent of popular sovereignty, chiefly propagated through the principles of the French Revolution, that allowed the idea of national self-determination to modify the rules and institutions of European international society. In the conclusions to his study, Mayall recognised the importance of Third World nationalism in constructing the multilateral institutions of the post-war years, and in extending the scope of international law to areas such as colonialism and international economic inequality. Yet ultimately, the revolts inspired by notions of popular sovereignty were also obliged to accommodate to existing patterns of international relations. This tension between challenge and accommodation produced a situation where, "[t]he primacy of the national idea amongst contemporary political principles has modified the traditional conception of an international society but has not replaced it."[21]

This brief survey of the English School's approach to the term 'international society' will hopefully have revealed the core elements of the concept. We have seen that, for the authors associated with this school, international society refers to a set of diplomatic practices, legal precepts and institutional arrangements which bind sovereign states into a shared understanding of how international relations should be conducted. These norms, values and institutions are buttressed by a common standard of civilisation which was not substantially contested until the middle of this century. Since then, international society has adapted to these challenges by extending its membership and modifying some of its guiding principles. Despite its historical evolution, so its advocates argue, the concept retains both descriptive validity and analytical purchase: it helps students of international relations to explain the behaviour of states and it does so in ways which are at once more sophisticated and more accurate than those offered by alternative theories.

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[21] Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, p. 145

The rest of this chapter aims to criticise this understanding of international relations. It will be argued that the International Society approach offers a historical and analytical account of the modern international system that reifies the discourse and practices of ruling classes, and which consequently fails to credit the essential role of popular political action in the development of this system. In essence, the claim being made is that the English School's conception of international society is fundamentally state-centric and therefore inherently incapable of theorising the role of collective political agency in world politics.

One of the basic reasons behind this disregard for questions of collective agency lies in the superficial usage of the term 'society' by the English school. In order to accommodate social movements within a theory of international society, it is imperative to have some notion of how and why modern collective social and political activity emerged in the first place. Social theory has generally recognised that social and political movements are central to our understanding of the term 'society'; indeed, the introductory chapter to this thesis argued that theories of civil society, both classical and contemporary, reflect this long-standing preoccupation with the link between self-conscious collective action and the constitution of society as we know it today. Yet, like the "moral and political paucity" of IR once decried by Martin Wight, our discipline has also suffered from a general sociological shallowness. Until very recently, and with a few notable exceptions, IR theory had very little to say about how interstate relations might be connected to wider social structures and processes. Class conflict, gender inequality, racial hierarchies, the workings of the capitalist market or the bureaucratic extension of the state to take but a few examples, seem to have been excluded from the domain of the international. This sociological naivety is especially damaging when IR theorists employ the loaded term 'society' without recognising its complex and contested genealogy.

A classic example of this conceptual poverty is, of course, the English school's use of the term 'society' simply to denote a loose association of states; a collection of political entities which share some basic behavioural characteristics.

Without exploring the historical and sociological evolution of the idea of 'society', however, it is impossible to seriously consider the role of social movements in the construction of the international system. Employing the term international civil society can, I suggest, begin to redress the English school's narrow conception of international society and provide a richer account of the origins and development of the modern international system.

The sections that follow will therefore attempt to show how, by considering the interplay between states and social movements, we can arrive at an historically and sociologically deeper understanding of international society. From this perspective, the practices and institutions of international society are seen not as natural outgrowths of an autonomous system of states, but rather as the product of the historically specific interactions between states and societies. The essential components of international society -sovereignty, the standard of civilisation, national self-determination- are explained with reference to the concrete social and political struggles between and within states and civil societies, and not as the result of the mysterious expansion of international codes of conduct through negotiation and consensus among ruling classes.

3.2 State Sovereignty: the Popular Contribution

A striking feature of recent IR literature on sovereignty is the absence of sustained discussions of the notion of popular sovereignty. With the notable exceptions of James Mayall's juxtaposition of nationalism and popular sovereignty, and Daniel Deudney's heterodox retrieval of the 'Philadelphian system'[22], few contemporary IR theories consider the principle and practice of popular sovereignty in the construction of the international system. Yet, as this chapter has suggested thus far, an adequate

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[22] In Daniel Deudney "Binding sovereigns: authorities, structures, and geopolitics in the Philadelphian systems" in T. J. Biersteker and C. Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.190-249.

understanding of the nature and development of state sovereignty requires that we pay attention not only to the transformations in the practices and institutions of the ruling classes, but also to the changing forms of resistance and agitation among the populace. State sovereignty is ultimately the historical product of a clash of interests between ruling and subaltern classes. This section aims to elaborate on this point with reference to some historical examples. Before doing so, however, it is important to register two caveats.

First, as with the concept of civil society, the notion of popular sovereignty should not be confused with that of democracy. Struggles for democracy have certainly been premised on the idea of popular sovereignty, but not all formulations of this principle are inherently democratic. This is true both conceptually and historically. The early modern theorists of popular sovereignty invoked the concept in the battle against royal absolutism, but their vision of enfranchisement never extended beyond that of propertied men. In contrasting the early expressions of popular sovereignty in France and England, Ellen Meiksins Wood points out that

> This conceptual device, with roots in the Middle Ages, had no necessarily democratic implications, since the 'people' could be very narrowly defined. It had long been available to aristocratic opponents of royal pretension and had been forged as a weapon against absolutism elsewhere. Bodin's conception of absolute and indivisible sovereignty, for example, was constructed in just such claims of popular sovereignty, enunciated by Huguenot pamphleteers to justify resistance during the Religious Wars. [23]

Likewise, contemporary history offers plenty of instances where popular sovereignty has sustained undemocratic regimes. Yet the interesting point about popular sovereignty in this context, is not so much its connection or otherwise to democracy,

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[23] E.M. Wood, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism: A Historical Essay on Old Regimes and Modern States* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p. 59.

but the fact that, despite its medieval origins, it has been at the root of the transformations in the modes of popular protest which I have identified as being characteristics of modern civil society. This in turn altered the terms of the political relationship between state and society in such a way as to affect the nature and practice of sovereignty. In the words of Reinhard Bendix

> Until the revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European rulers assumed that the general population would quietly allow itself to be ruled. Popular uprisings were regarded as violating the divine order and were suppressed by force ... If some questioned this practice, it was without much effect [...] But with the Reformation, the persuasiveness of the ruler's old appeal to divine sanction was irreparably weakened. And since the French revolution, the right to rule has come to depend increasingly on the mandate of the people.[24]

There is, to be sure, an uncomfortable Whiggish resonance in Bendix's account of the shift from absolutist to popular mandates in the west. Although this does not cancel the overall validity of his argument, one should be wary of an excessively linear conception of this movement, and certainly of somehow associating this development to a theory of modernisation. The transition from absolutist to popular conceptions of sovereignty was the subject of bloody social and political upheavals; or in Koselleck's more elegant formulation, the product of "critique and crisis"[25]. Far from being a natural, evolutionary process, the acceptance that the 'people' might have a say in government was the outcome of a protracted struggle from the seventeenth century onwards which yielded very uneven results across Europe. Arno

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[24] R. Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 7-8.

[25] R. Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: the Parthogenesis of Modern Society* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1987).

Mayer's documentation of the "persistence of the Old Regime" into the present century serves as a timely reminder of just how variegated historical change can be.[26] Nonetheless, the aim here is simply to recognise the shift from absolutist to popular sovereignty, not to delve into the details of how this took place. For the purposes of our argument, the most important consideration is to relate these changes in the terms of political engagement to the consolidation of state sovereignty as a norm of international society. I hope the foregoing discussion will have clarified that this does not involve either conflating democracy and popular sovereignty, nor subscribing to an evolutionary understanding of historical change. It is merely an attempt to recover for IR theory, and more specifically, for our comprehension of international society, the centrality of the principle and the practice of popular sovereignty - a move that runs counter to the English school's account of sovereign statehood.

The prevailing explanation among theorists of international society for the emergence of state sovereignty focuses upon the transition from an overlapping patchwork of political communities which characterised medieval Christendom to the secularised states-system that sprung up in Europe from the fifteenth century onward. As was mentioned above, Martin Wight, the English school theorist with greatest historical acumen, placed the chronological limits of this transition somewhere between the Council of Constance (1414-18) and the Peace of Westphalia (1648): "In the fifteenth century the old constitution of the Respublica Christiana finally breaks down ... The papacy is transformed from an ecumenical theocracy into an Italian great power. The assertion of sovereignty by secular powers, growing since the thirteenth century, becomes normal [...] At Westphalia the states-system does not come into existence: it comes of age."[27] This has since become the standard interpretation among scholars adopting the International Society approach and is

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[26] A. J Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

[27] Wight, *Systems of States*, p. 151-152

accepted unproblematically as signalling the origins of the modern international system. Aside from the pitfalls of reading back into the past in order to legitimise a particular historical turning-point (in this case, Westphalia), the major fault of the 'secularisation' thesis lies in its essentially descriptive nature. Exploring the historical ,changes in European politics and society which accompanied the Renaissance, the Reformation and the wars of religion certainly sharpens our awareness as to the historicity of state sovereignty; but it explains very little about how the transition from a continent dominated by feudal domains to one characterised by sovereign states was actually accomplished. The principle of *cuius regio, eius religio,* for example, was plainly a manifestation of the growing capacity among local barons and princes to establish military and economic supremacy over their territories; but in itself, it hardly serves as a category capable of explaining the sources and nature of this transformation. In order to provide a satisfactory account of the origins and development of state sovereignty, it is necessary to consider the socio-historical roots of phenomena like the Reformation and the wars of religion, a task left largely unaddressed by the members of the English School.

A telling admission in Martin Wight's essay on systems of states which goes some way in explaining this kind of omission is his distinction between 'internal' and 'external' sovereignty: "Historians of political thought ... have traced the development of internal sovereignty [...] We are more concerned with the development of external sovereignty, the claim to be politically and juridically independent of any superior."[28] The uncontested acceptance of this separation between 'inside' and 'outside' sovereignty suggests that Wight saw no necessary link between these two spheres: 'external' sovereignty (mutual recognition, regular communication, international law and so forth) could be taken for granted as the central preoccupation for students of international relations. Rather than examining the social and historical conditions which allowed for the distinction to be made in

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[28] *Ibid.,* p. 130.

the first place, Wight and his followers set off from the premise that external sovereignty is a given, *then* to describe its origins in the process of secularisation. Not only does this give rise to a descriptive and circular account of state sovereignty ('external' sovereignty is defined with reference to a state's capacity to engage in legal-diplomatic relations with other independent states), but the crucial interaction among 'external' and 'internal' forms of sovereignty is left unexplored. The net result of these manoeuvres is an approach to state sovereignty that necessarily obviates any contribution from the ranks of civil society. The historical record, however, suggests that modern forms of popular agitation have been instrumental in defining the limits of state sovereignty.

Offering a comprehensive account of the origins and development of state sovereignty is obviously beyond the scope of this chapter. Aside from reasons of space, this task is unfeasible because it requires taking a position on extremely complex and intense multi-disciplinary debates on the historical-sociological roots of sovereignty. Moreover, the claim being made is not so much that state sovereignty was exclusively forged by an organised populace demanding a popular mandate, but rather that once defined as the appropriate domain of political struggle, the shape state sovereignty adopted from the seventeenth century onwards was heavily conditioned by movements which contested the authority of the ruling classes.

The English civil war provides one of the earliest instances of an organised populace affecting both the discourse and practice of sovereignty. Although by no means exclusively pitched in terms of a contest between elite and plebeian interests, the social and political upheavals experienced across England during the 1640s and 50s generated a number of popular movements which, by challenging the authority of the ruling class, were to have a long-standing influence upon the nature of the English and later, British state in the decades to come. Foremost among these organisations were the so-called Levellers, a heterogenous group of individuals represented by pamphleteers such as John Lilburne, William Walwyn or Richard Overton, who campaigned for the extension of the male franchise and the radical

reform of the institutions of political representation in England. The Levellers organised as a party, drawing their membership from the rank and file of the New Model Army, radicalised parishes and the 'middling sorts' around London. Their main vehicle of mobilisation, however, were petitions which in some cases accumulated over 40,000 signatures. One of the most celebrated Leveller documents was the *Agreement of the People,* a first version of which was released in 1647 in the context of the famous Putney debates over England's constitutional future. In opposition to the moderate schemes of 'mixed government' presented by Cromwell's second-in-command, Commissary-General Henry Ireton, the Leveller's *Agreement* aimed to form the basis of a constitution,

> That would embody the fundamental principle that just power was derived
> from the consent of the people, which meant ending the veto of the king and
> Lords, since they did not represent the people, and subordinating them to the
> Commons, which did, or should, represent the people. But the Commons
> would be supreme only in matters delegates to it by the people ... Therefore
> the *Agreement* bridled not only the king and the Lords but also the Commons
> in the interest of sovereignty of the people.[29]

The Leveller movement was short-lived and regionally circumscribed. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the Leveller conception of 'the people' was strongly limited. This should not blind us, however, to the impact this kind of collective action had upon early modern notions of popular sovereignty. The Levellers were in several important respects part of a broader pattern of struggles for popular sovereignty across Europe. In France, the mid-seventeenth century uprisings against the absolutist state, collectively known as the 'Fronde' included movements such as the republican

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[29] B. Manning, *Aristocrats, Plebeians and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (London and East Haven, CT: Pluto Press ,1996), p. 103. See also E. Meiksins Wood and N. Wood, *A Trumpet of Sedition: Political Theory and the Rise of Capitalism, 1509-1688* (London, Pluto Press, 1997).

Ormée, which drew on the Leveller experience, and particularly on the *Agreement of the People*, to support the call for popular sovereignty.[30] Although it is important not to conflate the very specific and often contradictory expressions of popular discontent in early modern Europe, it would likewise be a parochial oversight not to recognise the similarities in the language and aspirations of groups as diverse as the French *Ormistes*, the English Levellers, or the Castilian *comuneros*.

The link between early modern struggles for popular sovereignty and the process of state formation in Europe is by no means definitive. As we saw above, the social movements defending the right to popular sovereignty operated within the existing territorial boundaries already imposed by the ruling classes. In so far as these movements had an impact on the contours and nature of the emerging sovereign state, it was expressed in a reactive fashion. Rather than shaping the actual form of state sovereignty, early modern resistance movements can only be said to have chiselled away at the existing state structures when these impinged upon the interests of specific sectors of the population. By the eighteenth century, however, revolutionary movements emerged along both shores of the Atlantic which gave a new impulse to the aspiration of popular sovereignty. It is in this 'Age of Democratic Revolutions' that the connections between the agitation within civil societies and the construction of state sovereignty become most apparent.

In the cities of colonial America, new forms of political engagement had been developing since the beginning of the eighteenth century. The growing integration of the New England seaports into the world market, coupled with the inflationary

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[30] According to Nannerl O.Keohane: "The use of these ancient phrases -*le bien commun, le salut du publique*- in this context indicates that the Ormists were aware that they were rejecting the politics of *raison d'état* for a very different vision, the vision of an assembled community of men pursuing the common good together. They had the grandiose thoughts of extending this vision to other parts of France, liberating other Frenchmen as they themselves were freed from tyranny and oppression." N. O. Keohane, *Philosophy and the State in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 219. For an extensive study of the way the French public- both ruling and subordinate classes- linked the revolutionary upheavals in England to the French 'Fronde' see P.A. Knachel, *England and the Fronde: the Impact of the English Civil War and Revolution on France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967).

consequences of war with France accentuated the impact of wage and price fluctuations upon the 'middling' and 'lower' ranks of the colonial population.[31] The response to this economic hardship was hardly new: as in the past, different forms of direct action ensured that those responsible for unpopular policies felt the heat of discontent. The novelty lay in the mechanisms and language of agitation. Whereas fifty years earlier popular protest may have been expressed through spontaneous responses to the infringements on the 'moral economy', the first decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the rise of factional politics organised around specific interests and disseminated through printed media such as pamphlets, newsletters and petitions. The deferential politics geared toward maintaining a semblance of cohesion within the body politic gradually gave way to the overt recognition that contradictory political viewpoints could be expressions of socio-economic divisions within a community. The very notion of forming a 'party' to defend particular interests would have been an anathema to the seventeenth century public accustomed to the medieval emphasis on the pursuit of a collective harmony of interests. Yet by the early 1700s, the political life of cities like Boston, Philadelphia and New York was transformed by the rise of political clubs and caucuses which for the first time deliberately organised and mobilised the poorer sectors of society in defence of their own interests. It is worth stressing again that, together with the timeless and well-tested methods of violent cooption and the prospect of free liquor, the medium privileged in this endeavour was that of the printed word:

> [i]n the eight years from 1714 to 1721, economic dislocation brought forth a rush of pamphlets. Printed at the expense of political factions and often distributed free, they made direct appeals to the people, both those who enjoyed the vote and others who participated in the larger arena of street politics [...] It was testimony to the power behind the written word that even

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[31]   See G.B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1979).

those who yearned for a highly restricted mode of politics were compelled to set their views in print for all to read. For unless they did, their opponents might sweep the field.[32]

It was the consolidation of this kind of modern political agency which by the last quarter of the century produced the revolutionary ferment that led to independence for the American colonies. Naturally, the American War of Independence was not simply the result of accumulated plebeian agitation. Like the other democratic revolutions, crises emerged principally out of the contradictions among different sectors of the ruling class. Yet the popular input into these crises should not be underestimated. Be it through their participation in militias, political clubs or town assemblies, the 'common people' of the American colonies had by the late eighteenth century begun to take conscious control over their own lives. The patriotic struggles against English despotism thus became inextricably bound to the broader struggles for the social and economic transformation of colonial society. In this respect, the realisation of American independence was in part the assertion of popular sovereignty. For all the limitations of the revolution -and there were certainly many for the women, the peoples of colour and the unpropertied of the colonies- the creation of a new state was achieved through the mobilisation of the populace into modern social movements. As Gary B. Nash has put it:

> Although no social revolution occurred in America in the 1770s, the American revolution could not have unfolded when and in the manner it did without the self-conscious action of urban labouring people ... who became convinced that they must create power where none had existed before or else watch their position deteriorate... Thus, the history of the Revolution is in part the history of popular collective action and the puncturing of the gentry's

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

claim that their rule was legitimized by custom, law and divine will.[33]

Across the Atlantic, similar experiments in popular politics contributed a period of revolutionary transformation in Europe. The notion of popular sovereignty was given concrete historical expression as the events in France during 1789-92 inspired similar upheavals across the continent and beyond. Again, far from being the exclusive consequence of an unstoppable surge in popular agitation, the French revolution and its ramifications emerged out of specific crises within the absolutist state which were exploited by enlightened sectors of the ruling class. As in the American case, revolutionary change did not necessarily engender a more democratic or egalitarian society. Yet the participation of previously disenfranchised sectors of the population in the construction of new state forms certainly had a momentous impact on the character of state sovereignty during following centuries. For one, the French revolution generalised and radicalised the practices of state sovereignty which had been developing in Europe since the sixteenth century: small standing armies gave way to the *levée en masse*; the corporate rights of estates and cities were abolished and codified into universal citizenship rights; the process of fiscal centralisation encouraged by Colbert and Louis XIV was finally completed under the Republic; the baroque ideological symbols sustaining royal absolutism were transformed into a nationalist iconography. All these familiar characteristics of the contemporary state bear the imprint of the transformations effected by the French Revolution in the name of 'the people'. Even more pertinent to the substance of the argument being presented, however, was the consolidation of factional politics during the course of the French revolution. As Lynn Hunt has suggested, during the Revolution

> [...] the very nature of "the political" expanded and changed shape. The
> structure of the polity changed under the impact of increasing political

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 384

participation and popular mobilization; political language, political ritual, and political organization all took on new forms and meanings.[34]

By the late eighteenth century, the debating societies and discussion circles which had proliferated under absolutist France were transformed into political clubs such as the Parisian *Société de la Révolution*, otherwise known as the 'Jacobins'. For generations to come, the Jacobin political club remained the most important model of popular mobilisation. Socialist and communist parties certainly drew on Jacobin principles, as did many of the nationalist movements which emerged in Europe during the nineteenth century. In this respect, again, the social movements associated to the French revolution can be seen as the practical incarnation of the idea of popular sovereignty.

The history of nineteenth and twentieth-century working-class and nationalist movements clearly underlines the role of civil society in the construction of state sovereignty. The relevance of nationalist organisations in this domain should be obvious: most of today's states are the product of national liberation struggles generally sponsored by mass nationalist movements. Socialism, on the other hand appears as a weaker candidate for a force behind state sovereignty. Proletarian *internationalism* was from the outset one of the guiding principles of working-class movements across the world. The global expansion of capitalism was, according to socialists, breaking down ancestral ties of locality, ethnicity or creed and replacing them with the universal conflict among bourgeois and proletarians. As such, socialists organised internationally, making class, and not nationality, religion or colour the mainspring of their political solidarity. The avowed cosmopolitanism of working-class organisations, however, did not preclude their commitment to democracy and equality at the national level. As Marx himself once put it: "It is perfectly self-evident that in order to be at all capable of struggle the working class must organise itself *as a class*

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[34] L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984), p.2.

at home and that the domestic sphere must be the immediate arena of its struggle."[35] Since then, working-class movements have been among the staunchest advocates of national unity and have arguably been the most important force behind processes of state-building. One need only consider the socialist contributions to the extension of the franchise, the development of the welfare state or in the case of many third world states, the anti-imperialist struggles, in order to acknowledge the centrality of modern social agency in the explanation of state sovereignty.

The examples of popular sovereignty briefly outlined above should provide some sense of the limitations inherent to a view of sovereignty which excludes any consideration of modern social movements. The idea of international society is premised on the notion of state sovereignty; the latter in turn, must be explained as the outcome of historical changes -still under way today- unleashed by modernity. This much can be conceded to the advocates of the International Society approach to international relations. The problems arise when a definition of modernity and an explanation of the historical and sociological sources of state sovereignty is requested from the theorists of the English school. Here, the clearest answer comes in the shape of Martin Wight's idealist philosophy of history which ascribes the origins of modern international society to the Protestant Reformation. However if the preceding discussion carries any weight, a richer and ultimately more accurate rendition of the rise of state sovereignty must consider the interaction between state and civil society since the seventeenth century. It must address the changing nature of popular contestation and agitation, and examine the consequences of such modes of political agency for our understanding of sovereignty. Once this is accomplished, I have argued, the principles and practice of popular sovereignty take on a deeper significance for international relations as they help us to identify the agency of change in the struggles between ruling and subaltern classes. In this respect, the history of

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[35] K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, in D. Fernbach (ed.) *The First International and After, Political Writings, Vol.3* (Aylesbury, Bucks.: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1974), p.350.

international society becomes the history of its interaction with the forces of international civil society.

3.3 The Standard of Civilisation as the Expansion of Capitalism

For the thinkers of the English school, a central feature of international society is the adoption of common norms and values in the interaction among sovereign states. A *society* of states is distinguished from a *system* of states, among other things through the existence of a shared understanding of what rules and institutions should guide international intercourse. From this perspective, international society becomes a reality through the behaviour of states and statesmen in their dealings with each other. As we saw above, Gerrit W. Gong gave specific historical meaning to these behavioural norms in his study on the standard of civilisation. According to Gong, the end of the nineteenth century witnessed the codification of this standard through international law, diplomacy and the spread of international institutions. Such was the triumph of the standard of civilisation, that by the turn of the century a general consensus on the norms, rules and values of international relations had fashioned a 'universal' international society.

The notion of a standard of civilisation provides a useful tool with which to chart the expansion of international society. It clearly identifies the process by which the ruling classes across the world came to accept an international code of conduct, and there is no *a priori* reason to reject the view that these elites actually attached a meaning to such practices. Yet, however historically enriching such an account of international society may be, it still remains a fundamentally descriptive exercise. There is precious little in the English school's investigations on the standard of civilisation which explain why this standard was accepted in the first place. Astonishingly, there is no sustained discussion in Gong's work, nor that of his fellow contributors to the volume on the *Expansion of International Society* of capitalism and its international diffusion. Even a cursory examination of the origins and development

of the idea of 'civilisation', however, reveals that it was contemporaneous with, and indeed germane to the extension of capitalist social relations in Europe and beyond. It is in this sense that the expansion of international society must be studied in conjunction with the extension of capitalism.

The word 'civilisation' was invented in the late eighteenth century as a compound of the terms 'civility', 'civilized' and 'to civilize', first used by Erasmus in the context of a pedagogical treatise, *De civilitate morum puerilium*.[36] The new word appeared in French and English in 1756 and 1772 respectively, as means of distinguishing a 'polished' and 'civil' society from a 'barbarian' or 'savage' existence. The second chapter of this thesis already highlighted the connections made in Ferguson's *History of Civil Society* between the idea of civilisation and the institutions of commerce, specialised labour, private property and commodity exchange. Together with notions of rationality, politeness and refined manners, these components of capitalist market society defined the essence of 'civilisation' as it became understood after the eighteenth century. Indeed, the Scottish Enlightenment -one of the privileged sites for the theorisation of 'civilisation'- reveals in the starkest light the association between the extension of capitalism and the development of this concept. In a recent study "On the Scottish Origin of 'Civilisation'", George C. Caffenztis argues that

> [t]he development of 'civilisation' is genetically intertwined with that of the British financial system, with the subjugation of Scotland to the British crown, and the eighteenth-century social struggles in and out of Scotland. Thus, 'civilisation' originally referred to three different but interconnected processes: the rationalization of intercapitalist relations (civilisation *qua* reason); the disenfranchisement of the English workers from their 'traditional'

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[36] See F. Braudel (trans. R. Mayne), *A History of Civilisations* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1994), chapter 1; E. De Dampierre, "Note sur 'culture' et 'civilisation'", *Studies in Comparative Culture and Society* (Vol. 3, 1961), pp. 328-340; N. Elias (trans. E. Jephcott), *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, Vol. I, (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1982), Part Two.

rights and liberties (civilisation *qua* repression); and the destruction of communal relations in the Scottish Highlands, resulting in the integration of Scottish society into the orbit of Britain's imperial economy (civilisation *qua* progress from Barbarism).[37]

Of these three expressions of civilisation it is the latter which is most pertinent to our discussion. For one, it undermines the identification of civilisation with something inherently or exclusively 'western'.[38] Far from being a geographical or cultural category, the idea of civilisation originally referred to a socio-historical phenomenon tied to the expansion of capitalism. To be sure, it acquired a culturally-specific meaning as European imperialism extended across the globe, imposing its own laws and values on other societies; but these laws and values were not so much 'western' as *capitalist*. The 'civilising mission' visited upon non-European peoples during the nineteenth century was simply the extension of a process that had been tried and tested with the Scottish Highlanders and other European populations in the previous century. This constitutes the second significant reason for paying attention to the early processes and representations of 'civilisation', namely that the features of the standard of civilisation invoked by the English school actually refer back to the eighteenth century experiments in 'civilisation' *within* Europe. With minor modifications, the standard of civilisation which guided the expansion of international society at the end of the nineteenth century was the same as that which inspired the eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment in its quest for extending capitalist market

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[37] George C. Caffenztis, "On the Scottish Origin of 'Civilisation'" in S. Federici (ed.) *Enduring Western Civilisation: The Construction of the Concept of Western Civilisation and Its 'Others'* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), pp. 13-36, p. 14 .

[38] A welcome antidote to the facile assumption that the contrast between 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' is an ethnocentric construct can be found in Roger Bartra (trans. C.T. Berrisford), *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: the Mythic Origins of European Otherness* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994). For Bartra, "[t]he wild man and the European are one and the same, and the notion of barbarism was applied to non-European peoples as the transposition of a perfectly structured myth with a character that can only be understood within the context of Western cultural evolution" (p.4)

relations across Britain. It should therefore follow that an investigation into the standard of civilisation as a vehicle for the expansion of international society must be studied as part and parcel of a broader process of capitalist expansion.

The spread of capitalist social relations across the globe was of course effected in a number of different ways. Direct and indirect imperialism, colonialism, unequal treaties and capitulations all served as vehicles in the construction of a world capitalist market. One consequence of this differentiated articulation of global capitalism was that the legal framework imposed on pre-capitalist societies was equally versatile. Many early modern trade colonies, for example, operated as commercial outposts with no intention of altering indigenous law. The widespread acceptance of consular jurisdiction (ie. the privilege accorded to foreign merchants to live according to their own laws within the parameters of their settlement), coupled with the imperatives of commercial activity made any European encroachment on autochthonous law unproductive. As Jörg Fisch has pointed out, in those situations where they represented a minority of the population,

> [E]uropeans usually tried to adopt procedures used by the extra-European side rather than to impose their own legal forms and figures. The reason was obvious. If they attempted to bind their counterparts with obligations that were meaningless to them, there was little chance of their being kept."[39]

Once European powers began to construct territorial empires, however, the question of jurisdiction became more acute. In the case of the Maghreb as we shall see, the standard of civilisation was imposed either through outright annexation (as in the Algerian case after 1848) or through the establishment of 'protectorates' (Tunisia 1882, Morocco 1912). Differences in administrative structure were replicated in the

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[39] Jörg Fisch, "Law as a Means and as an Ends: Some Remarks on the Function of European and Non-European Law in the Process of European Expansion", in W. J. Mommsen and J. A. de Moor (eds.) *European Expansion and Law: The Encounter of European and Indigenous Law in the 19th and 20th century Africa and Asia* (Providence, RI and Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1992), pp. 15-39, p.21.

sphere of law: the French authorities left much of the pre-colonial framework intact in the two protectorates, but in Algeria substantial changes were imposed. Similarly, the Moroccan sultan and the Tunisian bey remained nominally sovereign and their subjects bound by *shari'a* law, Berber customary law and the special *dhimmi* status for the religious minorities. In Algeria, however, Islamic law was gradually confined to personal status through the *sénatus-consulte* of 1865 which separated French citizens (including most Algerian Jews and Christians) from the mass of the Muslim population. One arena where legal transformation proved to be uniform across the Maghreb concerned property law. Here, all three countries experienced the gradual abolition of pre-colonial systems of land tenure -private shareholdings (*mulk*), religious endowments (*habous*), communal lands (*'arsh*)- and their incorporation into modern European property law. Thus, by the second decade of the twentieth century, a standard of civilisation had certainly penetrated North Africa through the vehicle of imperial conquest: the anarchic and unproductive pre-colonial regimes -so the European imperialists saw it- had been 'civilised' through their incorporation into the European sphere of commercial and property law.

Although capitalist imperialism clearly played an instrumental role in the expansion of international society, it remains notably absent in the English school's investigations into this phenomenon. Curiously, the volume edited by Bull and Watson prefers to focus on those parts of the world - the Ottoman Empire, China, Japan- where capitalist imperialism made no significant inroads. Yet despite never being formally colonised or subjected to European rule (Hong Kong and France's North African acquisitions are of course exceptions), these states were only accepted into international society as they underwent a processes of capitalist transformation 'from above'. Both the Ottoman Empire and Japan introduced socio-economic reforms during the second half of the nineteenth century with the explicit aim of countering European encroachments. Their gradual integration into international society was therefore accomplished not only through the adoption of 'civilised' mechanisms of international intercourse, but also by way of radical changes in the

domestic political and socio-economic arrangements of these states. To this extent, the expansion of international society can be seen as the 'internalisation' of international norms and values and the 'homogenisation' of domestic structures in accordance with those prevailing internationally.[40]

In Japan, for example, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 transformed the feudal regime dominated by the Tokugawa shogunate into a modern capitalist state within the space of three decades. Much of the impetus behind this extraordinary change in Japan's socio-economic and political make-up was the result of internal contradictions within the country's social structure. Peasant revolts against the commodification of agricultural production coupled with an undermining of *daimyo* (overlord) and *samurai* (warrior) status in favour of the *chonin* (merchant) class, gave rise to a feudal-merchant coalition which eventually overthrew the *Bakufu*, or central Tokugawa government. These internal crises, however, were spurred on by the external challenge of European imperialism. Indeed, the anti-Tokugawa forces rallied around the slogan, "Revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians"; the latter in this case referring to the European merchants who had been granted licence by the Bakufu to trade in Japan. Paradoxically, the 'expulsion of the barbarians' did not entail the rejection of western ideas. Quite the contrary: the protagonists of the Restoration (*samurai, chonin* and some of the *daimyo* households) had maintained extensive contacts with foreigners and in many cases adopted western technological, economic and military innovations. In the words of E. Herbert Norman, "[The Restoration] was carried out under the brilliant leadership of *samurai*-bureaucrats who, in the teeth of opposition directed against them even by members of their own class, wisely pursued the path of internal reconstruction ... in preference to the path of foreign conquest."[41]

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[40] This is one of the main arguments developed by Halliday in "International Society as Homogeneity".

[41] E. Herbert Norman, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State: Political and Economic Problems of the Meiji Period* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1940), p.101.

Over the space of the forty-odd years which delimit the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912), Japan experienced the radical overhaul of the feudal legal-political structures that had prevailed for almost three centuries, and their replacement by a modern capitalist framework. A series of laws in the early 1870s legalised the sale of land and enforced a taxation system which facilitated the expropriation of peasants from their holdings. This in turn produced a sizeable reserve army of labour which fuelled the beginnings of state-sponsored heavy industry. Organising and legitimising these infrastructural transformations was the rationalised bureaucracy run by ex-*samurai* imbued with the organicist ideology of Herbert Spencer, and the attendant constitutional representative bodies like the *Diet*. Finally, as in other parts of the world, the turn of the century also witnessed the gradual emergence in Japan of political parties and trade unions which both contested and reinforced the legitimacy of the new regime.

The Meiji Restoration therefore represented the internalisation of western standards of civilisation precisely as a means of resisting their imposition from without. As such, it remains one of the clearest instances of the overlap between capitalist transformation and the expansion of international society. The Japanese adoption of the 'standard of civilisation' can not be gauged merely with reference to the practices of international relations, but must also consider the internal socio-economic and political adjustments made in the face of imperialist challenges.

A similar story could be told of the Ottoman Empire's reformist experiments in the face of European expansionism. As in the case of Tokugawa Japan, the Ottoman Empire had been subject to increasing commercial penetration by European traders since the sixteenth century. It was not until the second half of the eighteenth century, however, that European dominance in this sphere was codified in the form of 'capitulations' which granted foreign vessels freedom of navigation in Ottoman waters. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) first secured these rights for Russians, but similar treaties soon followed with Austria (1784), Britain (1799), France (1802)

and Prussia (1806).[42] To be sure, these capitulations were imposed in the aftermath of military defeat; yet their content betrays the economic motivation behind European encroachment. During the following decades, both trade and investment from the west increased exponentially, while the Sublime Porte became increasingly indebted to European credit institutions. By the turn of the century, the most significant regions of the Ottoman Empire had been integrated within the capitalist world economy through trade, investment and debt. Interestingly, this process was accompanied by the development of institutions of external relations. As Reşat Kasaba has noted:

> Concomitant with the new treaties that were being signed with European states, the Ottoman government set up its first permanent embassies in London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin ... In addition to the embassies, a consular network was set up, covering North and South America, parts of Africa and Asia, as well as Europe. Also, starting from the early nineteenth century, this global network was supported at home by a strengthened Translation Office ... which in effect became the seed of the Foreign Ministry. During the nineteenth century this office would become the most developed component of the Ottoman state apparatus, second only to the Interior Ministry in budgetary allocation.[43]

The nineteenth-century construction of Ottoman institutions for external relations plainly resulted from pressures exerted by foreign, mainly European powers. As in the case of Japan, however, this challenge also elicited responses in the sphere of domestic politics. From 1839 through to 1876, the Ottoman state underwent a process of social, political and administrative reform which historians have dubbed the

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[42] R. Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1988), p. 33.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 33

Tanzimat (re-ordering) period. The *Tanzimat* reforms introduced substantial changes in the military organisation, the fiscal system and the political institutions of the Empire. Most important for our purposes however, were the changes which affected the status of religious minorities (*millets*) and the land tenancy laws. An imperial edict of 1856, known as the *Hatt-i Hümayun*, stipulated the legal equality of all religious communities of the Empire, thereby securing the status of Christian communities as commercial intermediaries of European capital. Two years later, a Land Code legalised the private ownership of land, while in 1867 this right was extended to foreigners. Both these sets of reforms were implemented as a direct result of European pressure and petitioning. They were also a perfectly logical response to the domestic socio-economic and political requirements of the Empire. For all their admiration for western values and institutions, the bureaucrats which instigated the *Tanzimat* were operating at the interface of the domestic and the international: the reforms were as much a result of European penetration as they were a failure on the part of the existing Ottoman authorities to rise to this challenge. As Çağlar Keyder has noted

> In the Ottoman Empire the secular bureaucracy accepted and justified their adhesion to European models and principles in the name of progressive reformism. They welcomed the institutionalisation of economic integration into Western capitalism as a victory over the retrograde tenets of the old Ottoman statecraft.[44]

The incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into international society was therefore accomplished in tandem with its insertion into the world market. In this respect, one can discern a similar pattern of response to that of Japan. The outcome was certainly different in both countries: while Japan managed to pursue an autonomous route of

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[44] C. Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London and New York: Verso, 1987), p. 28.

capitalist development, the Ottoman Empire experienced a dependent integration into the world capitalist system. Yet there was a crucial common denominator in both cases, namely the need to engage in radical political, social and economic transformation at the domestic level in order to be accepted into the international society of states. On the surface of it, the expansion of international society was measured by the adoption of civilised norms of international intercourse; underlying this process, however, were the more surreptitious forces of capitalist accumulation and exchange, imposing the universal logic of surplus-value extraction.

The point of this excursus into the nature of Japanese and Ottoman entrance into international society is not to ignore the relevance of norms, values and institutions in this process but rather to explain their adoption with reference to the broader experience of capitalist expansion. It is a reflection of the English school's unidimensional approach to the expansion of international society that the contributions in the Bull and Watson volume dedicated to Japan and the Ottoman Empire make no mention of capitalism, and only a passing reference to the momentous socio-economic upheavals brought about by the Meiji Restoration and the *Tanzimat*. The authors of these chapters seem oblivious to the fact that the first treaties between the western powers and these two states were commercial treaties. More seriously, their exclusive focus on the external indices of membership of international society obscures the internal reforms along capitalist lines which accompanied this privilege. In short, through their highly legalistic and statist interpretation of the expansion of international society, English school authors such as Gong, Naff and Suganami[45] fail to consider the fundamental transformations operated at the societal level in order to meet the capitalist standard of civilisation. The argument presented above, on the contrary, has suggested that separating the 'high politics' of diplomacy, treaties and international institutions from the 'low politics' of legal reform, land expropriation and capitalist industrialisation

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[45] In their respective contributions to Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*.

impoverishes our understanding of international society. An approach to this category that emphasises the capitalist origins of the European standard of civilisation, on the other hand, offers a perspective attentive to the changes at the level of civil society, and their interaction with international transformations. Keeping an eye on the relationship between these two distinct spheres, I have argued, provides for a much richer historical and sociological understanding of the expansion of international society.

3.4 The Revolt Against the West: Popular Sovereignty and National Liberation

The English school's concern with the historical evolution of international society did not stop with the universalisation of this phenomenon at the turn of the century, but was extended into the post-war period. The disintegration of European empires in the aftermath of World War II and the accompanying creation of new states across the Third World posed important challenges to the notion of an international society. Did the emergence of new states undermine or reinforce the values and institutions of international society? Were the norms and values of international society actually encouraging claims to sovereignty and self-determination? What was the nature of sovereign statehood acquired by the ex-colonial peoples? These and other related questions have occupied much of the (mainly recent) literature on international society. In itself, this would justify considering the experience of decolonisation in the construction of international society; the focus of this thesis, however, makes it all the more important to evaluate the consequences of anti-colonial struggles in our understanding of the category. In essence, the argument developed in this section is that far from representing a 'revolt against the west', the Third World struggles for national liberation reflected the adoption of so-called 'western' values and practices -sovereignty, nationalism, mass political mobilisation, democracy- precisely as a means of combatting colonial oppression. As I hope to indicate in the next three chapters, the values and practices deployed by Tunisian civil society in the struggle

for independence were similar to those adopted by their western counterparts in their own experience of state-formation. In this respect, imperialist expansion created its own antithesis in the shape of nationalist and socialist movements which identified the nation-state as the appropriate locus of their political aspirations. To be sure, the way in which such 'western' values and norms were applied was conditioned by the specific historical and cultural legacies of each colonial society. Nonetheless, the fact remains that rather than challenging the accepted norms of international society such as sovereign equality, national self-determination or international law, the Third World movements for national liberation actually endorsed these principles as they lent legitimacy to their political demands, both domestically and internationally.

The suggestion that national liberation should be understood as an outgrowth and not an obstacle in the expansion of international society runs contrary to the general position of those English school authors dealing with the issue. As I shall indicate below, the English school's conception of the relationship between decolonisation and international society is often contradictory. On the one extreme, Robert H. Jackson claims that the end of empire represented the shift to a 'new sovereignty game' which had substantially altered the nature of international society. James Mayall, on the other hand, accepts that Third World liberation might be interpreted as a realisation of popular sovereignty which simultaneously challenged and reinforced the norms and institutions of international society. Operating in a middle-ground between these two positions, Hedley Bull offered equivocal responses to the question of how decolonisation had affected international society: while in some instances his writings accept that the expansion of international society encouraged colonial peoples to achieve their own statehood, other passages insist on anti-colonialism as a 'revolt' against the western standard of civilisation. Despite these contrasting views, the English school's approach to decolonisation and its impact upon international society displays an important common denominator: all these authors fail to consider the grassroots pressures for decolonisation. Typically, popular anti-colonial politics are ignored, deemed at best to be a marginal expression

of dissatisfaction among westernised elites, and at worst, an entirely negligible factor in the emergence of new states. Thus the historiography underscoring much of the international society approach to decolonisation adopts the elitist, 'official mind' perspective which views the end of empire as the outcome of a planned strategy devised by prescient civil servants at Whitehall. This flawed history in turn leads to an understanding of post-colonial states as somehow distinct from their 'western' counterparts, either because as Jackson would have it, they are 'quasi-states', or as Bull suggests, the norms and values that guide their behaviour are non-western. The paragraphs that follow aim to dispel the view of post-colonial states as being artificial entities conjured up in metropolitan capitals and propped up by colonial elites. Certainly many post-colonial *regimes* have proved to be undemocratic and repressive, but it does not follow from this that post-colonial *states* are in any sense less legitimate than other members of international society. In order to avoid this double misrepresentation of anti-colonial nationalism and its consequences for international society, it is necessary, I argue, to address the social roots of post-colonial states *i.e* to consider the legitimation of newly independent states 'from below'.

Underlying the English school's understanding of post-colonial international society is the assumption that the end of empire marked a significant departure from the prevailing norms and values of international society. This understanding is premised on a view of decolonisation that focuses almost exclusively on the legal-political features of this process and obscures their historical-sociological dimensions. Robert H. Jackson's influential argument on the 'negative' nature of post-colonial sovereignty, for example, relies very heavily on an account of decolonisation as the product of an international moral victory by anti-colonial forces. According to Jackson

> Independence became an unqualified right of all colonial peoples: self-determination. Colonialism like-wise became an absolute wrong: an injury to the dignity and autonomy of those peoples and of course a vehicle for their

economic exploitation and political repression. This is a noteworthy historical shift in moral reasoning because European overseas colonialism was originally and for a long time justified on legal positivist and paternalist grounds...[46]

By way of explaining this momentous reversal in the international legitimacy of colonialism, Jackson considers different routes to the end of empire. For the author, some European empires faced anti-colonial movements with 'positive' claims to national self-determination but in the British colonies however, a "[f]orceful and credible anti-colonial nationalism capable of inheriting sovereignty in rough conformity with positive international law usually did not develop."[47] In a move that remains unexplained, Jackson takes the British experience of decolonisation as being paradigmatic of the 'new sovereignty game' where "numerous artificial ex-colonial entities are postulated, created and protected" through the international acceptance of the right to self-determination for colonial peoples.

While Jackson's work remains one of the most thorough examinations of the impact of decolonisation on international society, in some respects it is unrepresentative of the broader consensus of English school authors on this theme. Both James Mayall and Hedley Bull, for example, accept that the states emerging out of decolonisation shared many of the key characteristics of their 'western' counterparts. Mayall is most forthright when he states categorically that, "Perhaps Asian and African societies have found some western ideas indigestible, but the concept of the sovereign state is not one of them. On the contrary it is the most successful western export to the rest of the world."[48] Bull, on the other hand is more elusive: although he consistently argues that the revolt against western *domination* did not necessarily entail the revolt against western *values*, his writings on the subject

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[46] Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p. 85.

[47] *Ibid*, p. 83.

[48] Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, p. 111.

leave the question open as to whether since the 1960s and 70s the former was being conflated with the latter. In the Hagey lecture on "The Concept of Justice in International Relations" Bull initially concedes that, "Third World demands for just treatment seem entirely compatible with the moral ideas that now prevail in the West; indeed all of these demands take western moral premises as their point of departure", only to insist later that, "[w]e have to remember that when these demands for justice were first put forward, the leaders of Third World peoples spoke as supplicants in a world in which the western powers were still in a dominant position ... the moral appeal had to be cast in terms that would have most resonance in Western societies."[49]

Despite the important nuances in their understanding of decolonisation, the work of these three English school authors displays two commonalities relevant to our argument. The first of these involves contrasting an ideal-type of Westphalian sovereign state (what Jackson unabashedly terms "empirical statehood") to the quasi-states emerging out of decolonisation. This allows the English school to consider post-colonial states as problematic for international society in so far as they fail to uphold domestic norms of governability and respect for basic rights such as life, property and the freedom of speech and association. Secondly, as was noted earlier, nowhere in the English school's elaborations on decolonisation is there a sustained consideration of the role played by collective action in this process. With the notable exception of Mayall's passing reference to popular sovereignty, the authors associated with this school seem uninterested in exploring the kind of socio-political dynamics that led to the campaigns for national self-determination in the first place. From the perspective of the English school, post-colonial sovereignty was above all the result of a recognition by the imperialist powers that colonial peoples might have a moral claim to national self-determination; independence therefore appears as something that was granted from above and not actually fought for politically from below. Both these

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[49] H. Bull, *Justice in International Relations: the Hagey Lectures* (Waterloo, Ontario: University of Waterloo Press, 1984), p.

assumptions are highly problematic historically, and furthermore, lead to thoroughly contestable readings of the status of international society as an analytical category in IR.

Let us first consider the distinction between positive and negative sovereignty which according to Jackson, marks the break between the 'old' and the 'new' sovereignty games. There are two related objections here: one concerns the validity of this distinction; the other, the place of the distinction in Jackson's overall argument on quasi-states .

For Jackson, as we have seen, post-colonial states at the time of decolonisation lacked the 'empirical sovereignty' of their European counterparts as they were essentially products of colonial administration bereft of popular legitimacy and merely sovereign by virtue of a 'negative' international recognition. By contrast, the European states-system crafted at the Peace of Westphalia reflected both a legitimate overlap between states and the populations they ruled over, and the recourse to a 'positive' sovereignty capable of "provid[ing] political goods for its citizens"[50]. Leaving aside for the moment the legitimacy and effectiveness of the methods deployed by European states securing such 'political goods', a brief survey of European history since 1648 would unmask Jackson's picture of 'empirical sovereignty' for the chimera that it is. Far from reflecting a clearly-defined and continuous states-system, the 'old sovereignty' game in Europe has been characterised by the constant revision of territorial boundaries among states and the protracted social and political instability within states fuelled by wars, revolutions, annexations and struggles for national unification. To suggest that the European system of states can be held up as an ideal-type of how positive and negative sovereignty combine to produce the 'old sovereignty game' is to overlook how both these notions of sovereignty have been violated at regular intervals in the modern history of the

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[50] Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p.29.

continent. If the capacity of a state to "provide political goods for its citizens"[51] is a crucial benchmark in the distinction between states and quasi-states, then European states like Spain, Greece, Germany or France to name but a few must have at different junctures during the past three centuries qualified as quasi-states.[52]

In fairness, Jackson does recognise that "History offers many examples of large or strong states and small or weak states and indeed ramshackle or derelict states both inside Europe and outside."[53] Hence, he is careful to emphasise that "What has changed is not the empirical conditions of states but the international rules and institutions concerning those conditions."[54] The point, however, is that both inside and outside Europe the claims to self-determination of the peoples living in these 'weak or ramshackle' states were not merely premised on lofty ethical principles, but on the very material shortcomings of the existing political and social arrangements. The benefit of hindsight might allow observers to debate whether the living conditions of ex-colonial peoples have improved or not after independence. But it would take a highly tendentious account of colonial history (and a large dose of imperialist nostalgia) to argue that at the time of independence the colonial powers were delivering 'positive' sovereignty to their subject populations, either in Africa or elsewhere. Jackson's elitist and legalistic view of international society 'from above' fails to consider why the rules and institutions that define the 'empirical condition of states' were questioned in the first place. For all his disclaimers to the contrary, Jackson's central argument on the 'new sovereignty game' ultimately hinges upon an idealised view of the 'classical' European system of 'positively' sovereign states, to be contrasted to an equally ephemeral post-colonial system of 'quasi-states'.

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[51] *Ibid.*, p.29.

[52] This argument is thoroughly explored in S. Halperin, *In the Mirror of the Third World: Capitalist Development in Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[53] Jackson, *Quasi-states*, p. 22

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 23

Recognising that European state sovereignty has historically been subject to the same challenges as those faced by post-colonial 'quasi-states' undermines Jackson's radical contrast between the old and the new sovereignty games: historical evidence suggests that the sharp break posited by Jackson cannot be treated as an accurate rendition of the differences between two historical ideal-typical forms of sovereignty, but should rather be seen as a rhetorical exaggeration aimed at highlighting the shortcomings of contemporary post-colonial regimes. That Jackson's specific historical-geographical distinction is unsustainable, however, should not preclude identifying the varying expressions of state sovereignty across time and place. Clearly, the processes of post-colonial state formation taking place in Africa during the 1960s and 70s differed substantially from those experienced by European peoples during the preceding centuries. The challenge therefore lies in explaining why and how specific historical conjunctures give rise to diverse expressions of sovereignty. The argument of this thesis is that in order to address this challenge we need to pay attention to the expansion of international civil society. In the specific case of post-colonial states, the form taken by state sovereignty was heavily conditioned by the nature of the collective struggles for national liberation. In order to explain the claims to national self-determination of colonial peoples, it is necessary to investigate their forms of social and political organisation and the processes which they engendered. In other words, it is essential to probe the dynamic interrelationship between state and civil society within an international context.

Whereas the English school's account of decolonisation focuses upon interstate relations and their attendant international organisms, the approach adopted here emphasises the role of modern social and political agency typical of civil society. Thus, contrary to the English school's juridical-diplomatic approach to the end of empire and Third World state-formation, the aim here is to highlight the place of modern social movements in the realisation of national liberation. As an Africanist, Jackson chooses the experience of that continent to illustrate his theoretical claims

about the nature of quasi-states and the 'new sovereignty game' for the whole of the post-colonial world. Although he recognises that even within Africa, many national liberation movements did actually meet the criteria necessary for the construction of 'positively' sovereign states, Jackson seems to draw his conclusions exclusively from those British colonies where national liberation movements appeared weakest. This in itself is patently inadequate. At the very least, one would expect Jackson to qualify his blanket denomination of post-colonial states as quasi-states, and contrast say, the revolutionary road to independence in Algeria or Mozambique to the reformist routes taken by some of the British colonies he mentions. Yet even if we accept Jackson's narrow focus on Britain's African colonies as being paradigmatic of weak and inefficient anti-colonialism yielding artificial and unstable quasi-states, empirical objections must again be raised. In comparative terms, the political parties and trade unions of Britain's African colonies may not have been as powerful and numerous as, say, their French or Portugese counterparts, but they existed and played an important role in the end of empire. Successive generations of colonial historians have debated over the impact of anti-colonial movements such as the Ghanian Convention People's Party or the Nigerian Action Group in achieving independence for their countries. These historical disputes will undoubtedly continue unresolved, but they do at least acknowledge the relevance of collective action in the process of decolonisation. IR scholars, and the English school in particular, have failed to account for the role of anti-colonial civil society in the construction of the post-colonial international order. This is not just a problem of historical insensitivity in IR, but more seriously, it reflects the disciplines's embedded disregard for the role of social and political agency in the construction and transformation of the international system. In the specific case of decolonisation and its impact upon international society, it leads to a static and elitist account of struggles for national liberation and the post-colonial order it gave rise to, where the dynamics of international society remain restricted to the negotiation of moral and legal norms among statesmen in diverse international forums.

3.5 Conclusions: International Civil Society and International Society

The basic aim of this chapter has been to outline the theoretical value of the term 'international civil society' for the study of international relations. I have chosen to do so through a critique of one of the defining categories of our discipline: that of international society. While accepting that the research agendas opened up by the study of international society still remain central to IR, the arguments presented in this chapter have suggested that the prevailing approach to international society -that associated with the English school- is unsatisfactory in two key respects. First, through its limited conception of 'society' as applied to international relations, the International Society approach is unable to accommodate broader social phenomena such as capitalist social relations or collective social and political agency into its account of the international system. Secondly, and following on from this, the interpretations of world politics offered by the International Society perspective tend to reify existing international norms, values and institutions in way that obscures their socially and politically contested nature. In other words, contrary to some of their best intentions, many of the authors adopting the International Society school assume an elitist, statist and ultimately conservative view of international relations.

As I hope the preceding sections have demonstrated, some of the key components of international society -sovereign statehood, the standard of civilisation, national self-determination- must be explained with reference to historical processes such as the global reproduction of capitalism and social forces like modern social movements. In order to identify and explain the origins and transformations of modern international society, it is imperative to look beyond the surface expressions of international intercourse among ruling classes and their attendant norms, values and institutions, and consider the social processes which engender these practices both domestically and internationally.

The conceptual tool I have proposed should be employed in this endeavour is

that of international civil society. As applied thus far, international civil society refers to that domain of international relations where the modern social movements emerging out of the global expansion of capitalism pursue their political goals. These movements have from the outset been forged in constant interaction with the institutions of international society, and have in turn shaped the values, norms and institutions of this very society of states. Thus, as this chapter has sought to demonstrate, the development of sovereign statehood, the extension of a western 'standard of civilisation' or the emergence of a post-colonial international society cannot be adequately explained without making reference to the social and political transformations taking place at the level of civil society. In the specific case of North Africa, for example, the processes associated to the expansion of international society -acceptance of certain norms of international intercourse, internal social and economic reform, the eventual achievement of sovereign statehood- all developed in tandem with the expansion of international civil society *i.e.* the rise of modern forms of social and political agency in response to the penetration of capitalist imperialism. One important feature of the term international civil society, therefore, is that it allows students of international relations to investigate systematically the way in which the historical interaction between state and civil society has constructed modern international society.

A second significant benefit in considering international civil society when explaining the dynamics of international society relates to the political horizons it throws up. The incapacity of most International Society theorists to encompass collective social and political agency within their account of international relations limits severely the political potential of the concept. If, as the prevailing understanding presents it, international society is essentially a society of states sustained by a code of international conduct agreed upon by ruling elites, then the scope for radical social and political change both at the domestic and international level is immediately circumscribed. From this perspective, change in international society only arises when government officials and international bureaucrats reach a

new consensus on the norms and values that should guide their international behaviour. Thus, as we have seen, the end of empire is explained by authors such as Robert H. Jackson and Hedley Bull as the outcome of a reversal in the ethical assumptions among western elites on the right of colonial peoples to self-determination. Likewise, the appearance of racial equality as a principle of post-war international society is ascribed to "the new dominance of two strongly anti-colonial great powers, the United States and the Soviet Union."[55] On this account, momentous social and political transformations in world politics are attributed to the logic of statecraft as it is manifested in international forums like the United Nations or to the bilateral negotiations among diplomats. International political change is ultimately effected by states and social forces beyond the state remain tangential to global transformations.

The concept of international civil society on the other hand aims deliberately to incorporate social forces outside the state into an account of international social and political change. It seeks not only to identify the way in which non-state actors have influenced the course of modern international society, but also to emphasise that international society itself has proved instrumental in forging many of these social movements which inhabit international civil society. What is at stake here, therefore, is not so much the sterile arguments within our discipline as to whether it is interstate or transnational forces that best define the workings of the international system, but rather, how these two spheres of the international combine to produce a wider totality of international relations. The history of modern international society is the history of the interaction between state and civil societies within an international context. Once this premise is accepted, the potential of international social and political transformation is no longer limited to an international society of states, but comes to embrace collective social and political activity outside, though not necessarily against the state. While it is unlikely that such social movements will in the future ignore the

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[55] R. J. Vincent, "Racial Equality" in Bull and Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*, p. 252.

territorial state as the locus of their political aspirations, it would be equally short-sighted to reduce the possibilities of international political change exclusively to the realm of interstate activity. In order to avoid the pitfalls of both unalloyed transnationalism and state-centric realism, it is, I have argued, necessary to complement the study of international society with the investigation of international civil society.

The purpose of the next three chapters is to lend historical weight to these claims. Through the investigation of the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia from the turn of the century until independence in 1956, these narrative chapters will hopefully offer a clearer historical conception of how international factors encouraged the establishment of modern social movements in the Maghreb, and how in turn, these organisations contributed to the making of inter-war and post-war international society. By focusing upon the practical and ideological interaction between Tunisian social movements and their counterparts elsewhere in the world, these contributions will become readily apparent. More specifically, a consideration of how local nationalist organisations turned to various institutions of international society during the immediate post-war years should also highlight the importance of such interaction between Tunisian civil society and the wider world, both for the evolution of the country's own history and in its impact upon broader international developments. From these mainly analytical considerations, a more concrete political agenda will also hopefully emerge. This is tied to the historical experience of internationalism -socialist and otherwise- in the western Mediterranean. For the expansion of international civil society to the Tunisia also entailed, as we shall see, a set of complex and often contradictory experiments in political solidarity across ethnic, religious and national boundaries. The chapter on the inter-war crisis and its impact upon the Maghreb, in particular, should underline the relevance of internationalism in the unfolding social and political events of the period. As the concluding chapter to this study will indicate, this historical experience has much to offer for similar contemporary experiments in transnational solidarity. At this

juncture, however, it is necessary to examine in closer detail the actual historical

processes that have made thinking about such political experiments possible at all.

Chapter Four

The International Origins of Tunisian Civil Society 1900-1924

Around the turn of the century, Tunisia witnessed one of the most important social and political transformations of its contemporary history. For the first time, autonomous associations with modes of organisation and a political idiom typical of civil society emerged in the country. To be sure, these were initially small groupings confined mainly to an elite of men from the Regency's capital (the so-called *beldi*[1]). Furthermore, the objectives of these associations were not immediately political - most of them insisted on the exclusively pedagogical nature of their activity. The benefit of hindsight however, allows us to identify cultural-educational associations like the *Khalduniyya* and the *Sadiqiyya* as the source of the constitutional reformism which underpinned the creation in 1920 of the *Destour* (Constitution) party - the first Maghrebi nationalist party.

Dubbed 'Young Tunisians' by the colonial press, the group of men which animated these associations drew their inspiration from a variety of sources including elements of European liberalism and later, the Young Turk experience itself. In the early stages of its development however, two major tendencies were discernible in the programme of the Young Tunisians. The first was a tradition of constitutional reformism initiated by the enterprising prime minister Khayr al-Din from 1873 until his dismissal in 1877. Reacting to the growing imperialist pressure on North Africa, Khayr al-Din (1822-1890) had set about reforming key institutions of the Regency such as the army, the fiscal system, and the schools and mosque-universities with a view to creating a modern state capable of fending off the European powers. Although ultimately unsuccessful, Khayr al-Din's experiment became the central reference point for later generations of reformists including the Young Tunisians.

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[1] This Arabic term is a corruption of *baladi*, meaning 'from the town or city'. It refers to an urban elite from Tunis (many of them descendants of *mamluks*) which included *ulema*, traders and some government officials. They prided themselves in being more distinguished in manners and education from both the rural population (*arabi*) and the lower sorts from the city itself. See the entry for *Baldiyya* in K. J. Perkins, *Historical Dictionary of Tunisia* 2nd Edition (Lanham, MD and London : Scarecrow Press, 1997), p 29.

A second important influence came from the so-called 'salafiyya' movement which claimed that an adequate response to European imperialism could only be achieved through a re-evaluation of the central tenets of Islam, and through the substantial reform of the existing Islamic institutions. Many Young Tunisians felt the salafiyya doctrines offered the ideal political language with which to disseminate their modernising programme without jeopardising the cultural legacy of Islam. These two reformist trends -one constitutionalist, the other Islamic- combined to create some of the early expressions of Tunisian civil society which we shall be exploring below.

Parallel to this gradual emergence of Tunisian nationalism was the slow implantation of working-class movements in the Protectorate. Various working-class parties opened sections in Tunisia from 1907 and while trade unions were not formally legalised until 1932, most of the European workers had been affiliated to the local branch of the CGT set up in 1911. The indigenous membership of these organisations was curtailed by both the limited development of the Tunisian proletariat and by the administrative obstacles placed on Arab workers wishing to join trade-unions and political parties. The root cause for the overwhelmingly European character of the Tunisian working-class movements, however lay in the racist attitude which pervaded much of their early activity. Most branches of the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) and the *Section Française de la Internationale Ouvrier* (SFIO) were unwilling to attack head-on the various forms of discrimination faced by indigenous working people, nor to embrace the political issues which motivated this population. Despite this glaring insensitivity for the social and political aspirations of the majority of Tunisians, the European working-class organisations managed to attract a growing number of Arabs to their ranks. In the years following World War I, indigenous workers participated in strikes and demonstrations side by side with their European comrades, while their presence became more noticeable in the governing bodies of working-class organisations. The upshot of this activity was the creation in 1924 of an independent Tunisian trade union, the *Confédération Générale*

des Travailleurs Tunisiens (CGTT).

This chapter is concerned with the international dimensions in the rise and consolidation of these different social movements, which I suggest, formed the backbone of an incipient Tunisian civil society. While acknowledging some of the domestic sources of its genesis, the discussion that follows will argue that modern civil society emerged in Tunisia as a result of a number of international factors. European imperialist expansion was plainly foremost among these: it was the colonial enterprise launched by France in 1881 and its aftermath which provided the overarching conditions for the rise of a modern civil society in the Protectorate.[2] I shall therefore start by describing what the colonial process entailed and considering its social, political and economic implications. It will be suggested that out of these transformations there emerged three broad types of political organisation: the European working-class movements, the associations inspired by the salafiyya trend in Islamic political thought, and the constitutionalist organisations seeking equal civil rights for Muslims within the colonial framework. The following sections will explore the way in which these movements absorbed and reshaped foreign political ideas; how they interacted internationally with other political movements in order to further their particular cause; and finally, how wider international events impacted upon their activity. The sum of these interactions, I argue, represents the beginning of a process of the expansion of international civil society, the analytical implications of which I would like to address in the concluding section of this chapter.

It should be highlighted from the outset that the socio-economic and political forces that accompanied the expansion of international civil society grafted their own features and their singular logic upon existing forms of trans-boundary communication and activity. The peoples of the Maghreb had obviously established complex social

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[2] The terms 'Protectorate' and 'Regency' will be used interchangeably in the rest of the thesis to describe colonial Tunisia. The former term refers to the political-administrative structures imposed by the French at the al-Marsa convention of 1883 within the context of the so-called 'protectoral system' of the late nineteenth century. The latter is the word used by the French to describe the suzerain states of Ottoman North Africa, known in Turkish as *oçaklar* (garrison).

and political interconnections among themselves and with the outside world long before European conquest. Trade, pilgrimages (most notably the *hajj*), the high geographical mobility of religious scholars and the extensive sufi networks all contributed to the forging of strong social, cultural and political bonds within the region and beyond.[3] Julia Clancy-Smith has recently evoked this intricate web of social relations in her study of pre-Saharan oasis towns during the nineteenth century.[4] Through an examination of communication and exchange at markets and fairs, the movement and migration of religious notables and the expansion of *turuq* (lodges or orders) such as the *Rahmaniyya* or the *Qadiriyya* across the region, she demonstrates the importance of these connections when exploring Tunisia, and indeed the whole of the Maghreb's encounter with European imperialism. More importantly, it was precisely these pre-colonial solidarities which informed much of the social and political activity in the Tunisia during later decades. Hence, any consideration of the origins of Tunisian civil society should be sensitive to the influence of previously existing forms of social, cultural and political affiliation. This said, any historical-sociological analysis worthy of this label must combine a focus on historical *breaks* as well as on *continuities*. As such, the key development underlying the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia was the colonial penetration of the country during the late 1880s. It was the advent of capitalist imperialism that heralded the most significant transformations in the socio-economic and political structures of contemporary Maghreb. The following section will therefore examine the broad parameters of this momentous process.

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[3] The contribution of religious notables (sufi or otherwise) toward the construction of trans-local connections in the Maghreb and beyond is well captured in R. S O' Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad Ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition* (London: Hurst and Company, 1990) and D.K Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a 20th Century Notable* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[4] J. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)* (Berkeley. Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994), p. 2.

4.1 Colonialism and its Consequences

The French colonisation of the Maghreb was a long drawn-out affair. Initiated with the invasion of Algiers on 14 June 1830, it passed through at least three phases, roughly coinciding with the colonisation of each of the three major countries that form the region. Because of the important interaction among the different stages of this colonialisation and the mutual impact of each experience, the consequences of imperialist penetration will in this section be considered for the region as a whole.

From 1830 to 1881, French efforts focused on the suppression of Algerian resistance led by the Amir Abd el-Kader. Newly conquered lands were settled by a combination of unemployed workers, poltical prisoners and vagrants expelled from the metropole. This method, however, did not yield the results the French government had aimed for, namely the creation of a colony of small-holders. Of the 109,000 Europeans living in Algeria in 1848, only 15,000 (9,000 of whom were French) came under the category of rural settlers, the rest being urban dwellers.[4] The French defeat at Sadowa in 1870 and the final quelling of rural rebellions in Algeria during the following year, furnished the French government with an excuse to launch a second colonising campaign. In June 1871 approximately a thousand families from annexed Alsace-Lorraine -totalling 8,000 people- were granted 100,000 hectares of Algerian land. During subsequent decades, the colonial population continued ascending, mainly as result of immigration, so that by 1906, for example, it had reached the figure of 654,114 out of a total population of 5,231,850.[5]

Although Algeria had been formally declared a colony in 1848, it was during the last decades of the century that the discriminatory legal and political apparatus characteristic of imperial regimes was completed. A series of laws enacted during the

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[4] M. Bennoune, *The Making of Contemporary Algeria, 1830-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 71.

[5] These figures are taken from Mahfoud Bennoune "The Origin of the Algerian Proletariat", *Dialectical Anthropology* (Vol. 1, No. , 1976) pp. 201-223 , p. 212.

1870s, known collectively as the *code de l'indigénat*, effectively created a separate legislation for native Algerians whereby they could be punished for infractions such as "speaking disrespectfully to or about a French official, defaming the French Republic or failing to answer questions put by an official", together with some thirty other arbitrary offences.[6] In terms of political representation, the colonial assembly (made up of the *Délégations financières* established in 1898 and 1900) was composed of sixty-nine members of which twenty-one Muslim representatives were partially elected by a body of 5,000 men. Through a law passed in 1884, the rest of the Muslim men were eligible to vote in local and provincial elections only if they were landholders, civil servants or leaseholders of land over the age of twenty-five. A mere 35,000 out of a total of three and a half million Algerians met these criteria in the 1880s.

The nineteenth century had witnessed the growth of European trade with the Ottoman provinces of North Africa. Increasingly, the Europeans began to use the threat of force in order to impose capitulations and other commercial privileges on Tunisia and Morocco. With the French invasion of Algeria, both the Moroccan Sultan and the Tunisian Bey became weary of European encroachment on their sovereignty. By the 1880s, their fears proved justified as North Africa ceased to be of purely commercial interest to the European powers and became a target of their imperialist designs. According to Jamal Abun-Nasr, at the Congress of Berlin held in 1878 "Bismarck unambiguously encouraged the French to occupy Tunisia so as to divert their attention from the loss of Alsace-Lorraine."[7] From this moment on the French consul at Tunis, Emile Roustan, endeavoured to find a suitable justification for enforcing a French protectorate over Tunisia - something he had been unable to achieve through diplomatic means over the past decade. The opportunity arose in

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[6] J. Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 89.

[7] J.M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 276.

early 1881 as the French accused the Bey of being unable to control a raid by Tunisian tribesmen into Algerian territory. French forces invaded Tunis on 25 April 1881 and Muhammad as-Sadiq Bey was presented with a treaty which he signed at the Bardo palace on 12 May, allowing for the French military occupation until "[t]he Tunisian administration became able to re-establish order in the country and ensure the security of the frontiers."[8] With the signing of the al-Marsa Convention two years later, Tunisia officially became a French protectorate.

The French occupation of Tunisia was initially dictated by a combination strategic and economic concerns. The French felt it necessary to secure their Algerian conquest through a presence in the neighbouring territories and also preempt Italian ambitions on the Regency. On the other hand, the high costs of enforced colonisation in Algeria had suggested the possibility of taking an alternative route of economic exploitation, namely the creation of a 'colony for capital'. In a famous speech given in July 1885, Jules Ferry drew on the principles outlined by the theorist of imperialism Paul-Leroy Beaulieu in his work *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes* suggesting that the French objective in Tunisia was "to reserve for its capitalists and its products this technologically and economically backward country".[9] Consequently, the first decade of the Protectorate was characterised by the mass influx of private capital into Tunisia. French banks, corporations, and individual businessmen took heed of Ferry's advice and proceeded to buy vast tracts of land off absentee landlords and to establish highly profitable commercial enterprises under the privileged conditions meted out by the French administration.[10] This first wave of

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[8] *Ibid.*, p.279.

[9] Quoted in J. Poncet, *La Colonisation et l'Agriculture Européennes en Tunisie depuis 1881* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1961), p. 141. See also Martin, *L'Empire Triomphante*, p. 99.

[10] Carmel Sammut offers some examples in his *L' impérialisme capitaliste français et le nationalisme tunisien (1881-1914)*, (Paris: Publisud, 1983): "[d]es nombreuses sociétés financières s'étaient constituées au lendemain du Protectorat pour pouvoir acheter des grands domaines tunisiens; La Banque Nationale de Tunisie avait fondé une filiale qui avait pour seul but d'acheter des terrains agricoles; il s'agit de la Société Foncière de Tunisie qui put acquérir le domaine de la Mornaghia qui

capitalist colonisation was facilitated by the destruction of pre-colonial systems of land tenure. A decree of 23 May 1886, for example, legalised the alienation of *habous* lands (under Islamic law, an inalienable religious endowment) to colonists via a 'Habous Association'.[11] It was not until the beginning of 1890s, however, that the French opted for a policy of 'official colonisation'.

The immediate cause for this change of strategy was the growing Italian presence in Tunisia. This had been a long-standing feature of the Regency's social make-up and, as was mentioned above, it was one of the reasons which prompted the French invasion. In 1881 there were 15,000 Italians living in Tunisia as against 700 French nationals; in subsequent years their number rose to 20,000 in 1891, 55,000 in 1896 and 71,000 by 1901.[12] Fearful of this 'Italian menace', the French government set out to colonise the protectorate with settlers. By 1931 there were 91,000 French living in Tunisia, still not a majority of an overall European population which on the eve of independence had reached the figure of 255,000.[13] Parallel to this, the French authorities deepened the administrative reforms first initiated under the Bey. A regular standing army was established and a modern bureaucracy, with its corresponding *directions* of Education, Finances and Public works, or Agriculture, Commerce and Colonisation were gradually introduced during the 1890s.[14] These

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comprenait environ 3,500 hectares ... la Société Marseillaise de Crédit Industriel et Commercial (qui possédait, en dehors d'Enfida, les domaines de Sidi Tabet et d'El-Azib ayant respectivement 5,000 et 1,500 hectares ...la Compagnie des Batignolles, concessionaire du chemin de fer Tunis-Bône-Guelma, (qui revendit à Géry, president de la Banque de Tunisie, le domaine de l'Oued Zarga qui comprenait 9,000 hectares)." (p. 93).

[11] See E. Moudoud, *Modernization, the State, and Regional Disparity in Developing Countries: Tunisia in Historical Perspective 1881-1982* (Boulder, CO.: Westview, 1989), p.112.

[12] Martin, *L'Empire Triomphante*, p. 103.

[13] *Ibid.*, p 193 and Mahfoud Bennoune, "Primary Capital Accumulation in Colonial Tunisia", *Dialectical Anthropology* (Vol.4, No.2, July 1979) pp.83-100.

[14] L. Anderson, *The State and Social Transformtaion in Tunisia and Libya: 1830-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 146.

policies were not uniformly successful, but they certainly brought about a series of crucial transformations in the socio-economic, cultural and political structure of the protectorate.

Despite regional variations and historical particularities, colonialism effected a threefold transformation of the Maghreb. In the first place, the process of land expropriation left the mass of the autochthonous population without a direct means of subsistence. This landless population was gradually transformed into a new set of social classes. Most of them joined the ranks of an under-proletariat which inhabited the shanty-towns or *bidonvilles* of Casablanca, Algiers and Tunis[15]; others still became the rural or urban proletariat of both the colonies and the metropole. The traditional artisanal industry of the urban centres, for its part, slowly succumbed to the competitive pressure of metropolitan imports. This dismantling of precolonial economic structures, however, was complemented by the selective modernisation of the North African productive system, most notably mining, transport, agriculture and banking.

Secondly, the colonial administrative apparatus, cemented through war and coercion, created a dual society where Muslims were systematically deprived of the most basic civil rights. Moreover, the colonial authorities made every effort to put down the indigenous religious or cultural expressions, save the occasions when this formed part of a policy of 'divide and rule' (as in the case of the Berber *dahir* of 1930 that tried to exempt berberophone Moroccans from Islamic jurisprudence). The brutality and destruction which accompanied colonisation further accentuated the humiliation and suffering felt by North Africans and certainly fuelled a sense of resentment, when not outright hatred toward all things French which was to linger well into the future. At the same time, however, this very process of political colonisation allowed for the centralisation of the state and the delimitation of its

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[15] See the historical background in Calude Liauzu's study of the 1930s "Un aspect de la crise en Tunisie: la naissance des bidonvilles" *Revue Français d'Histoire d'Outre Mer* (Vol. LXIII, 2e et 4e trimestre, 1976).

territorial boundaries, a development which had obvious consequences for the later ascent of nationalism.

Lastly, the French occupation afforded a small but important Maghrebi élite (the so-called *évolués*) the chance to enrich themselves and attain a high social status under the colonial régime. Colonisation was therefore also important in that it furnished some sectors with a whole new set of economic, social and cultural aspirations. This is particularly significant in explaining the adoption of modern political language by the many North Africans who received a European education in the Maghreb or who later lived and studied abroad.

These, then, were the changes responsible for the rise of a modern civil society in the Maghreb. As was pointed out at the outset of this chapter, the new colonial structures were grafted upon the existing patterns of social, economic and political organisation. Rather than being neatly reproduced in some ideal-typical form, the basic elements of modern civil society were refracted through the lens of imperialism, racism, violent political domination and forced expropriation - all arguably international phenomena. In this respect, the implantation of civil society in Tunisia clearly represents the variegated impact of the expansion of international civil society. The universal forms associated to civil society -private property, modern classes, modern social and political agency- acquired a specific character in the colonial setting. As was noted in the introductory chapter, bearing in mind this dialectical relationship between the universal and the particular is essential when analysing the modern social movements which emerged in Tunisia during the first two decades of this century. As I hope the following sections will demonstrate, the social and political associations germane to Tunisian civil society adapted the organisational and ideological norms prevalent in other parts of the world to the concrete socio-historical circumstances of their own country. It is in this sense that the expansion of international civil society becomes a process played out simultaneously at the domestic (particular) and the international (universal) levels. Let us now turn to an historical

illustration of this process by considering the three most significant expressions of Tunisian civil society during the early part of this century.

4.2 The Impact of the Salafiyya Movement

The outstanding civilisational achievements of Islam -its profound political, spiritual and cultural force- had for several centuries provided Maghrebi society with a firm reference-point for the maintenance of social cohesion and moral order. Faced with the deepening of imperialist penetration by the latter half of the nineteenth century, North Africans naturally turned to Islam as the most immediate source of resistance. The way Islam served as a vehicle of political mobilisation, however, varied a great deal according to the place and moment of its occurrence.

As in other parts of the Muslim world, the expansion of Islam in the Maghreb yielded a form of popular religion imbued with a number of pre-Islamic characteristics such as saint-worshipping and certain esoteric forms of spiritual enlightenment. This syncretism produced forms of social and political mobilisation with a strong mystical and millenarian hue -summarised by the concept of *maraboutism*- which contrasted with the rational, scripturalist legalism of the orthodox Islamic traditions.[16] The first Algerian resistance to colonialism, for example, was led by the Emir Abd el-Kader, a perfect example of the charismatic and messianic leadership characteristic of *maraboutism*.[17] Similarly, the bedouin reaction to the French invasion of Tunisia in 1881, and the 1906 revolt of Mawlay Ahmad Haybat Allah (el Hiba) in southern

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[16] *Maraboutism* (derived from the Arabic for fortified tower -*ribat*- where religious notables were held to live) is central to the idea of North African popular Islam. For the classic discussion on the distinction between popular and scripturalist ('catholic' and 'protestant') Islam see, E. Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969) and *Muslim Society* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); See also M. Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

[17] See the comparison between the thought and action of the two resistance leaders Abd al-Kader and Abd el-Krim in Pessah Shinar, "Abd al-Qadr and Abd-Alkrim: Religious Influences on their Thought and Action" *Asian and African Studies* (Vol. 1, 1965) pp. 139-174.

Morocco represented two other instances where the resources of popular Islam were deployed against foreign intervention.[18] These forms of popular protest were undoubtedly part of a long tradition of resistance to the encroachment of the centralising state. Nonetheless, by couching their actions in the language of *jihad*, these movements clearly sought to revive the imagery of *Dar al-harb* (Abode of war) and *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam) which could conjure up a continuity between the Crusades and the contemporary expansion of capitalist imperialism. Similarly, while Sufism in North Africa was a much more complex phenomenon than is conveyed here through its association with rural uprisings and *maraboutism*, one should not overlook its essential role in defining the particular mode of rural protest outlined above.

A second recourse to Islam in the face of imperialist penetration focussed on the state apparatus. The commercial and military pressure deployed by the European states in the Maghreb led to various reformist experiments similar to those taking place simultaneously at the heart of the Ottoman Empire under the Tanzimat period discussed in chapter three. The eighteen-year (1837-1855) rule of Ahmad Bey introduced the first systematic military, administrative and educational reforms into the Regency.[19] Further innovations followed during the 1870s under the guidance of the Tunisian Prime Minister Khayr al-Din. In both cases, the programme of modernisation involved the adoption of European tools of state-building -rationalised and centralised administration, extension of taxing system, creation of standing army, educational reform- in the belief that only imitation could deter European expansion. The reforms were rejected by some sectors of the Tunisian population on the grounds that they represented heretical innovations (*bid'a*) alien to the traditions of Islam. For

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[18] For a discussion of these modes of resistance see respectively, Mohamed-Hadi Cherif, "Les mouvements paysannes dans la Tunisie du XIXe siècle", *Revue de L'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* (No. 30, 2e semèstre 1980) pp. 21-55 and E. Burke III, *Prelude to a Protectorate: Moroccan Resistance 1860-1912* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1976).

[19] For a detailed account of this period see L. Brown, *The Tunisia of Ahmad Bey, 1837-1855* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974).

the most part, however, the religious establishment, embodied in the *ulema*, displayed no overt opposition to these initiatives. In fact, Khayr al-Din managed to enlist the support of certain members of the Tunisian *ulema* and explicitly invoked the *Sharia*, the *Umma* and the traditions of the Prophet in his programmatic manifesto, the Surest Path (*Aqwam al-masalik*), published in 1867.[20]

The Tunisian *Tanzimat* could simply be explained in sociological terms as a 'revolution from above' designed to counteract international military and economic pressures through domestic modernisation. This is undoubtedly a crucial element of the interpretation; but it is also important to bear in mind that this particular reaction to European expansion turned to Islam as a source of legitimacy. In this respect, despite all the Weberian resonances of rationalisation and secularisation, the reformist experiments in Tunisia were part of a general trend in the Muslim world to seek a response to imperialism in Islam.

The most coherent and historically significant expression of this trend was embodied in the *salafiyya* movement. Derived from the concept of *al-salaf al salih* ('the virtuous forefathers'), the term 'salafiyya' refers to those Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century -names like Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani, Mohammed Abduh and Rashid Rida are usually associated to the trend- who argued for the return to the values which had guided the Prophet Muhammad and his followers during their exile at Madina.[21] The leitmotif of their argument was that the original postulates of Islam had been abandoned through the centuries by heterodox

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[20] See A. H Green, *The Tunisian Ulama, 1873-1915: Social Structure and Response to Ideological Currents* (Leiden: E.J Brill, 1978); and Kenneth J. Perkins, "'The Masses Look Ardently to Istanbul': Tunisia, Islam, and the Ottoman Empire 1837-1931" in J. Ruedy (ed.), *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995).

[21] Good overviews of these thinkers include: A. Al-Azmeh, *Islam and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993); H. Enyat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1982). Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); E. Kedourie *Afghani and 'Abduh : an Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam* (London: Frank Cass, 1966); and A. Rahmena (ed.) *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1994).

practices like Sufism and by corrupt governments. The results, according to the Salafis, were plainly visible in the Muslim world's feeble response to European imperialism, and the remedy lay in the revival of the pristine culture of the first Islamic community. The Salafis did not reject European values and achievements *per se*, but on the contrary, sought to reconcile Islam with modernity. Their objective was to combine elements of European industrial society -positivistic science, technology, rationalised organisation- with the heritage of Islam -moral order, spirituality and just governance. According to Aziz Al-Azmeh

> [The] work of Muhammad Abduh and others, was part of a modernist reinterpretation of Muslim texts of sacred or semi-sacred character, in which these texts were regarded as a code, open modernist interpreter which yielded ideas in keeping with science, with evolutionism, and other ideas in currency... [22]

As opposed to the other two Islamic reactions to imperialism outlined above, the Salafiyya trend became a 'movement' in that it actually established a permanent network of institutions characteristic of civil society. Interestingly, this was particularly true of the Maghreb where, as we shall see, the Salafis had a considerable social and political impact. Essentially, the Salafiyya influence was transmitted through two vehicles: educational institutions and cultural or religious associations.

The Salafiyya movement's first inroad into North African political life was through education. Given the emphasis placed by the Salafiyya thinkers on the need for Muslims to combine Islamic learning with training in the modern sciences, it comes as no surprise that their efforts were first focussed on educational reform. The most important phenomenon to arise from this project were the so-called "free schools" (*maktab al-hurriyya*) or *"Kuttab réformés"*, which took this name by virtue

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[22] Al-Azmeh, *Islam and Modernities*, p. 34.

of being independent from colonial regulation. Initially, the aim of these institutions was simply to put into practice the tenets of Salafi ideology. By offering a curriculum comprised of both traditional and modern subjects taught mostly in Arabic, the schools provided an alternative to both the secular francophone institutes and the declining Koranic schools.

After the success of the first 'free school', established in Tunis in 1906 by Khairallah ibn Mustafa, the movement spread across the Maghreb, gradually adopting a more political hue. Islamic modernists, who had in many cases already been heavily involved in the reform of the Zaytouna or al-Qarawiyyin Mosques, took on the task of setting up free schools as a response to the advancement of western-style education. With considerable foresight, the Salafis had identified the *Kuttab réformés* (free schools) as the corner-stone of future Muslim resistance against European imperialism. By 1925, Morocco boasted a dozen such institutions (distributed between Fez, Rabat, Casablanca, Tetouan and Marrakesh) while in Algeria, the movement pioneered by Ibn Ben Badis in 1917 accounted for the country's 100 free schools by the mid-1930s.[23] An important off-shoot of all this activity was the circulation of a number of journals and newspapers -both in Arabic and French- such as Ben Badis' *al-Shihab* (The Meteor) or the Tunisian *As-Sa'da al'Uzma* (The Greatest Happiness).

The uneven extension of Salafiyya influence in the Maghreb reflects the particular domestic circumstances which fuelled the movement in different places at different times. Furthermore, this early expression of the Salafiyya movement only offered a glimpse of what was later a central component of political activity in North Africa, particularly in Morocco and Algeria. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the Salafiyya doctrine had initially evolved outside the Maghreb by men who had little relation to the region. In this respect its heavy impact across North Africa needs to

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[23] For a description of the 'free-school' movement in the Maghreb see John P. Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism", *Journal of African History* (Vol.5, No.3, 1964) pp.435-447 and John Damis, "The Free-School Phenomenon: the Case of Tunisia and Algeria", *International Journal of Middles East Studies* (Vol. 5, No. 4, September 1974) pp. 434-449.

be explained with reference to the wider contacts with the outside world, as one of the most notable characteristics of the Salafiyya trend was its Pan-Islamic character.

A central figure in this process was the Egyptian Mohammed Abduh (1849-1905), scholar, activist and disciple of Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani (1838/39-1897). For Al-Afghani, Abduh and Rida, the concept of *umma* (community of believers) lay at the heart of the an Islamic revival. The imperialist encroachment of Muslim lands had been possible due to the division among the Islamic *umma*, and the only way of evicting the European powers was through the political reconstitution of this very community. To this end, Al-Afghani and his disciple Abduh, had established a Pan-Islamic secret society called "The Strongest Link" (*al-Uwra al-Wuthqa*). Despite its brief existence (1882-1884) the Society was able to extend its membership across the Muslim world, and in December 1884 two of its Tunisian associates, Muhammad b. Mustafa Bayram and Muhammad as-Sanusi arranged Abduh's first visit to Tunisia and a second sojourn in 1903.[24] There is some controversy regarding the historical significance of these events for the later development of Tunisian nationalism. According to Moncef Chenoufi, for example, Abduh's impact first found expression four months after his departure as 3,000 demonstrators marched the streets of Tunis in opposition to water restrictions imposed by the Regency.[25] Furthermore, it is argued, Abduh's Tunisian followers played a crucial role in the development of reformist institutions such as *al-Hadira* newspaper and the *Khalduniyya* association, which as we shall see below were instrumental in the forging of Tunisian civil society. Other interpretations are more sceptical about the salafi contribution, arguing that their impact among the Tunisian ulema was marginal and that furthermore, their ideas were not central to the reformist project of the 1890s. According to Arnold H. Green

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[24] For an exhaustive account of Abduh's visits to Tunisia see Moncef Chenoufi, "Les deux séjours de Muhammad 'Abduh en Tunisie", *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* (Vol. 16, 1968), pp.57-96.

[25] *Ibid.*

[...] a few broad-minded ulama associated themselves with the revived reform movement ... but this was no purely Tunisian coalition purporting to advance national values by impugning the Protectorate administration, as some have suggested. Rather, the essential and significant alliance in force during this period was that linking the progressive Tunisians with the administration itself.[26]

Either way, there is a degree of consensus regarding the salafi participation in the early institutions of Tunisian civil society, including for instance the *Khalduniyya* association and the *al-Hadira* newspaper, minimal as it may have been. Similarly, there appears to be little dispute about this trend having emerged in the Regency as a result of Mohammed Abduh's efforts of propagation. The consequences of this were to be strongly felt in subsequent years as leading North African politicians such as Abd al-Aziz Thaalbi, Shaykh Abd al-Hamid Ben Badis or Allal Al-Fasi incorporated the tenets of salafi doctrine into their own versions of nationalism, thus imbuing it with elements of Islamic internationalism.[27] Again, it is important to underline that the success of the salafiyya trend in the Maghreb during this period owed a great deal to the indigenous traditions of Islamic reformism. Taking the case of the Rifian revolt of Abdelkrim, George Joffé has argued that, "The Rif example inspired others with the desire to resist European rule elswhere in Morocco ... If no more, the Rif war was one of those 'historic connections' that link primary [i.e millenarian, kin-based] and secondary [modern, mass-based nationalist] resistance in Africa ..."[28] This kind

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[26] Green, *The Tunisian Ulema*, p. 169.

[27] See J. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco" *St. Antony's Papers*, N°16 (*Middle Eastern Affairs*, N° 3, 1963); A. Laroui, *Les Origines Culturelles et Sociales du Nationalisme Marocain* (Paris: François Maspero,1977) and A. Merad, *Le réformisme musulman en Algérie de 1925 à 1940* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1967).

[28] E.G.H Joffé, "The Moroccan Nationalist Movement: Istiqlal, the Sultan and the Country"*Journal of African History* (No. 26, 1985), pp. 289-307,p. 291. See also P. Shinar, "Abd-al Qadr and Abd-Alkrim: Religious Influences on their Thought and Action" *Asian and African Studies*, (Vol.1 1965),

of example, however, complements rather than cancels out the relevance of international factors in the emergence of 'secondary' resistance movements in the Maghreb. In fact, it reinforces the need for an analysis which focuses on the interplay between the domestic and the international in the genesis of such movements. In this respect, the salafiyya movement represents a clear example of the international dimensions to the rise of civil society in Tunisia.

4.3 Constitutionalist Reformism

In 1897, the prominent *colon* journalist Victor de Carnières stated in his newspaper *La Tunisie Française*:

> The more the *indigène* is educated, the more he despises us. Our worst enemies are those young people from bourgeois families who have been brought up like Frenchmen by the *direction* of Education ... If there is ever a revolt in Tunisia, it will be they who we shall see heading the insurgency.[29]

Although anecdotal, Carnières' observation registered a new development in the political life of the Maghreb. It reflected the gradual but unequivocal rise of liberal constitutionalist politics in North Africa. In the Tunisian case, this soon took the shape of a nationalist party, the Destour; in Morocco and Algeria it manifested itself in a number of associations which sought to ameliorate the status of Muslims under the colonial regime by invoking the modern concepts of reformism, citizenship and constitutional rights. Taken together, these new organisations represented an

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p.175 .

[29] Cited in Charles-André Julien, "Colons français et Jeunes Tunisiens (1882-1912)" *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* (Vol. LIV, Nos. 194-197, 1967), pp. 87-150, p. 114.

important shift in the nature of political protest in the Maghreb. North African civil society was moving away from more traditional sources of political mobilisation and gradually adopting modern forms of political engagement. The political party became the prevailing form of organisation; strikes, petitions, manifestos and demonstrations the tools of protest; and the language of rights, self-determination and representation the dominant political idiom. Naturally, the break was not a clean one - the salafiyya trend found a prominent voice in the Young Tunisian movement. Nonetheless, it was a sufficiently fundamental break to beg the question of why and how it came about. Clearly, an exhaustive response to this question requires making reference to a multitude of factors. In line with the general thrust of this thesis, however, this section will concentrate on the international dimensions to the rise of Tunisian constitutionalism.

These fall into three basic categories. Foremost among them is the broader historical and sociological process whereby colonialism engendered its own antithesis in the form of modern anti-colonialism.[30] Added to this were a series of ideological and organisational contacts with the outside world which strongly influenced the nature and direction of Tunisian constitutionalism. Last, a host of wider international events, such as the Young Turk and Bolshevik revolutions or Wilson's Fourteen Points, all heavily impacted upon the politics of the region. Before examining how these international factors played themselves out in the forging of Maghrebi civil society, it is necessary to outline some of the characteristics of this new stage in the region's history.

For all its racist overtones and its exaggerated language of "revolt" and "insurgency", Carnières' remark was sociologically accurate on two important

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[30] For an exploration of the dialectics of colonialism see, J. Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation* (London: Pluto Press, 1989). For a cogent application of this process to the Tunisian case see Sammut, *L' impérialisme capitaliste*. Sammut emphasises the numerous other variables to be taken into account in the rise of Tunisian nationalism but maintains that ,"[...] les modes de pénétration imperialiste française ont donné une certaine forme au nationalisme tunisien qui s'est structuré selon la nature de la pénétration économique et politique française." (p. 177).

accounts: it pointed to the centrality of education in the rise of Tunisian constitutionalism and it highlighted the *bourgeois* nature of this phenomenon. As we saw in the previous section, educational reform had been a major objective of both the salafiyya movement and the modernising administration of Khayr al-Din. Beyond the pedagogic concerns over more efficient training, the purpose of these programmes was to raise the political consciousness of the Muslim population. The new generation of Maghrebi political activists adapted this legacy and used similar methods to pursue their own political project. Indeed, many of the leading bourgeois constitutionalists had attended the free schools or the modern educational institutions set up by the reformist régimes.

Perhaps the most notable example of this phenomenon was the Sadiki College of Tunis.[31] Set up in January 1875, the college was the product of a series of inquiries headed by the Prime Minister Khayr al-Din into the reform of the Tunisian educational system. Its objective, according to the preamble which introduced the college's foundational constitution, was to "à faire développer la civilisation [sic], dans l'intérêt de la population ... dont a besoin la nation musulmane pour la gestion des affaires en confromité avec la loi islamique."[32] In many respects, therefore, it epitomised the salafiyya ideal of an Islamic modernism. Nonetheless, as the French took over the Tunisian administration and the élite represented at Sadiki lost the prospect of securing an administrative position in the Beylical regime, the College gradually became a breeding ground for modern nationalist politics. The Sadiki students had, after all, acquired the necessary skills for confronting the colonial regime on its own terms: knowledge of a number of foreign languages; acquaintance of European history and political thought; widespread familiarity with the methods of modern science. Thus, according to Mustapha Kraïem, a division was bound to arise

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[31] The most comprehensive study of the Sadiki College is N. Sraïeb, *Le Collège Sadiki de Tunis 1875-1956: Enseignement a nationalisme* (Tunis: Alif, Editions de la Méditterannée, 1995). See also A. Abdessalam, *Sadiki et les sadikiens* (Tunis: Cérès Productions, 1974).

[32] Cited in Sraïeb, *Le Collège Sadiki*, p. 36.

between the 'modernist' élites emerging from the Collège Sadiki and their traditional counterparts at the Grand Zaytouna Mosque:

> Despite all the precautions taken, the cohesion of this élite was irredeemably shattered as, in the last instance, the choice was between two competing world-views. True, the sadikiens had a profound acquaintance of the Arab-Islamic legacy but their western education had opened their spirit toward the rationalism, the liberal-humanist principles, the sciences and the new technology which constituted the foundations of modern civilisation.[33]

Evidence of the Collège Sadiki's vanguard role in the development of Tunisian liberal constitutionalism was provided in the following decades as the Protectorate experienced the virtually uninterrupted growth of constitutionalist organisations. Like their European counterparts, the bourgeois political clubs and debating circles which proliferated during the early decades of the century were intended to serve the dual purpose of influencing policy and educating the general public. The most significant examples of this development were the *Khalduniyya* club and the Alumni Association of Sadiki College (*Association des anciens élèves du collège Sadiki*) or *Sadikiyya*, set up in 1896 and 1905 respectively. Both groups were animated by a small number of Sadiki graduates dedicated to the dissemination of the 'modern sciences' (geography, political economy, physics, chemistry) among the general public. They chose the vehicle of lectures, debates and a public library as a means of realising this project, and found a considerable response among certain sectors of the Tunisian population.[34]

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[33] Mustapha Kraïem, "Les élites du mouvement nationaliste Tunisien pendant la période de l'entre-deux-guerres" in CERES (ed.), *Elites et pouvoir dans le monde arabe pendant la période moderne et contemporaine* (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1992) pp. 7-29. p. 14.

[34] For figures reflecting the *Khalduniyya* and the *Sadikiyya's* impact on Tunisian civil society see Charles-André Julien, "Colons françaises et Jeunes Tunisiens (1882-1912)",*Revue Français d'Histoire d'outre Mer* (Vol. LIV, 1967).

Both associations had received strong backing from the Residency in an attempt by the colonial administration to undermine the Zaytouna's status as the major Tunisian academic institution, and to replace it with a docile élite of francophile intellectuals. Nonetheless, by the mid-1900s the *Khalduniyya* and the *Sadikiyya* had become the major centres of an incipient constitutionalist movement. Predictably, the ostensibly apolitical activities of the two association had furnished a considerable number of Tunisian men with the ideological tools for the shaping of a nationalist consciousness. More interestingly, for all their salafiyya roots and their links with the Zaytouna ulema, both associations proved to be instrumental in the shift from the traditional to the modern forms of political agency. As Sraïeb points out:

> Nous voions ainsi naître de nouveaux systèmes de valeur où le patriotisme, le bien matériel des concitoyens, l'idée de progrès et travail se substituent brusquement à celle de la piété, de la communauté religieuse et du bienes l'au-délà .[35]

While there is little controversy about the centrality of education in the emergence of liberal-constitutionalist movements in the Maghreb, the bourgeois character of this phenomenon requires further elucidation. 'Bourgeois' is understood here as referring to a comprehensive political project, the explicit or implicit aim of which is to facilitate the development of capitalist social relations in a particular society. It does not imply the self-conscious agency of a homogenous bourgeois class united under the banner of liberty, equality and fraternity - the leadership of North African bourgeois nationalism was largely drawn from a Turkish *mameluk* aristocracy that had in the past displayed little respect for these principles. Rather, it is meant to convey the existence of a particular set of class interests which express themselves in a programme for capitalist reform. In exploring the nature of bourgeois revolution in

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[35] Sraïeb, *Le Collège Sadiki*, p. 270.

Germany, for example, Geoff Eley defines the concept in the following fashion:

> [...] we associate bourgeois revolution with a larger complex of change ...
> which cumulatively established the conditions of possibility for the
> development of industrial capitalism.[36]

My contention is that the constitutionalist organisations which emerged in the
Maghreb during the beginning of this century were bourgeois in that their principal
objective was to reform the social, economic and political structures of their
respective countries so as to promote the capitalist social relations they saw prevailing
in Europe. They were also interested in advancing the liberal constitutionalist politics
which could sustain a liberal-democratic regime; but this was not inherent to their
primary concern, namely the defence of their class interests in the face of French
imperialism. As Eley and numerous other theorist of bourgeois revolution have
emphasised, there is no necessary correlation between the social and economic
development of capitalism and the establishment of a legal-political framework
characteristic of liberal democracy.[37]

This insistence on the bourgeois character of the emerging Tunisian civil
society is helpful in two respects. First, it permits the sociological and political
distinction between movements such as the Young Tunisians or the Destour and their
contemporary rivals, the working-class organisations we shall be exploring below.

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[36] D. Blackbourn and G. Eley, *The Pecularities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 145.

[37] In his discussion of the notion of bourgeois revolution, Perry Anderson, for exampt, emphasises that, "[n]one of the great turbulences of the transition to modernity has ever conformed to the simple schema of a struggle between a feudal aristocracy and industrial capital of the sort presupposed in the traditional Marxist vocabulary. The porous pattern of feudalism above, the unpredictable presence of exploited classes below, the mixed disposition of the bourgeoisie within, the competitivepressure of rival states without, were bound to defeat this expectation. In that sense, one could say that it was in the nature of 'bourgeois revolutions' to be denatured these transformations could never have been the linear project of a single class subject." P. Anderson,"The Notion of Bourgeois Revolution" in*English Questions* (London and New York: Verso, 1992), p 112.

Second, it accounts for the elitist nature of these movements.

Taking the issue of the political aspirations of bourgeois nationalism first, it is clear that their project amounted to the fuller integration of the Muslim population into the French colonial system - the policy of *assimilation*. This did not involve questioning the basis of the protectoral and colonial regimes *per se*. Rather, it meant advocating the introduction of reforms to the existing political framework which might grant some Muslims full French citizenship rights. Aside from the demands for equal political representation, the bourgeois constitutionalists were interested in laying down the foundations of a modern capitalist economy which they felt had not been delivered through French colonisation. Thus, the first Young Tunisian Manifesto stated in 1907:

> Concerning the economic situation, we will ask the government to develop professional and agricultural education, and to make it available to the children of our working classes. In a country which is again opening itself up to economic activity, the natives must be the primary producers. It is urgently necessary to train the working population and to prepare it for an adequate response to the new requirements of private industry and public enterprise.[38]

Bourgeois constitutionalists were very much aware of the elitist character of their organisations, but not all of them sought to enlist the mass of the disadvantaged population to their cause. In his examination of the Young Tunisian newspaper *Le Tunisien*, for example, Byron Cannon identifies a 'rhetoric of social justice' which showed a distinct concern for the plight of subordinate classes like the peasantry or the *khamassat* (share-croppers). When faced with the concrete problems of land reform and the *medjba* head-tax, however, the Young Tunisians came to the realisation "... that their positions had EITHER to reflect the socio-economic biases

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[38] Quoted in B. Tlili, *Crises et mutations dans le monde islamo-méditerranéen contemporain (1907-1912)* (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1978), p. 289.

of established classes on whom they depended for support OR show a much more innovative bent to which an only gradually emergent section of the Tunisian population could rally."[39]

The previous sections have discussed in some depth the defining characteristics of bourgeois constitutionalism as it arose in the Tunisia during the beginning of this century. We have seen how the essence of this project lay in the economic and political reform of the existing regimes, and how the chosen vehicles for its propagation were educational associations, printed media and in some cases, the participation in electoral contests. The rise of this new kind of politics was undoubtedly related to the progress of French imperial penetration. The socio-economic transformation of the Maghreb by colonial capitalism threw up a new constellation of class forces which formed the basis of the bourgeois reformism. Furthermore, the deepening of French administrative power and cultural influence over the Maghreb heavily conditioned the shape of political protest in the region. Both these factors formed part of dialectics of colonialism alluded to above, whereby the colonial process creates its own antithesis. Yet for all the internal logic responsible for the evolution of liberal constitutionalism in North Africa, there was also a crucial international dynamic which has to be brought into account.

The most significant of the international dimensions was the ideological and organisational contact between Tunisian movements and the outside world, and indeed with their Maghrebi counterparts. It is, of course, impossible to trace the exact meanderings of these international contacts from their origin through to their subsequent development. Some links were personal, others institutional; many were one-off but later proved to be of great importance, while others were long-standing yet insignificant. Furthermore, the influences from abroad were often meshed together in such a way as to complicate the identification of their exact provenance. For the

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[39] Byron Cannon, "Rural Social Justice Rhetoric and the Young Tunisian Movement, 1907-1912", *Revue d' Histoire Maghrébine* (No. 59/60, October 1990).

sake of clarity, however, I shall focus on the two main geographical sources of this foreign influence: Turkey and Europe.

The impact of the Young Turk revolution of 1908 on the reformist politics of the Regency was perhaps the most pervasive. Although the term 'Young Tunisians' was an invention of the colonial regime and the French press, it was never disowned by the membership of the associations which came under this rubric. In fact, being for the most part of Turkish descent, the Young Tunisian leaders cherished the idea of being associated with the political developments taking place in Istanbul. This affiliation to the Ottoman Empire was part of what Ali Merad, taking Algeria as a case in point, has referred to as 'Turcophile' sentiment which sought to counter the trauma of imperialist conquest through the glorification of an Ottoman past:

> For the generation that witnessed the conquest, the establishment of French power [in North Africa] did not abolish its old allegiances, starting with the moral allegiance to the sultan of Istanbul recognised as the Emperor of all Muslims.[40]

It would be a mistake, however, to reduce the Tunisian admiration of the Young Turks to an expression of Pan-Islamism or Pan-Ottomanism. There was, as we shall explore below, a trend within the Young Tunisian movement which emphasised this aspect of Maghrebi-Turkish relations. Yet the central element to the ideological parallelism between Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) and the bourgeois constitutionalists of the Maghreb lay in their common programme for a comprehensive reform of their respective regimes. This was not initially the product of some pan-Islamic agency, but rather the self-conscious participation in a wider international

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[40] A. Merad, "La turcophile dans le debat national en Algérie au debut du siècle (1911-1918)" *Revue d' Histoire Maghrébine* (No. 31-32, 1983), p. 338. A similar relationship is examined in Kenneh J. Perkins, "'The masses Look Ardently to Istanbul': Tunisia, Islam and the Ottoman Empire 1837-1931" in J. Ruedy (ed.) *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

movement against despotism. As the Young Tunisian, Abdeljalil Zaouche wrote in *Le Tunisien* in the wake of the Young Turk revolution:

> Nous ne pouvons que féliciter le Jeunes-Turcs de ce magnifique résultat. Et, nous l'avouons sans difficulté, nous suivons avec sympathie un mouvement qui démontre clairement que les musulmans ne sont pas comme on se plaît à les répresenter dans certaines milieux européens des fanatiques ayant au coeur la haine de tout ce qui est étranger à leur foi, des ennemis irréductibles de tout progrès dans l'ordre économique.[41]

Admittedly, the actual organisational contacts between the CUP and the Young Tunisians only flourished after 1912, when the latter movement was proscribed and some of its top leaders were exiled to Istanbul. The Unionist regime took advantage of this circumstance to enlist a section of the Young Tunisians in their war efforts during World War I. At the beginning of 1913 a Benevolent Islamic Society was established in Istanbul under the auspices of the CUP, with the covert intention not only of furthering the Pan-Islamic cause but also, according to Jacob Landau, "[t]o undertake political and military operations in countries where the Ottoman army could not openly intervene, such as Tunisia."[42] This policy was buttressed with the founding in May 1916 of the *Revue du Maghreb*, a monthly publication with the subtitle *Tribune des revendications des indigènes* (Platform for the Defense of Native Demands). Mohammed Bach Hamba, brother of the notable Young Tunisian Ali Bach Hamba, edited the journal from Geneva with Turkish support, thus maintaining a degree of constitutionalist activity in exile.

    While the example of the Young Turk revolution remained the closest to the

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[41] *Le Tunisien*, 29 September 1908, cited in B. Tlili, *Crises et mutations* Vol. 1, p. 291.

[42] J.M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organisation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.92.

Young Tunisian aspirations, it was the principles advanced by the French Revolution a century earlier which lay at the heart of the Young Tunisian programme. Like most other bourgeois constitutionalist movements across the world, the Young Tunisians adopted the language of rights, progress, reform and maxims such as 'careers open to all' or 'constitutional accountability' in order to reinforce their liberal credentials. As we saw above, the Young Tunisian leaders were unembarassed about their Francophone upbringing and their admiration for Enlightenment science and philosophy; their political project, after all, involved realising the promises of the French revolution in Tunisia. The editorial of *Le Tunisien*'s opening issue had stated this quite unequivocally:

> Nous avons la ferme conviction qu'en poursuivant la défense des intérêts légitimes de nos compatriotes, nous servons la politique d'association préconnisée par le Gouvernement de la République. Conscients des bienfaits résultant, pour les indigènes de ce pays, de la protection d'une nation dont nous connaissons les traditions de liberté et de justice, nous apporterons notre concours loyal à la France pour l'aider dans sa mission civilisatrice.[43]

Given this unabashed 'assimilationism', what kind of solidarity did the Young Tunisians receive from French liberals? Khaled Guezmir has documented some of the cooperation offered by French liberals at a personal level. The editorial secretary of *Le Tunisien*, for example, was the Alsacian Kelin Koberty, while the newspaper itself was printed at a press owned by Louis Nicolas, a self-proclaimed 'socialist dreamer' and close friend of Ali Bach Hamba.[44] Similarly, a number of liberal deputies at the French Assembly and a host of French artists and intellectuals afforded the Young Tunisians moral and material backing. By and large however, this support came from

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[43] Quoted by Sammut, *L' impérialisme capitaliste français*, p. 24

[44] Khaled Guezmir, *Les Jeunes Tunisiens* (Tunis: Editions Alif, 1986).

the fringes of French politics.[45] The Young Tunisians had made a conscious effort to present their ideas before the French public - both in the Regency and in France. A year after the first issue of *Le Tunisien* had appeared, a delegation of prominent Young Tunisians made their ideas heard at a North African Congress held in Paris during October 1908. Likewise, the Young Tunisians had welcomed the opportunity of participating in the Protectorate's annual parliament -the Consultative Council- even though it was the Regency which appointed the sixteen *indigène* representatives. Yet none of these accommodating gestures was reciprocated with any kind of solidarity from the French public. The bulk of French parties either ignored or vilified the Young Tunisians as elitist *arrivistes* with little interest in the welfare of their compatriots.

The aftermath of World War I saw some changes in this respect. A group of surviving Young Tunisians led by Abdelaziz Thaalbi reassembled to from a loosely-knit *Parti Tunisien* in early 1919. Encouraged by President Wilson's Fourteen Points and their defence of the right to self-determination, members of the group attended the Versailles Conference under Algerian-Tunisian delegation and addressed a letter to Wilson demanding the restitution of their countries' "lost freedom".[46] Wilson allegedly responded by suggesting that Tunisia's independence was a question pertaining to French domestic politics. It was this failure to secure endorsement from the nascent institutions of post-war international society, which led Thaalbi and his associates to turn toward the metropole for support. During the summer of 1919 Thaalbi established contact with representatives of left-wing associations, including a number of socialists, through the mediation of a Paris-based Tunisian student, Ahmed Sakka. On some accounts, it was Sakka who actually penned Thaalbi's

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[45] Béchir Tlili studies the case of the group forged around the journal *La Tunisie Libéral* in great detail. See Tlili, *Crises et mutations Vol. 2*, pp. 149-214.

[46] D. Goldstein, *Libération où annexion: Aux chemins croisés de l'histoire tunisienne (1912-1922)* (Tunis: Maison Tunisienne de l'Edition 1978), p. 204

seminal pamphlet *La Tunisie Martyre*, later to become the programme of the first Tunisian nationalist party the Liberal Constitutionalist or *Destour* Party.[47]

There is little doubt that the evolution of the Tunisian nationalist movement owed much to the persistence of an idea of Tunisian independence anchored in a sense of historical and cultural identity. This patriotic sentiment was consistently upheld, developed and reformulated by an outstanding group of Tunisian intellectuals and politicians, often operating under extremely adverse conditions. Yet the history of this evolution cannot be understood without reference to the myriad international factors outlined above. Whether originating from Europe, Turkey or the Mashreq, the Tunisian bourgeois constitutionalist movements drew much of their ideological and organisational support from outside the Regency. They consciously developed a reformist socio-economic and political programme moulded on the western capitalist experience of their time, and deliberately cultivated international contacts that might further their cause in this respect. Much of this adaptability responded to the tactical requirements of specific political battles, yet for the most part it would be fair to argue that the constitutionalist reformists had genuinely internalised the norms of political engagement deployed by their counterparts in other parts of the world. In so far as this process was achieved through a systematic interaction with the broader social and political forces of the international system (foremost among them, French imperialism), it represented, I maintain, an instance of the expansion of international civil society.

4.4 The Working-Class Movements

From a Marxist perspective, civil society represents a social sphere defined by capitalist relations of production ie. by the capitalist market. Although incomplete,

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[47] A. Mahjoubi, *Les origines du mouvement national en Tunisie 1904-1934* (Tunis: Publications de l'Université de Tunis, 1982), p. 206.

this definition of civil society is very much relevant to the Maghreb as it points to the role of capitalist expansion in the emergence of modern forms of political agency. Hence, in some respects, the expansion of international civil society can be equated with the international expansion of capitalism.

This is especially clear when examining the origins and later development of the working-class organisations of the Maghreb.[48] Initially, this process was spurred on by European immigrant workers exporting the politics of class antagonism to the Maghreb. Many of the Spanish, Maltese, Italian or French workers arriving at North African shores had been politically active in their own countries and some were in fact political exiles.[49] In Tunisia, working-class politics made its first appearance during the early years of this century as metropolitan parties and trade unions set up branches and divulged their publications in the Protectorate. According to Béchir Tlili, a section of the SFIO was already established in Tunisia in 1907, with an official newspaper, *La Bataille* (later to be replaced by *Le Socialiste*) coming out during a brief period between 1911 and 1912. As a prolongation of this activity, the French CGT set up a Departmental Union in Tunis in 1911, although trade unions were not formally legalised until 1932.[50] With the split in the SFIO at the 1920 Tours Congress, a small section of the Communist International was set up at the port of La Goulette in December 1921, together with its accompanying party organ, *L'Avenir Social* and

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[48] The main sources for the following overview are: A. Ayache, *Le Mouvement Syndical au Maroc, Vol.I: 1919-1942* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1982); F. Benseddik, *Syndicalisme et Politique au Maroc* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990); R. Gallissot (ed.), *Mouvement Ouvrier, Communisme et Nationalisme dans le Monde Arabe* (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1978); R. Gallissot, *Maghreb-Algérie, Classe et Nation* (2 Vols.) (Paris: Arcantère Editions, 1987); B. López García, *Política y Movimientos Sociales en el Magreb* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 1991) and B. Tlili, *Nationalismes, socialisme et syndicalisme dans le Maghreb* (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1984).

[49] This included, for example, some 20,500 workers expelled from Paris after the 1848 revolution. See M. Bennoune, *The Making of Contemporary Algeria, 1830-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 67.

[50] B. Tlili, *Crises et mutations dans le monde islamo-méditerranéen contemporain (1907-1912)* (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1978), p. 289.

the associated trade union, the *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire* (CGTU). An independent socialist association grouped around the journal *Le Libéral* and a variety of libertarian and syndicalist organisations completed the picture of working-class movements in Tunisia during the first two decades of the century.

As was mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the membership of these first Tunisian working-class organisations was overwhelmingly European. Although never overtly imperialist, the mainstream of French socialism defended the possibility of a 'humane colonialism' which might extend the benefits of developed capitalism to 'backward' peoples.[51] The political consequence of this was the alienation from socialist organisations of those very masses which were meant to be its major protagonists. As we saw above, there were some isolated instances of internationalist cooperation between Maghrebi constitutionalists and metropolitan socialists. Furthermore, there is some evidence of North Africans going against the grain and joining their European comrades in marches, strikes and demonstrations during the beginning of this century. For the most part, however, these were exceptions to the general rule held by most socialists whereby the indigenous proletariat was still politically immature and therefore had to subordinate itself to the dictates of the 'European vanguard'.

The social and political changes brought about by World War I, coupled with the rise of the Third International changed all this. Approximately 73,000 Tunisians were enlisted by the French army while a further 30,000 Tunisian workers were recruited to sustain the French war effort.[52] The effects of this North African presence

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[51] For an examination of this policy and the historical context in which it developed see Manuela Semidei, "Les socialistes français et le problème colonial entre les deux guerres (1919-1939)" *Revue Français de Science Politique*, (December, 1969) pp. 1115-1153; Madelaine Rebérioux and Georges Haupt, "Le socialisme et la question coloniale avant 1914: L'attitude de L'Internationale", *Le Mouvement Social* (N° 45, 1963), pp.7-34 and H. Carrère D'Encausse and S. Schram, *Le Marxisme et L'Asie 1953-1964* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965).

[52] M. Bennoune, *The Making of Contemporary Algeria, 1830*-1987 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) p. 77 and L. Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Lybia, 1830-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1986) p. 144.

in France were two-fold. On the one hand, returning immigrants brought with them a direct experience of metropolitan politics, and in particular, socialist activism. On the other hand, those North Africans who remained in France extended the boundaries of Maghrebi civil society by inaugurating the politics of exile and immigration on French soil. Both these developments had enormous consequences for the shape of Maghrebi politics during the following decades.

Even more momentous, however, was the impact of the Bolshevik revolution. As in the rest of the world, this was partly expressed in the close attention paid by all sectors of North African society to the demonstration effect of the events in Russia. A more specific influence of the Bolshevik take-over, however, was the endorsement of national liberation movements by the newly-created Communist International. While the Second International had only payed lip-service to the anti-colonial politics, its successor made the anti-imperialist struggle a fundamental component of its project. Clearly, part of this shift in the locus of revolutionary activity from the heart of world capitalism to its periphery corresponded to a tactical move by the new Soviet state geared toward safeguarding its own strategic interests. Nonetheless, the establishment of the Third International also reflected an ideological commitment to revolutionary internationalism. As the eighth of Lenin's twenty-one conditions for membership of the new organisation put it:

> Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose the tricks and dodges of "its" imperialists in the colonies, to support every colonial liberation movement not merely in words but in deeds ... [53]

The French Communist Party (PCF) initially took heed of these requirements. In July

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[53] Cited in D. Joly, *The French Communist Party and the Algerian War* (London: Macmillan Press, 1991), p.25.

1921 it helped to create the Intercolonial Union (*Union Intercoloniale*), a movement made up of communists from the French colonies and which eventually incorporated a number of North African activists. A month later, a Committee for Colonial Studies (*Comité d'Études Coloniales*) was set up by Charles-André Julien, in an attempt to report and discuss colonial issues in the communist press.[54] The outbreak of the Rif revolt during 1924-25 prompted a sustained campaign within France in favour of Abd el-Krim, which Georges Oved has thoroughly documented.[55] A year later, the first North African immigrant party and precursor to the Algerian nationalist movement, the *Etoile Nord-Africaine*, was established under the auspices of the PCF.

Although the communist movement's direct impact was limited during these early years of its development, it nonetheless shifted the terms of the political debate in Tunisia. Those elements of Tunisian civil society which had already experienced a certain degree of evolution now had to revise their programmes in order to incorporate the 'social question' introduced by the working-class movements. As Mustapha Kraïem has pointed out:

> Avec l'emergence de l'idéologie socialiste, la constitution du premier parti communiste et de la première central syndicale tunisienne, nous assistons a l'apparition d'une nouvelle culture assumée et prise en charge par une nouvelle élite qui refusait non seulement l'idéal et les valeurs défendus par les zeitouniens mais aussi le libéralisme militante des jeunes Tunisiens.[56]

Thus, the dual influence of nationalism and socialism gradually made inroads into

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[54] See M'barka Hamed, "L'Union Intercoloniale: première école d'activité politique des immigrés coloniaux en France au lendemain de la première grande guerre" in *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* (Nos. 162-163, 4ème semèstre 1992/ le 1993).

[55] G. Oved, *La Gauche Française face au Nationalisme Marocain* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1983) Vol.1.

[56] Mustapha Kraïem, "Les élites du mouvement nationaliste tunisien" p. 22.

North African politics. The immediate effects of this development were felt first in 1924 when the political divorce between European and indigenous working-class movements was consummated with the formation of an independent *Confédération générale des travailleurs tunisiens* (CGTT). Although the founders of the new union recognised an ideological and organisational debt to their European comrades, they felt it necessary to support the struggle for national independence alongside the Destour. As the leader of the CGTT Mohammed Ali explained

> The creation of a Tunisian federation does not mean that we shall not be united with the workers of the world as a whole. France, Germany and England have national federations. Why are we denied similar rights?[57]

There is no need to delve here into the complex events which lead to the formation of the CGTT.[58] Suffice is to say that it was essentially the result of three factors: the continuing poverty and discrimination experienced by the budding Tunisian working-class; the insensitivity toward this fact displayed by the European CGT; and the growing attractiveness of the nationalist option represented by the *Destour*. While a considerable number of Tunisian workers had joined the CGT and the CGTU over the years, they rarely reached positions of authority within the organisation. More importantly, debates within the unions were generally directed to the political situation in France or Italy, and were always carried in French or Italian. In short, the Arab

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[57] Quoted in Ahmad, E. and Schaar, S. (1978), "M'hammed Ali and the Tunisian Labour Movement", *Race and Class* (Vol. XIX, No. 3, 1978), pp. 253-276, p. 266.

[58] For a detailed account of the formation of the CGTT see *Ibid*. Three protagonists of the movement wrote their own account of the CGTT: A. Ben Miled, *M'hamed Ali: la naissance du mouvement ouvrier tunisien* (Tunis: Ed. Salambat, 1984); T. Haddad (trans. A. Halioui) *Les travailleurs tunisiens et l'emergence du mouvement syndicale* (Tunis: Maison Arabe duLivre 1985) and J-P. Finidori, *Batailles Ouvrières: La CGT Tunisienne et les impérialistes des années 20* (Paris: Textes-Documents de Robert Louzon 1981).

participation in these predominantly European institutions was always a subservient one. The explosiveness of this situation finally came to the fore when the CGT refused to support a wild-cat strike called by the predominantly Tunisian dockers at the ports of Tunis and Bizerte. With the strike-action spreading across other industrial towns, the leaders of the movement, M'hammed Ali and Tahar Haddad decided to go ahead with the constitution of a new, nationalist-oriented trade union in November 1924.

There is some dispute as to the political pedigree of the CGTT. At least seven of the union's thirteen-member executive committee belonged to the Destour party, while three had been identified by the police as communists.[59] This nationalist inclination was reflected both in the social composition of the new union and in the programmatic statements made by its leaders. Like the Destour, the CGTT derived most of its support from the north of the country while its affiliated unions centred around the traditionally nationalist sectors: dockers, medina artisans, tram and railway workers. Similarly, while it emphasised its working-class character, the CGTT understood class struggle in national terms as a conflict between French capital and Tunisian labour. Yet paradoxically, the CGTT jealously guarded its syndicalist autonomy and refused to align itself with any political party. The Destour reciprocated this position by joining the SFIO in denouncing the CGTT as a communist front-organisation. This accusation might initially seem at odds with the fact that the communists already had a union in the shape of the CGTU. But the communist support for the CGTT, their presence in the union's executive committee, and most importantly, Mohammed Ali's stated preference for the Moscow-aligned Red International Labour Union, all suggest that, "[l]'influence communiste n'est pas, comme s'est tant plu à le répéter, absolument étrangère à l'action de Mohamed Ali."[60]

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[59] M. Kraiem *Nationalisme et Syndicalisme en Tunisie 1918-1929* (Tunis: Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail 1976), p. 568.

[60] Juliette Bessis "Le mouvement ouvrier tunisien: des ses origines à l'indépendance" *Le Mouvement Social* (No. 89, octobre-décembre, 1974), pp. 85-108, p. 91

The socialist hostility toward the CGTT was accentuated as the newly-formed union managed to effect considerable impact on the Tunisian working world. Figures provided by Abdelbaki Hermassi suggest that the CGTT had attracted 6,000 members by the time of its first Congress in January 1925.[61] After touring the mining towns of the south and supporting another wild-cat strike at the cement factory in Hamman-Lif, just outside Tunis, Mohammed Ali's union became too dangerous for both the colonial authorities and the established European labour movement. In February 1925, the French authorities arrested Mohammed Ali and several other of his associates, subsequently banishing them form Tunisia and thus effectively dismantling the CGTT. Despite this brief existence, the CGTT had demonstrated the relevance of addressing both the needs of the working-class and the aspirations of a colonised population. As Julliette Bessis has observed:

> Cette expérience syndicale purement tunisienne a comme conséquence positive le fait d'avoir fait découvrir aussi bien au Destour qu'aux organisations politiques et syndicales de la gauche l'existance indéniable d'une classe ouvrière autoctone, consciente, combative, et capable de s' organiser.[62]

4.5 Conclusions: The Genesis of Civil Society in Tunisia

The preceding sections will hopefully have provided an historical and sociological overview of the first modern social movements which constituted the beginnings of Tunisian civil society. More importantly, it should also have illuminated the international factors which conditioned the emergence of these movements. By way of summary, and in order to ascertain the validity of the concept 'international civil

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[61] A. Hermassi, *Mouvement ouvrier et société coloniale: La Tunisie entre les deux guerres* (Thèse de 3e cycle, Sorbonne,19). Cited in Claude Liauzu, "La Presse Ouvrière Européene en Tunisie (1881-1939)", *L'Annuaire d'Afrique du Nord*, 1971, pp. 933-955, p. 942.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

society' in this context, the last section of this chapter seeks to identify the main features associated to the initial expansion of international civil society to Tunisia.

In the first place, the expansion of international civil society must be seen as a process facilitated by the expansion of capitalist imperialism. As was stated earlier, these two phenomena are virtually synonymous in the Marxist understanding of civil society: the international extension of capitalist social relations *is* the expansion of international civil society. The approach adopted here starts from this basic premise but then proceeds further by suggesting that out of the class relations introduced by capitalism there arise social and political movements which are bearers of different class interests. The expansion of international civil society also involves the extension of modern forms of political activism which mediate such interests. Thus the emergence of the early protagonists of Tunisian civil society -Young Tunisians, Destour, the different trade unions and parties, even the salafiyya trend- must be explained with reference to the introduction of capitalist social relations into the Protectorate. This point is worth underlining as it runs contrary to much of historiography -nationalist or otherwise- which assumes the paramountcy of ethnic, national and even religious factors when explaining the rise of modern Tunisian social movements. While not underestimating the relevance of these categories, this chapter has sought to lay greater stress on the fact that Tunisian civil society developed simultaneously with the expansion of *capitalist* imperialism in the Protectorate, and consequently, that the movements which operated within this sphere were part of a broader pattern involving the internationalisation of class conflict.

Secondly, the early decades of this century witnessed the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia in so far as the movements discussed above were broadly comparable to their counterparts in other parts of the world. In other words, the salafiyya trend, the constitutionalist reformists and most obviously, the Tunisian working-class organisations were all part of an expanding international civil society because their modes of organisation and their political language corresponded to those

employed by similar movements across the globe. This is a sociological point about the international transmission of modern forms of social and political agency. Although the organisations constitutive of Tunisian civil society clearly drew on the rich historical and cultural legacy of their country's past, the shape taken by these movements was heavily conditioned by the various international factors explored above. The Young Tunisians, for example took up the language of Khayr al-Din's constitutionalist reformism and translated it into the political idiom and political practice of modern liberalism. Similarly, the CGTT emerged directly out of the experience of European trade unionism in Tunisia, but emphasised the nationalist character of its aspirations. In short, the expansion of international civil society refers to that historical and sociological process whereby forms of social and political protest within a particular country become adjusted to the predominant international norm. My contention is that the genesis of Tunisian civil society, as examined in this chapter, provides a clear example of how even those social movements with a considerable indigenous tradition adopt the mechanisms of modern political agency prevailing internationally in order to pursue local political objectives.

While imperialism has been identified as the main conduit for the expansion of international civil society, other international factors such a specific world-historical conjunctures or the simple international transmission of ideas via individuals or printed media, also contributed to the consolidation of international norms of political agency. Perhaps the most important phenomenon in this context however was the actual organisational collaboration among different national social movements, otherwise known as internationalism. As was suggested in the preceding chapter, the very attempt at realising the ideological aspirations of internationalism necessarily involves extending modern forms of political agency. Hence, the rise of working-class movements in Tunisia was not only the outcome of capitalist imperialist penetration, nor the exclusive result of a demonstration effect encouraged by the triumph of the Bolshevik revolution; it was also a consequence of an attempt at applying the

internationalist principles of such movements to a concrete political practice. It is unlikely, for instance, that trade unionism would have established itself so strongly among Tunisian workers at a relatively early stage in the development of Tunisian capitalism without the concerted effort of the existing unions at extending international and inter-ethnic class solidarities.

The combination of these three historical phenomena -the extension of capitalist imperialism, the rise of modern social movements and the operation of internationalism- marked the beginning of the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia. Clearly, all of these features were inter-related and should be taken as distinct expressions of an overarching historical process. The following chapters will consider how this process evolved during the inter-war and post-war periods. It will hopefully become apparent in what follows that, for all its characterisation as the unfolding of an historical process, talk of the expansion of international civil society need not assume the identification a specific *telos*. Nor should it be surmised that such an expansion, and more specifically, the practice of internationalism which encouraged it, necessarily created an international community of interests among the different social movements in question. On the contrary, as this chapter has aimed to indicate, the expansion of international civil society should be seen sociologically as a process whereby specific forms of social and political practice were reproduced internationally. On occasion, this facilitated the concerted social and political mobilisation of groups across ethnic, religious or national boundaries, as in the case of pan-Islamic solidarity of the Mashreqi salafis toward their Maghrebi brethren, or the French communist support of Tunisian trade unionism. Above all, however, the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia implied the extension of modern *forms* of social and political agency which often articulated political programmes with radically opposed *contents*. It is in this sense that international civil society comes closer to the analytical conception of social interaction as forming part of a *Gemeinschaft*, rather than as a normatively-charged *Gesellschaft*.

Chapter Five

Tunisian Civil Society and the Inter-War Crisis 1934-1938

With the banning of the CGTT in 1925 and the ensuing repression of nationalist opinion via the so-called 'Scélérat Decrees' of January 1926[1], Tunisian social movements were forced out of the Protectorate's political life during the late 20s. The onset of economic crisis in Tunisia, and the rise to power in France of the left-wing Popular Front during the Spring of 1936, however, reinvigorated the forces of civil society in Tunisia. This chapter, like the previous one, seeks to identify the international context of this resurgence of social and political activism in the Protectorate. As we shall see below, the dynamics of Tunisian civil society during the 1930s need to be explained with reference to the historical developments of the two preceding decades. Yet at the same time, this intense period of Tunisian history is self-contained in so far as it formed an integral part of the European inter-war crisis. During these years, Tunisia was fully engulfed by the European civil war as the economic depression, the rise of fascism, the sharpening class antagonism, and of course, the outbreak of World War II itself, played themselves out within the Protectorate. The rise of Arab nationalism in the Mashreq and the critical political developments elsewhere in the Maghreb completed the incorporation of Tunisian civil society into the wider international conjuncture. In many respects, therefore, the 1930s represent a privileged historical moment for scrutinising the workings of international civil society. It was during these years that the international factors affecting the development of Tunisian civil society revealed themselves in the starkest light.

The chapter opens with an consideration of the origins of the two pillars of

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1 These decrees, promulgated on 29 January 1926 sought to proscribe any form of criticism towad the colonial authorities, hence their French soubriquet meaning 'villainous' or 'wicked'. Article No.4 of the first decree stated quite unequivocally, "[q]uiconque par des écrits, des actes ou des paroles publics ou non, provoque à la haine, au mépris ou à la déconsidération du souverain, du gouvernement et de l'administration du Protectorat, des fonctionneres français ou tunisiens investises des mêmesattribution ou cherche à faire naître dans la population un mécontement susceptible de troubler l'ordre public, sea puni d'un emprisonnement de deux mois à trois ans." Cited in A. Mahjoubi *Les origines du mouvement national en Tunisie 1904-1934* (Tunis: Publications de l' Université de Tunis, 1982), p. 415.

Tunisian nationalism during this period: the Neo-Destour and the second CGTT. As in the first chapter, the international dimensions of these two organisations will be explored without thereby doing injustice to the domestic sources of their development. A second section examines the full impact of the international conjuncture on Tunisia through the prism of the Popular Front experience. Although short-lived, the period of Popular Front governments lays bare like no other the mechanisms of international civil society outlined at the beginning of this thesis. In the closing paragraphs of this chapter, I shall point to some of the emerging contradictions in the expansion of international civil society, thus preparing the ground for their full treatment in chapter six which deals with the post-war struggle for independence.

5.1 Mass Nationalism in Tunisia

In March 1934 a group of young Destourians led by Habib Bourguiba met in the Sahelian town of Ksar Hellal to celebrate the opening congress of a splinter party, henceforth known as the Neo-Destour. Bourguiba and his followers had been preparing the split for almost two years, voicing their criticism of the existing leadership in their newspaper *L'Action Tunisienne* and using the latter as a rallying point for those Destourian activists seeking "[t]o regain contact with the masses."[2] The reasons behind this schism have remained the subject of considerable historical and political controversy.[3] In essence, however, the break can be seen as the combined result of a generational clash between Tunisian nationalists, a regional confrontation between the *beldi* aristocracy of Tunis and the petite-bourgeoisie of the Sahel, and a

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[2] Cited in L. Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 168.

[3] See for example Hamza Hassine-Raouf, "Elements pour une reflexion sur l'histoire du mouvement national pendant l'entre-deux-guerres: la scission du destour de mars 1934" in *Actes du 3e Séminaire sur l'histoire du Mouvement National: Les mouvements politiques et sociaux dans la Tunisiedes années 1930* (Tunis: Ministère de l'Education, de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985), pp. 51-78.

tactical difference regarding the way nationalist should approach the French authorities. Above all, however, the break-away party was a reaction to the growing role of the masses in Tunisian politics, exacerbated by the onset of the economic crisis in the early 1930s. Its stated aim was the construction of an independent Tunisian state through the mobilisation against colonialism of all sectors of Tunisian society. In this respect, the Neo-Destour effected a double break with the old Destour by replacing the latter's elitism with a staunch populism and by consequently embracing European modes of political action more forcefully than its predecessors.

At the heart of the Destourian split was the sociological transformation of the nationalist party's cadres. The 1920s had witnessed the rise to the party's leadership of the first generation of Tunisians brought up under the Protectorate. Many of those who were later to become leading figures of the Neo-Destour had received a Francophone education in Tunisia and later in the universities of the metropole itself. Although this kind of career was not exclusive to the new generation -some of the leading lights of the Young Tunisian movement and the old Destour, for example, had been educated at the the bilingual Sadiki College- the exposure to and absorption of European political ideas and practices was much more intense among those Tunisians who came of age during the inter-war period.[4] As Mustapha Kraiem has highlighted:

> Les néo-destouriens...étaient formés dans l'université française. Ils avaient rejoints le métropole au milieu des années vingt voire même pendant les premières années de la décennie ultérieure. Ils furent spectateurs de la fermentation intellectuelle et politique de la période de l'après-guerre à un moment donc où la capitale française était la capitale cosmopolite mondiale de l'art et de la culture. Mieux encore, les néo-destouriens y trouvaient des

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[4] Noureddine Sraieb has offered the following break-down in the educational background of the Destour's and the Néo-Destour's leadership: while the former contained 7 members educated at a modern college and 15 at the Zaytouna Mosque-university, the latter's central committee was composed of only one person educated at the Zaytouna and 38 at modern colleges. See N. Sraieb, *Le Collège Sadiki de Tunis, 1875-1956: enseignement et nationalisme*, (Tunis: Alif-Editions de la Méditeranée,1995), p.297.

nationalistes algériens et marocains et ce lancèrent dans une activité militante pan-maghrébine. Ils acquirent par conséquent une initiation plus approfondie à la civilisation occidentale et prenaient une réele distance vis-à-vis du patrimonie arabo-musulman à l'égard duquel ils affichaient une altitude réelment critique.[5]

The contradictions of imperialism therefore found expression in the personal experiences of an elite who saw their educational and social opportunities enhanced at a time when the majority of their compatriots faced the continued oppression and exploitation of colonial rule. The resulting world-view of this new nationalist elite combined a heightened appreciation for European models of political activism with the conviction that their adoption by Tunisian nationalism was the key to attaining independence.

In addition to the divergent educational backgrounds was an important regional and therefore, class contrast between the membership and leadership of the two organisations. The Destour's affiliation was almost exclusively from the North of the country and the capital's *medina* (old town). The bulk of this constituency was made up of artisans and small landowners. The Destour's national leadership, as we have seen, included numerous aristocrats tied to the old *mamluk* ruling families while the local party representatives generally fell either into the artisan or petty land-owning class. By the early 1930s, the old party had been making some head-way into the eastern region of the Sahel and the south of the Regency. Consequently, the artisan/landowner domination was complemented by the entry into the party of government employees and liberal professionals.[6] Yet these were precisely the sectors which were to form the backbone of the Neo-Destour. According to figures provided

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[5] M. Kraiem, *Elites et Pouvoir*, p. 25.

[6] These calculations are taken from Mustapha Kraiem's piece, "Le Néo-Destour: cadres, militants et implantation pendant les années trente", *Actes du 3e Séminaire sur l'histoire du Mouvement National Les mouvements politiques et sociaux dans laTunisie des années 1930* (Tunis: Ministère de l'Education, de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985)., pp.17-49, p. 25.

by Mustapha Kraiem, almost two-thirds of the delegates present at the Ksar Hellal Congress originated from the Sahel and the southern districts. This tendency was reinforced in the following years as the new party exploited the climate of political freedom inaugurated by the Popular Front victory, and launched a powerful country-wide recruitment campaign under the charismatic leadership of Habib Bourguiba. By the end of 1937, the party's president Dr. Materi could claim 480 cells with approximately 70,000 members across the country - a number which, though somewhat inflated, was probably not far of the mark.[7] The vast majority of this membership belonged to party cells in the rural areas of the Sahel and the South. This was consequently reflected in the predominantly provincial origins the Neo-Destour's 38-strong Political Bureau, although perhaps not so much in their professional background: almost half of the Bureau members were liberal professionals (10 lawyers, 4 doctors, 3 journalists and a pharmacist) while the other half was made up of petty traders and small land-holders.[8] In sum, although the contrasts between the old and the new Destour can often be exaggerated, the generational, educational and sociological differences in the leadership and membership of these two organisations represented a real shift in the nature and aspirations of Tunisian nationalism. By extending its influence across the whole of the country; by politicising previously marginalised sectors of Tunisian society; and perhaps most importantly, by fully developing the powerful mechanisms of modern political mobilisation, the Neo-Destour established itself as the most significant political force in Tunisia during the 1930s.

The Neo-Destour's formidable ascent undoubtedly owed a great deal to the charismatic personality of Bourguiba and to the various sociological and historical factors internal to Tunisian nationalism explored above. Yet it is just as important to emphasise the fierce competition between the Neo-Destour and the left-wing parties

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 27

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 35

and organisations over the political allegiance of the nascent Tunisian working-class. Indeed, one commentator has gone as far as suggesting that, "No hay duda que en los años treinta la concurrencia política por el control de las masas tunecinas se ejerce entre dos fuerzas, desturianos y comunistas".[9] Although this claim somewhat overstates the influence of what was still a minuscule Tunisian communist movement, it rightly underlines the relevance of an expanded political public when explaining the nature of the Neo-Destourian project.

As was briefly expounded in the previous chapter, the early stages of capitalist expansion in Tunisia had produced a form of colonial capitalism which grafted metropolitan modes of surplus extraction onto pre-colonial patterns. This resulted in an economy which, although integrated into the wider circuits of the international -and more specifically, French- capitalist market, still retained many of the non-capitalist features of the pre-colonial mode of production. The inter-war years, however, witnessed the virtual extinction of these pre-colonial social relations and their replacement by capitalist relations. The extension and mechanisation of the agricultural sector coupled with massive investment in mining and transport and communication networks led to the transformation of the pre-World War I socio-economic structures. Urban artisans and rural share-croppers or *khammes* -the two pillars of the pre-colonial economy- now faced the disappearance of their means of livelihood as a result of metropolitan competition or eviction from their lands through capitalist expropriation. Thus, the pauperised artisans and the mass of landless peasants were gradually converted into a new proletariat which sold its labour at mines, ports and agricultural estates or more commonly, into an under-proletariat which, unable to secure a stable employment was forced to join the ranks of a reserve army of labour which swelled the newly-formed *bidonvilles* or shanty towns around

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[9] B. López García, *Política y Movimientos Sociales en el Magreb* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.,1991), p. 60

Tunis.[10]

The onset of the world economic crisis after 1929 accelerated these socio-economic transformations in Tunisia and deepened their negative consequences for the working population of the Protectorate. Ali Mahjoubi has identified two stages in the unfolding of the crisis in Tunisia.[11] The first involved what Mahjoubi terms a 'traditional' crisis of underproduction caused by successive droughts in 1931 and 1932 and the locust invasion of 1932.[12] These resulted in a scarcity of staple crops such as wheat and barley, which left much of the population in the south and centre of the country on the verge of starvation.[13] A second, 'modern' underconsumptionist crisis hit Tunisia from 1933, this time including a dramatic fall in the prices of key agricultural and mineral exports such as olive oil, wine, wool, phosphates, iron, and zinc. The combined effects of these two crises were felt at every level of Tunisian society. Clearly, the indigenous working population -artisans, sharecroppers and small landowners- experienced the worst of the crisis as expropriation, debt, unemployment and bankruptcy drastically reduced their standard of living, when not actually removing their means of livelihood. Yet the European population -working class and *colons* alike- also suffered the consequences of a production slump which left them without jobs or out of business. In short, though variegated in its immediate effects, the economic crisis in Tunisia displayed the same social symptoms as elsewhere in the world: rise in unemployment, pauperisation of large parts of the population and a general reduction in the standard of living. It was these conditions, added to the

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[10] See Mahfoud Bennoune, "Primary Capital Accumulation in Colonial Tunisia" *Dialectical Anthropology* (Vol. 14, No. 2, July 1979), pp. 83-100 and M. Kraiem,*Le mouvement social en Tunisie dans les années treinte,* (Tunis: Cahiers du CERES, 1984), chapter 1. For the emergence of *bidonvilles,* see Claude Liauzu's interesting study, "Un aspect de la crise en Tunisie: la naissance des bidonvilles" *Revue Français d'Histoire d'Outre Mer* (Vol. LXIII, 2e et 4e trimestre 1976).

[11] Mahjoubi *Les origines du mouvement national,* Part IV, Chapter 3.

[12] *Ibid.,* pp.540-544

[13] André Nouschi, "La crise de 1930 en Tunisie et les débuts du Néo-Destour" *Revue de l'occident musulman et Méditerranée,* (Vol. 8, No. 2, 1970), pp. 113-123.

emergence of a rural and urban proletariat and underproletariat which fostered the eruption of mass politics in Tunisia during the 1930s.

As we saw above, the Neo-Destour self-consciously sought to represent these new social forces, arguing from the outset that the old Destour's shortcomings stemmed from its excessive elitism. In order to translate this rhetoric into practice, Bourguiba and his associates had set out on a two-month tour of the Regency immediately after the Ksar Hellal congress. Far from being an exclusively populist attempt at "regaining contact with the masses", the tour served as the cornerstone of what eventually emerged as a clientelist edifice in which, "The party became a social club, an employment agency, a school, a sanctuary".[14] Like other mass nationalist parties across the world, the Neo-Destour sought to enlist all sectors of Tunisian society to its cause either by using the existing social and religious networks (sufi brotherhoods, mosques, Koranic schools) or through the establishment of affiliated associations with a cultural, recreational or social function (scouts, sports clubs, farmer's unions). As one of the party notables, Salah Ben Youssef insisted in an internal report of 1936, "Il faut que toutes les associations soient progressivement intégrées dans notre parti et que celui-ci deviennne peu à peu le parti de toute la nation et l'émanation de ses désirs et de ses volontés".[15] Perhaps the most interesting example of the Neo-Destour's attempt at securing a hegemony over Tunisian civil society lies in its fraught relationship with the second CGTT, founded in 1937.

The Neo-Destour's understanding of the proper relationship between trade unionism and mass nationalism was candidly layed out by Bourguiba himself in an often-cited article appearing in the March 1933 issue of *L'Action Tunisienne*. Emphasising the ultimate goal of national liberation, and the need for transcending class divisions among Tunisians within a unitary political movement, Bourguiba

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[14] Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation*, p. 173

[15] Cited in Mustapha Kraiem, "La Seconde CGTT et le Neo-Destour", *Actes du 2e Séminaire sur l'histoire du Mouvement National: Sources et Méthodes de l'Histoire du Mouvement national (1920-1954)* (Tunis: Ministère de l'Education, de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985), pp. 243-271, pp. 246.

celebrated the creation of independent Tunisian trade unions, so long as they served to further independence:

> Ces syndicats ... ne traduisent nullement le phénomène de la lutte des classes, la volonté des prolétaires de se grouper en vue de se défendre contre la force ou la rapacité d'un patronat inexistant [...] Il traduit plutôt le besoin des ouvriers et des patrons d'une même profession de s'unir pour se défendre victorieusement contre un état des choses qui les frappe uniformément...Le Tunisien est un homme pratique qui sait tirer des instruments d'émancipation qu'on met à sa disposition et les adapter aux besoins réels qui existent en lui [...] Comme quoi il est prouvé que chez un peuple que ne veut pas mourir, toute institution étrangère qu'on y transplante d'une façon plus ou moins artificielle est vite assimilée par ce peuple qui les adapte à ses besoins particuliers ...[16]

Bourguiba was referring here to over a dozen unions which had been founded by workers of the traditional artisanal sectors -tanners, hat-makers, tailors, perfumers and so forth- since the liberalisation of trade union laws in 1932. It was from these virtually self-employed quarters that the second CGTT was to draw most of its support. As Ahmed Ben Hamida has suggested,

> [e]n regroupant des syndicats d'artisans réunissant "patrons" et travailleurs et d'autres gens ayant des activités dans des secteurs où la séparation capital-travail n'est pas très marquée ... la nouvelle centrale tunisienne est appelée à formuler ses revendications qui ne sont pas toujours spécifiquement ouvrières[17]

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[16] Quoted in Claude Liauzu, "Les syndicats en Tunisie en temps du cinquentenaire" *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord* (1973), pp. 1031-1044, p. 1042.

[17] Ahmed Ben Hamida, "Syndicats, Affinités et solidarités de type traditionel dans la Tunisie colonial (1924-1956)" in *Journées d'études* (Nice: Université de Nice, Centre de la Mediteranée Moderne et Contemporaine, 1980), pp. 91-114, p. 97.

The first news of a second CGTT being formed came in July 1936. At a meeting called to celebrate the Popular Front victory in France, a historic member of the first CGTT, Ali Karoui, took the podium and announced the future creation of an independent Tunisian union. It was not until the following year however, that the second CGTT elected an Confederal Bureau and formally constituted itself as an organisation comprising some thirteen unions. According to Mustapha Kraiem, the composition of the executive bureau reflected two divergent, though not incompatible tendencies within the new CGTT. One aimed at recovering the militant legacy of the first CGTT and included some of Mohammed Ali's old comrades (Tahar Ben Salem, Mohammed El Ghannoushi and Karoui himself); the other was represented by Neo-Destourians seeking to establish a nationalist trade union closely allied to Bourguiba's party.[18] Though both tendencies recognised the importance of linking worker's struggles to the nationalist project, only the second of these saw the Neo-Destour as the natural outlet for such a combination. The tension between these two understandings of what nationalist trade unionism should entail eventually came to a head over the Neo-Destour's unilateral decision to call a general strike on 20 November 1937 in solidarity with Moroccan and Algerian nationalists. The secretary-general of the CGTT, Belgacem Guennaoui refused to second the strike, arguing in an interview that his union was,"[u]n organisme purement corporatif. Elle n'est affiliée a aucun parti politique de quelque nuance il soit."[19] The strike's resounding failure marked the Neo-Destour's own incapacity in developing a surrogate trade unionism. Yet this experience did not undermine Bourguiba's intent. The tension between party and trade union resulting from the events of November 20 occassioned the call for an extraordinary congress of the CGTT in January 1938. In truly fascist style, a group of Bourguibist members of the CGTT interrupted the proceedings of the congress and, after forcing their opponents to leave the hall where the meeting was

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[18] Kraiem, *Le Mouvement Social*, chapter 7.

[19] Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 231

being held, unanimously elected a pro-Destourian Confederal Bureau. This violent schism within the CGTT signalled the end of the organisation as its affiliated unions either dissolved or re-joined the mainstream CGT by the Spring of 1938.

The CGTT's short-lived experience reflects the challenges faced by any social movement operating in Tunisia during the inter-war years. Put crudely, this challenge was characterised by the tension between two contending political forces: socialism and nationalism. The CGTT's ultimate failure lay in its incapacity to take either of these two sides: while clearly a nationalist organisation in its membership and ideology, the CGTT refused to carry the political weight of the Neo-Destour's more radical position in favour of independence. Similarly, though professing to defend the interests of Tunisian workers, it never managed to contest the CGT's overwhelming hegemony over this sector of Tunisian society. Yet to focus exclusively on the internal sources of the CGTT's weakness would do an injustice to its history. The tensions between nationalism and socialism in the Protectorate during this period have to be placed within a wider international context. The following section attempts to do just that by analysing the international dimensions to nationalist and socialist politics in Tunisia during the Popular Front years.

5.2 Tunisia, the Popular Front and Internationalism

Internationalism has been a central component of socialist politics since the inception of working-class movements in Europe during the nineteenth century. From the outset, the ideologues and activists of these organisations sought to emphasise the international character of proletarian struggles and the universal validity of the principles they stood for. As Marx and Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto*, the bourgeoisie was creating a world in its own image: "It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production" so that "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that

is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned"[20]. If the 'bourgeois mode of production' was to be successfully contested, it was incumbent upon the revolutionary proletariat to organise internationally and act politically on a world scale. By 1864 this project began to take shape in the form of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA) or the First International, to be followed in later decades by the Second and Third Internationals.

Until the late nineteenth century, French working-class parties saw internationalism primarily as a mechanism of practical cooperation with their European counterparts in matters relating to strike-breaking, immigration or the homogenisation of working conditions across the continent. It was not until European imperialism reached its apogee at the turn of the century that socialist internationalism became inextricably associated with the 'colonial question'. Colonialism was first officially addressed by the French Left in 1895, when a resolution denouncing the "filibusteries coloniales" as "une des pires formes de exploitation capitaliste" was passed at the Romilly congress of the *Parti ouvrier français*.[21] The subsequent history of the French left's attitude toward colonialism, however, was to prove much more ambiguous. Following Manuela Semidei's useful classification, we can identify three broad positions on the French left regarding imperialism.[22] In line with the resolution adopted at Romilly, a considerable number of French socialists remained staunchly anti-colonialist, condemning European imperialism both in France and at the various congresses of the Second International. This 'orthodox' line was gradually contested by a growing number of socialists who, imbued with notions of racial supremacy, celebrated imperialism as a means of extending the more 'advanced' European civilisation among 'primitive peoples' outside the old continent. A third tendency

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[20] K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Norton, 1988), p.59.

[21] As cited in Madeleine Rebérioux and Georges Haupt, "Le socialisme et la question coloniale avant 1914: L'attitude de L'Internationale", *Le Mouvement Social* (N° 45, 1963), pp.7-37, p. 9.

[22] Manuela Semidei, Les socialistes français et le problème colonial entre les deux guerres (1919-1939)", *Revue Français de Science Politique* (Vol. 18, No. 6, décembre 1968, pp. 1115-1153.

within the French left offered qualified support to colonialist policies. They argued that a 'humane' or 'socialist' colonialism which respected the political rights of the indigenous population and raised their living standard to European levels could benefit both the metropolitan and the colonial working class. Sensitive to their growing electoral success and aware of the increasing role of nationalism in French domestic politics, many socialists saw this option as the most realistic and politically responsible approach to the colonial question.

In this continuing battle among the three tendencies, the bulk of the French left took a 'centre' position between the anti-colonial left and the imperialist right. The disaster of the First World War and the triumph of the Bolshevik revolution, however, were to bring a realignment within the French Left regarding the question of imperialism. As we saw in the previous chapter, the creation of the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF) in 1920 strengthened the anti-colonial wing of the French Left as the party vigorously defended the Third International's call for the national liberation of colonial peoples. The electoral victory of the *Rassemblement Populaire* in May 1936, a coalition of left-wing forces including the PCF, put the ideological commitment of socialist internationalism to the test. For the first time in over a decade, the French Left faced the possibility of applying its internationalist principles from a position of power. It is this sense that internationalism becomes relevant to an understanding of how international civil society operated in Tunisia during the thirties. As we have seen, the French Left was strongly divided on the question of internationalism, and its role within a left-wing colonial policy. The three tendencies within the SFIO had remained fundamentally intact through the twenties and into the Popular Front.

By all accounts, the triumph of the Popular Front was received with excitement and optimism in Tunisia. In a letter to secretary-general of the SFIO in Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba emphasised how the Neo-Destour, "[e]st convaincu que les partis de gauche qui forment le Front Populaire [...] auront à coeur d'aborder le problème fondamental des rapports franco-tunisiens, de réviser les méthodes et les

doctrines à la lumière des faits, en une mot de concilier les aspirations du peuple tunisien ave les interêts de la puissance protectrice."[23] There was precious little in the *Rassemblement Populaire*'s election manifesto to warrant Bourguiba's high expectations. The only reference to the colonies in the Front's programme appeared in the section on 'Défence de la Liberté' in which it pledged "[la] constitution d'une commission d'enquête parlamentaire sur la situation politique, économique et morale des territoires français d'outre-mer ...".[24] Beyond this, the Popular Front had not formally committed itself to further policy changes *vis-à-vis* the colonies. Yet the rise to power of the Popular Front was accompanied by a explosion of social and political activity in Tunisia, and by the introduction of several important political and socio-economic reforms in the Protectorate. Furthermore, for a number of reasons to be explored below, Tunisia became fully engulfed in the struggle between fascism and democracy which had inspired the Popular Front in the first place. Clearly, the preceding years had prepared Tunisia for a full-blown encounter with both the principles and practices which characterise internationalism. In order to elucidate this point I shall examine three aspects of internationalism in Tunisia during this period: the reforms introduced by the Blum government; the increase in social and political militancy; and the rapport between colonial and metropolitan social movements.

The most immediate result of the new Popular Front government was the replacement of the reactionary Resident-General Peyrouton by Armand Guillon, a civil servant known for his liberal political attitudes and his previous involvement with the labour movement. Peyrouton had been responsible for the ferocious repression of the nationalist and working-class movements over the past three years. Since the tumultuous events of September 1934, trade-union branches had been closed,

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[23] Cited in Mohamed Lofti Chaibi, "La politique coloniale du Front Populaire en Tunisie (1936-38) Essai d'evaluation", pp. 549-567, p. 549 in *Actes du 3e Séminaire sur l'histoire du Mouvement National: Les mouvements politiques et sociaux dans la Tunisie des années 1930* (Tunis: Ministère de l'Education, de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985).

[24] Cited in André Nouschi, "La politique coloniale du Front Populaire", *Cahiers de Tunisie* (Vol. 27, Nos. 109-110, 3e et 4e trimestre, pp. 143-159), p. 144.

nationalist and left-wing leaders expelled from the country, and virtually all critical press suspended. As Mustapha Kraïem has suggested, "La période de Peyrouton fut ressentie par les nationalistes et les forces de gauche comme une dictadure."[25]

The arrival of Guillon to the Residency in April 1936 was therefore seen by the Left and nationalist forces as heralding the end of a difficult period of clandestine activity. The first few months of the new administration fulfilled this expectation as Guillon proceeded not only to lift Peyrouton's repressive regime but also to extend to Tunisia the progressive reforms introduced by the Popular Front government under the Matignon Agreement of 7 June 1936.[26] The reinstallment of civic rights of association and expression led to a resumption of political activity inaugurated with a mass demonstration on 14 July 1936 in favour of the Popular Front. A week later, on 20 July 1936, a meeting between trade union and employers representatives led to the signing of the 'Kasbah Accords' whereby three decrees of the Matignon legislation referring to wage increases, payed holidays and eight-hour working-days became applicable in Tunisia.[27]

The second significant initiative launched by the new Blum government was the creation in July 1936 of a parliamentary committee to study the situation in the colonies, as promised in the Popular Front's electoral manifesto. A sub-committee on North Africa, comprising thirteen members from different professional backgrounds (bureaucrats, politicians and 'specialists') set out to evaluate the state of the colonies under thirteen headings, including demography, education, employment, administration and nutrition. The activities of the committee, spread approximately over a twelve-month period, displayed a rather adhoc methodology -including reports,

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[25] M. Kraiem, *Le mouvement social en Tunisie dans les amées treinte* (Tunis: Cahiers du CERES, 1984), p. 105.

[26] For a full description of the Matignon Agreement and the Popular Front in France see G. Lefranc, *Le Front Populaire (1934-1938)*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965).

[27] See Juliette Bessis, *La Méditerrannée Fasciste: L'Italie Mussolinienne et la Tunisie* (Paris: L'Harmattan), p. 93 and B. López García, *Política y Movimientos Sociales en el Magreb* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1991) p. 61.

interviews and questionnaires- and produced very disparate recommendations.[28] Perhaps the most fruitful outcome of the exercise was the establishment of direct links between the respective authorities in Paris and the various Tunisian social movements. Admittedly, most of the correspondence received by the sub-committee on North Africa, for example, came from the Popular Front organisations in Tunisia. The Neo-Destour preferred to nurture its good relations with the Secretary of State Pierre Viénot, and viewed the committee's activities with some scepticism.

Thus, be it through a lack of commitment toward substantive alterations in the political and economic structure of the Protectorate or simply due to the limited duration of its mandate, the Popular Front government failed to advance major changes in the French colonial policy toward Tunisia. What it had managed, however, was to transform the nature of relations between the French administration and the various political movements representing the colonial population. It had opened channels of communication and influence previously closed to most of these organisations. As Charles-André Julien, one of the notable participants of this process has testified, "Le Quai d'Orsay et l'Hôtel de Matignon cessèrent d'être des hautes lieux où seuls les officiels, les colons et les hommes d'affaires pouvaient accéder. Pour la première fois, Algériens, Marocians et Tunisiens eurent la possibilité de s'expliquer librement devant les pouvoirs publiques."[29]

While the official colonial policy of the Popular Front had a limited impact on the social and economic structure of the Protectorate, the effect at the grass-roots level was much more pronounced. The importance of the political liberalisation introduced by Resident General Guillon in the resurfacing of social and political militancy has already been highlighted above. But this process was also the direct result of the

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[28] For details on the Commission see Charles-Robert Ageron, " La Commission d'enquêt du Front Populaire sur les colonies et la question Tunisienne" pp. 103-125 in*Actes du 3e Séminaire sur l'histoire du Mouvement National: Les mouvements politiques et sociaux dans la Tunisie des années 1930*(Tunis: Ministère de l'Education, de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche Scientifique, 1985).

[29] Ch.-A Julien, *L'Afrique du Nord en marche: nationalismes musulmans et souveraineté française* (Paris: René Julliard 1952), p. 84.

tightening links between the colonial and metropolitan working-class politics brought about by the triumph of the Left in France.

The first indication of this was the creation in the summer of 1936 of a Tunisian *Rassemblement Populaire* in the image of the French coalition.[30] This reinforced the identification of the Tunisian Left with the events unfolding in France, and led to a sharp rise in the membership of the Tunisian working-class organisations. The most notable example of this trend occurred within the labour movement. Before 1936, the membership of the Departmental Union of the CGT had a never exceeded a few thousand; by the end of 1936 the number climbed to 40,000 members, three-quarters of which were Tunisian.[31] All the major Tunisian industrial centres and some of the agricultural areas saw the multiplication of local trade-unions which in some cases extended into previously non-unionised sectors such as domestic and cleaning workers or the bakers.[32] Among the political parties, both the SFIO and the communists gained adherents as a result of their association with the French Popular Front, although neither reached beyond 1,000 members. The SFIO had not substantially altered its policy of "humane colonialism" and continued neglecting the political demands of the Tunisian nationalists. The communists for their part had moved away from their previous anti-colonialism toward an emphasis on the primacy of unity between the metropole and the colonies in the struggle against fascism. Despite these seemingly unpopular stances, both parties managed to increase their influence among the indigenous proletariat and on some occasions, represent the latter's interests before the Regency and the French administration in Paris. The wave of strikes which swept over the Protectorate in the aftermath of the Popular Front victory was a testimony to this. Similarly, the interventions of Tunisian socialists at

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[30] See Bessis, *La Mediterrannée Fasciste*, p. 181.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 94 and López García, *Politica y Moviminetos Sociales*, p. 63.

[32] For further details on the trade-unions during this period see Kraiem, *Le Mouvement Social en Tunisie*, Chapter 2 and R. Liauzu, *Salariat et mouvement ouvrier en Tunisie: crises et mutations (1931-1939)* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1978) .

the SFIO Congress of Huygens in 1936 and their contributions to the Popular Front's commission on the colonies demonstrated a genuine, albeit paternalistic concern for the socio-economic situation of all Tunisians, whether European or Arab.[33]

What the socialists and communists had failed to register, however, was that by the mid-thirties it was the *political* demand for national independence which preoccupied most Tunisians. The Tunisian Left had managed to mobilise the urban working-class after 1936 but had less success with the agricultural workers, the commercial petty bourgeoisie and the large under-proletariat. As we saw above, it was left to Bourguiba's Neo-Destour to build politically on these sectors. Thus, at the peak of their influence, the Tunisian Left faced the strongest opposition it had yet encountered in the form of a mass nationalist movement demanding independence. How was the Left's internationalism affected by this challenge?

The three basic positions on the 'colonial question' within the SFIO had remained fundamentally intact through the twenties and into the Popular Front. The revolutionary left sector of the SFIO continued its campaign for the liberation of colonial peoples but found little echo in government where Léon Blum, representing the majority centrist position, advocated a policy of "assimilation" which would bring the colonies closer to France and allow them to benefit from the social reforms and political rights of the metropole. The communists on the other hand, had maintained a relatively consistent anti-colonialism until 1935, supporting the cause of national liberation. Yet by the time of the Popular Front, both parties had come to share a common perspective on the Maghrebi nationalist movements, switching their attention from the colonial question to the question of 'national security'. The reasons for this sudden convergence in the Left's position on the colonies is to be found in the very same international conjuncture which gave rise to the Popular Front, namely the rise of fascism in Europe. Thus, internationalism becomes relevant to Tunisia under the

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[33] See Nouschi,"La politique coloniale du Front Populaire" and López García, *Politica y moviminetos sociales.*

Popular Front not only as a principle of political action, but also as a concept which describes the Regency's insertion into the European civil war of the 1930s.

The relations between the Tunisian nationalists and the European working-class organisations had always been fraught. Socialists in the Regency generally looked upon the Destourians with disdain, branding them everything from elitist to fanatical. In France, however, the nationalist leadership often received moral and material support from working-class circles. We have seen how in Tunisia, nationalists and socialists suffered equally under the Peyrouton regime and how Bourguiba initially welcomed the Popular Front with a 'favourable disposition' (*préjugé favorable*). The communists in particular were interested in a *rapprochement* with the Neo-Destour which might radicalise the nationalists into a revolutionary position. In the wake of the outburst of popular discontent in 1934, André Ferrat, head of the PCF's colonial section wrote from Tunisia :

> L'organisation communiste fit des tentatives pour que le mot d'ordre de la grève générale soit lancé à la fois par le parti socialiste, le néo-Destour, le parti communiste et les organisations syndicales. Mais les dirigeants socialistes estimèrent que cette initiative devait revenir au néo-Destour.[34]

International events, however, were to overtake the PCF's support for colonial insurrection. The rise of fascism in Europe and in east Asia was menacing to both communist activity across the old continent, and to the security of the Soviet Union. In August 1935, the seventh congress of the Comintern adopted a strategy which it thought could dispel both these threats: communist parties were to establish a 'united front' with anti-fascist forces in their own country. The PCF had no difficulty in embracing the strategy as it had in many ways originated within the French anti-fascist experience. Moreover, three months earlier the French and Soviet Foreign Ministers,

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[34] Cited in J. Moneta, *La politique du Parti communiste français dans la question coloniale, 1920-1963* (Paris: Maspero, 1971), p. 97.

Laval and Litvinov had signed a long-awaited Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance, thus committing the PCF to the defence of the existing French regime, Empire included.[35] By the time the *Rassemblement Populaire* was formally constituted in January 1936, therefore, the PCF had clearly endorsed the idea of putting the interests of the Franco-Soviet Alliance above any ideological commitment to colonial emancipation. Despite paying lip-service to the idea of "the liberation of colonial peoples", Thorez emphasised in December 1937 that, "Since the decisive issue of the moment is the victory over the struggle against fascism, the interests of the colonial peoples lies in their union with the people of France, and not in an attitude which might further the aims of fascism and place in Algeria, Tunisia or Morocco ... under Hitler or Mussolini's yoke."[36]

Much historical and political debate surrounds Thorez's injunction. In terms the fascist threat in North Africa, there is little doubt that Thorez was right. The outbreak of the Spanish civil war in July 1936 had put Spain's protectorate over northern Morocco in the hands of Franco. Further East, Mussolini used the Italian presence in Libya and the large Italian population in Tunisia to extend fascist influence in North Africa. Juliette Bessis has examined in great detail the methods employed by Mussolini in the pursuit of this objective, including the Italian consulate and school in Tunis, the local Italian newspapers and most important, the Arabic language service of Radio Bari.[37] As regards the pro-fascist tendency within the nationalist movement, however, Thorez's concerns were misplaced; the available evidence suggests that few Tunisians succumbed to the Italian propaganda. Bourguiba himself had stated as much in response to an insinuation by the communist Duran-

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[35] For an excellent account of this process and the international context of its genesis see J. Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-39*(London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1984), chapters 3 and 4; and J. Néré, *The Foreign Policy of France from 1914 to 1945* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), chapter 11.

[36] Cited in M. Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 98.

[37] Bessis *La Mediterrannée Fasciste*.

Angliviel that Mussolini might curry the nationalist favour: "Personne au Néo-Destour ni dans notre pays ne veut que la France cède la place à Mussolini."[38]

Nonetheless, it is clear that his initial enthusiasm for the Popular Front began to wane as the Blum government fell without delivering the substantial reforms Bourguiba had anticipated. At the second congress of the Néo-Destour held on 7 November 1937, Bourguiba declared that "le Gouvernement actuel a montré par ses actes précis sa volonté de reverter Congress tenir .... à la vielle erreur de la politique de force et de contrainte condammé par son prédécesseur [...] le parti s'estime fondé à retirer dès maintenant au Gouvernement actuel le préjugé favorable ..."[39] A week later, a general strike was called by the Neo-Destour in solidarity with the nationalist movements elsewhere in the Maghreb suffering from the a fresh wave of repressive measures. In the face of worsening relations with the French authorities -both in Tunis and Paris- and fuelled by the need to distance himself from the old Destour after the arrival in Tunisia of it charismatic leader Abdelaziz Thaalbi, the Neo-Destour radicalised its opposition toward the French Administration. The first months of 1938 witnessed a number of serious riots and bloody demonstrations which culminated in the massacre of April 9, where 112 demonstrators were killed and 62 injured. The following day, Bourguiba and 29 other Destourian leaders were arrested and the nationalist organisations outlawed. The Popular Front era in Tunisia had thus come a full circle.

5.3 Conclusions: The Contradictions of International Civil Society

By the end of the 1930s, Tunisia had been fully immersed into the process we have described as the expansion of international civil society. The basic features of civil society, as defined in chapter two, had taken root within the Protectorate and

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 217

[39] H. Bourguiba, *La Tunisie et la France* (Paris: René Julliard, 1964), p.154.

Tunisia's vibrant political life had been integrated into the broader international political developments. This process of expansion certainly had a homogenising effect in so far as the social movements which operated within Tunisian civil society adopted the internationally prevalent modes of political agency, epitomised by the mass-based party with a universalist message. Yet, the expansion of international civil society also opened up new possibilities for political resistance -most notably in the shape of anti-colonial nationalism- thus multiplying the different expressions of political protest internationally, and further accentuating the competition between contending political projects. As was noted in chapter two, one way of presenting this contradiction is to posit the expansion of international civil society as a process which extended particularly modern, and therefore relatively homogenous *forms* of political agency but which simultaneously facilitated a pluralism in the *content* of these forms. The classic expression of this contradiction in our context are the nationalist parties and organisations which adopted the prevalent forms of political agency but imbued them with a content which contributed to the diversification of political projects available internationally. One of the central contradictions of the expansion of international civil society, therefore, is that it can be the source of both a greater international cooperation among social movements and a sharpening of political antagonism between different movements at the domestic level.

The inter-war period in Tunisia exemplified this tension most dramatically as the Protectorate's civil society became increasingly polarised between socialist and nationalist political options. At one level, the movements comprising these two tendencies shared common organisational and ideological traits. As we have seen, one of the Neo-Destour's central aspirations was to build a political machine in the image of the large European parties. Similarly, in terms of both leadership and ideology the Neo-Destour relied very heavily on Enlightenment notions of citizenship, progress, secularism and reform. In these two respects, Tunisian nationalism was an expression of international civil society in that it employed modes of political engagement similar to other modern social and political movements across the world. As a party almost

exclusively concerned with the achievement of Tunisian independence, the Neo-Destour was bound to privilege the 'national question' over the 'social question'. The socialist organisations, on the other hand inverted this priority, consistently refusing to give the political claims for Tunisian national self-determination the relevance they deserved. Indeed, the principle of working-class internationalism was invoked by the socialists only as a means of sidelining nationalist demands with the argument that class solidarities had to come before national or ethnic affiliations. Yet, as the Tunisian communists had argued since 1921, national liberation and socialist emancipation could also be conceived as two sides of a single internationalist coin. By 1937, however, the PCF and its affiliated party in Tunisia gave way to the argument that the imminent war against fascism meant putting off the struggle for national liberation in the colonies. The Tunisian Left's approving silence during the Regency's crackdown of the Neo-Destour in 1938 reflected the final divorce within Tunisian civil society between a European-dominated working-class movement hostile to the idea of Tunisian self-determination and a mass-based nationalist movement with an irreversible commitment to the attainment of Tunisian independence.

The following chapter will deal with the eventual resolution of this tension between assimilation and independence during the post-war years. What is important at this stage is to recognise that the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia did not necessarily involve the harmonisation of political interests among its different representatives in the Regency. On the contrary, the extension of modern forms of political agency to the Maghreb fostered the emergence of mass nationalist parties which eventually proved to be the strongest rivals of European-based social movements. At the same time, however, as the Popular Front experience in Tunisia indicates, the fact that Tunisian social movements shared common political structures, practices and procedures allowed for some experiments in internationalist collaboration. The contradictions of international civil society lie precisely in this differentiation between its form and content. Whether or not the expansion of international civil society necessarily increased the chances for political collaboration

between the different Tunisian social movements and their international counterparts therefore remained an open question.

Chapter Six

Civil Society and International Society in the Struggle for Tunisian Independence 1943-1956

A year or so after the evacuation of Dunkirk in May 1940, a tract of the Tunisian Neo-Destour party proclaimed: "Le Protectorat est mort, noyé dans les eaux de Dunkerque."[1] The benefit of hindsight allows us to view this statement as a premature celebration of an event which only formally took place a decade and a half later, in 1956. Yet the expectations attached to the Neo-Destour's claim were not entirely misplaced. The social, economic, and especially the political upheavals which accompanied World War II had a momentous impact on the anti-colonial struggles, and were therefore rightly identified by the nationalist forces in Tunisia and elsewhere as a turning-point in the history of the French Empire.

In terms of colonial politics, the most obvious consequence of World War II was the weakening of the metropole's administrative and ideological hold over the colonial peoples. Although, as previous chapters have sought to indicate, anti-colonial parties had gained considerable support during the inter-war period, the reality of a defeated and divided France reinforced the case for the severing of links with the metropole by dealing a death-blow to the imperialist imagery of civilisational superiority. Arguments of the sort used in the past to justify France's protectorate over Tunisia -that the country was not yet 'ready' for independence, that it was too 'weak' to bear the burden of sovereign statehood- now rang hollow in the face of the French war-time experience. Moreover, as in World War I, the colonial peoples' contribution to the allied war-effort not only had far-reaching sociological effects for those veterans returning to their homeland or those remaining in the metropole, but more importantly, emphasised the European powers' political debt to their colonies. In the case of France, this latter point was clearly recognised by de Gaulle during the

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[1] Juliette Bessis, "L'opposition France-Etats Unis au Maghreb de la deuxième guerre mondiale jusqu' à l'indépendance des Protectorats 1941-1956" in Ch.-R. Ageron, *Les chémins de la décolonisation de l'empire colonial français* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1986), pp. 341-375.

Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and, as we shall see below, heavily informed the new concept of *Union Française* which guided Paris' relations with the colonies under the Fourth Republic.

As if the profound war-time transformations within France were not enough to alter the social and political situation of the colonies, key international developments during this period further encouraged the dismemberment of the old imperial order. The first glimpse of this newly emerging international order came with the signing of the Atlantic Charter by Roosevelt and Churchill in 1941. As is well known, this document set out the basic parameters of the world an Allied victory would seek to create, including a commitment to "[r]espect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." With the end of World War II, these aspirations were partly formalised in a chapter of the United Nations (UN) Charter which promised to uphold the colonial peoples' right to self-determination.

The renewed force of the anti-colonial agenda at the international level should further be understood in the context of the nascent US hegemony and the first crises of the Cold War. Like other imperial powers, most notably Britain, France found it hard to adjust to this new international conjuncture. The post-war popularity of the French Communist Party (PCF), the ambiguous role played by the USA in Vietnam before, during and after the battle of Dien Bien Phu (1954), and most relevant to our discussion, the strategic importance of the western Mediterranean, all contributed to the development of a political and military rivalry between Washington and Paris in the post-1945 period.

These were the broad outlines of the world which Tunisian social movements encountered at the end of the war. The aim of this chapter is to explore the way in which these movements came to terms with the post-war order. Specifically, it seeks to examine the relationship between the agents of Tunisian civil society and the institutions of post-war international society. The full implications of using the loaded

term 'international society' in this context were explored in chapter three of the thesis. For the purposes of the present discussion, the focus of our attention shall be on the way in which Tunisian social movements, and in particular, the Neo-Destour, exploited the juridical, political and logistical resources provided by international society.

The discussion will proceed by looking at three broad areas of interaction between civil society and international society in the struggle for Tunisian independence. The first concentrates upon the legal and institutional sources of this struggle. While the Neo-Destour, the UGTT and even the Communist Party had in the past turned to different international institutions in order to further their political cause, the post-war period witnessed a heightened awareness of the role of organisations like the UN or the Arab League could play in guaranteeing Tunisian independence. Thus, for the first time, the institutions of international society adopted a central function within Tunisian politics. A second important intersection between civil society and international society concerns the political contacts and collaboration between the Tunisian social and political movements, and their foreign counterparts. This is a dimension of international civil society which we have already examined in some detail under the rubric of 'internationalism'. The post-war years saw the same political tension arising between the French Left and the Tunisian nationalists as had characterised their inter-war relations. There were, nonetheless, some significant instances of internationalist cooperation which need to be taken into account. The main source of internationalist support after 1945 now came from neighbouring Arab countries and from newly independent Third World states. The Egyptian Free Officers coup in 1952 and the launch of the Algerian revolutionary war in November 1954 gave Bourguiba's cause a considerable moral and tactical boost. This was further complemented by the campaigns in favour of Tunisian independence launched the newly-found League of Arab States and the lobbying work of the Afro-Asian group at the UN. Last, as in previous chapters, the Tunisian struggle for

independence has to be understood within the context of the existing world-historical conjuncture - in this case, the Cold War. Tunisian social movements were fully aware of the strategic value of their political allegiance to either one of the contending blocs. The revolutionary wars in Vietnam and Algeria had highlighted the possibilities of using the bipolar confrontation as a means of advancing the case for national liberation. Thus, in some important respects, the Tunisian route to national independence has to be explained with reference to Cold War politics.

Taken in combination, these three domains of domestic and international interaction tell the story of how Tunisian civil society exploited the tools made available by international society in order to achieve national independence. On this reading, the struggle for independence was not an exclusively domestic or Franco-Tunisian experience, but rather, was played out at the interface between the domestic and the international. At the same time, however, this very interaction with international society buttressed the nationalist aspiration to sovereign statehood. Paradoxically, the international and transnational activities of the Tunisian nationalists reinforced the process of Tunisian state-building. It is in this sense that the expansion of international civil society becomes a dual process where the social movements that operate within civil society simultaneously undermine and reinforce the territorial and political boundaries of the international system. Tunisian post-war history is in many respects an exemplary instance of how this tension between the particular struggle for national self-determination and the broader international forces such as wars, revolutions or global capitalism, combined to produce a novel international conjuncture in the region. The following sections aim to illustrate how this process played itself out historically.

6.1 The International Setting of the Tunisian Struggle for Independence

That Tunisian independence, like that of other colonies, was the product of a novel set of international circumstances ushered in by the end of World War II is an uncontroversial enough statement to border on the banal. As most histories of de-colonisation point out, the post-war demise of European Empires was a direct consequence of US ascendancy during and after World War II, and the attendant spread of liberal internationalist institutions such as the UN.[2] Whether or not these new players in the international scene were motivated by lofty sentiments of anti-colonialism, or rather sought de-colonisation for reasons of political and economic expediency, are both moot points. What is important for our purposes, is simply to identify the relevant historical transformations that accompanied World War II, and their subsequent impact upon political developments in North Africa.

Perhaps the most notable influence of World War II upon the Maghreb was the geo-strategic value the region acquired during the course of the war. The German defeat of France in June 1940 and the subsequent entry of Italy into the conflict brought their respective North African colonies into the Mediterranean war-theatre almost overnight. Furthermore, Britain's rejection of Germany's peace overtures in July of that year, turned Hitler's attention toward British military outpost in the Mediterranean.[3] Under the terms of the Franco-German Armistice, the newly-created *Etat Français* retained nominal sovereignty over the French Empire, thus making North Africa a likely site for a second war front in Europe, and a haven for both Resistance members working toward the liberation of France and Pétainist 'patriots'

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[2] Representative texts include J. Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: the Retreat from Empire in the Post-war World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); R. F. Holland, *European Decolonization 1918-1981* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985); and W. R. Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-45: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

[3] For a detailed discussion on Hitler's strategy in the Mediterranean see G. Schreiber, B. Stegemann and D. Vogel, *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

seeking to redress the ignominious defeat of 1940. From the very beginning, therefore, the Maghreb became the focus of a political and military contest involving four interconnected parties: the Allies, the Axis, the Vichy regime and the Free French. Although muted by both an exiled or imprisoned leadership and the war-time constraints on political activity, the Maghrebi nationalist movements must be counted in as the fifth element in this complex puzzle. As Peter Calvocoressi has suggested

> The military campaigns of 1940-43 were superimposed upon a further conflict between rulers and ruled, between imperial power and nationalist aspirations. The war provided nationalists with new opportunities in an old cause. The Americans, whom the war brought into the western end of this increasingly crowded scene in 1942, sympathized with the nationalists' hope of turning the evils of war into some good by accelerating the liberation of their homelands from foreign domination.[4]

While Calvocoressi's emphasis on the links between the military and political dimensions of the war in North Africa is to be welcomed, his assessment of US anti-colonialism is somewhat skewed. Franklin D. Roosevelt's avowed anti-colonialism certainly lead to a series of seemingly pro-nationalist stances in the Maghreb on the part of the US. The most celebrated of these was the dinner Roosevelt gave for the Moroccan Sultan Mohammed V at Anfa, in the outskirts of Casablanca, on 22 January 1943. Nationalist lore has insisted that Roosevelt promised the Sultan eventual independence for Morocco at this meeting, but there is only anecdotal evidence to support this claim.[5] Better documented were the activities of US representatives in the

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[4] P. Calvocoressi, *Total War: the Causes and Courses of the Second World War, Vol. 1* 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 372.

[5] E. Roosevelt, *As He Saw It* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1945); R. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (London: Collins, 1964) pp. 216-217.

Maghreb during these years.[6] Under the aegis of Roosevelt's special envoy to North Africa, Robert Murphy, a number of American businessmen were appointed as vice-consuls to each of the three French North African colonies. The Tunisian vice-consul, Hooker A. Doolittle, developed close contacts among Neo-Destourian circles and eventually befriended Habib Bourguiba. This proximity to the nationalist cause earned him Murphy's censure and a subsequent transfer from Tunisia. According to Leon Borden Blair, "Murphy reported to State that Doolittle 'had become and active partisan' of better treatment for the Arab population, even to the point of insisting that 'the four freedoms and the Atlantic Charter include the Arabs, and it is our duty to compel the French to act accordingly."[7]

Doolittle's fate is unsurprising when one considers the actual reasons for his presence and that of other vice-consuls in North Africa, namely to safe-guard the recent agreements between Murphy and the French High Commissioner for North Africa, General Maxime Weygand, permitting Vichy France to import American consumer goods with funds frozen in the USA. Far from unsettling Pétain's control over the North African colonies, the Americans sought to bolster the Vichy regime as a barrier to further German expansion and to foster the necessary stability in the Maghreb for the imminent Allied landing. In the words of one distinguished commentator:

If the presence of an American ambassador in Vichy was useful to protect

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[6] See, L. Borden Blair, *Western Window in the Arab World* (Austin, TX: Texas University Press, 1970) and Mohamed Khenouf and Michael Brett, "Algerian Nationalism and the Allied Military Strategy and Propaganda during the Second World War: the Backgound to Sétif", pp. 258-274 in D. Killingray and R. Rathbone (eds.) *Africa and the Second World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978).

[7] Leon Borden Blair, "Amateurs in Diplomacy: The American Vice Consuls in North Africa 1941-1943" *The Historian* No.35 (August, 1973), pp. 607-620, p. 617.

North Africa from the Germans ... that presence would have to be continued as long as possible. If Admiral Darlan, the Vichy Prime Minister who was in Algiers at the time of the invasion on November 8 1942, prevented the French forces from engaging the Allied troops, it was necessary to negotiate with him and remind Churchill of the old Balkan proverb: "My children, in times of great danger, you may go with the devil until you have crossed the bridge"[8]

In so far as North African nationalists turned to the Americans for support, therefore, it was because they saw the US undermining French colonial authority. This image was reinforced as the supply of American goods under the Murphy-Weygand Agreement and later, the Lend-Lease Act, helped to improve the dire socio-economic conditions experienced in the North African colonies during the war.[9] With the Allied landing, and the subsequent Anglo-American manoeuvres to bring the different French factions under a single military and political command, the vision of a crumbling French Empire being replaced by an ostensibly anti-colonial superpower became even more appealing to the nationalists.[10] Ferhat Abbas, a leading Algerian anti-colonial activist, for example, held several interviews with Robert Murphy on the eve of the Allied landing with the prospect of obtaining US support for Algerian independence. Some commentators have gone as far as suggesting that Abbas

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[8] A. Grosser (trans. M. Shaw), *The Western Alliance: European-American Relations since 1945* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) p. 23

[9] See, J. J. Dougherty, *The Politics of Wartime Aid: American Economic Assistance to France and French Northwest Africa, 1940-1946*(London and Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), especially chapter 7. See also A. Lacroix-Riz, *Les Protectorats d'Afrique du Nord entre la France et Washington* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1988) especially Chapter 1.

[10] See, "Les Etats-Unis et le Maghreb" *Maghreb* (No.7, jan-fév., 1965 and No. 8 mars-avril 1965), pp 39-47 and 34-49.

subsequent *Manifeste du peuple algérien* was Robert Murphy's brainchild[11], but the American representative's own recollections offer a somewhat different reading:

> [Abbas] had approached me before once or twice to discuss Algerian independence, and now ... wanted to inquire what was the American Government's latest attitude towards an autonomous Algeria? I repeated what I had told him before, that Americans were generally sympathetic to all desires for independence but that our present purposes in Africa... were concentrated on defeating the Nazis.[12]

In Tunisia, too, most nationalists rallied to the Allied cause. In August 1941, Bourguiba "il reccomande à ses partisans de ne pas prêter l'oreille aux propagandes allemandes" reaching Tunisia via *Radio Bari* and *Radio Berlin*.[13] He had also instructed his second-in-command, Dr. Thameur to "Tâcher si possible, et par l'intérmediaire des Français Gaullistes, d'entrer en contact avec les agents anglais ou américains ... On pourra les sonder sur les intentions de leur pays à notre égard après la victoire".[14] When German troops arrived at the outskirts of Tunis in early November 1942, the vast majority of Tunisians remained loyal to the neutralist policy

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[11] See for example D. B. Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth and Constitution-Making in the Fourth Republic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 117.

[12] R. Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (London: Collins, 1964), p. 157-158.

[13] Annie Rey Goldzeiguer, "L'occupation Germano-italienne de la Tunisie: un tournant dans la vie politique tunisienne", Ch.-R. Ageron, *Les chémins de la décolonisation de l'empire colonial français*, (Paris: Editions du CNRS 1986), pp. 325-340, p.328.

[14] "Les Etats-Unis et le Maghreb", p. 45.

adopted by the newly-appointed Moncef Bey. This stance was maintained throughout the six-month German occupation and after the arrival of the Allies. Yet Bourguiba's and indeed, the Bey's hopes of an Allied occupation raising the prospect of independence were soon to be betrayed. As Murphy had promised, the Allied invasion of North Africa would be accompanied by a preservation of the French administration over its colonial territories. On their arrival in Tunis, the Allies acquiesced to the return of the autocratic Marshal Peyrouton as Governor of Tunisia. This led to the deposition of the 'Destourian Bey', Moncef Bey and the forcible exile of the nationalist leaders. The exigencies of geo-politics had clearly won over any plans for independence the Americans may have reserved for the Maghreb.

One measure of the nationalist failure in turning the social and political turmoil of the war to their advantage was the relative ease with which the French empire was reinstated as an administrative entity after the Allied victory. The presence of foreign troops in the colonies, coupled with the existence of two rival French authorities had cast considerable doubt over the viability of a French empire in the post-war international order. The reappearance of the question of self-determination on the agenda of the major war-time conferences, and most notably during the drafting of the UN Charter at San Francisco, further compromised the future of the French colonial empire. Yet by 1946, the latter had been politically reconstituted in the form of the French Union (*Union Française*). It was General de Gaulle, the man who only a few years earlier had been kept on the margins of French political life because of his personal and political antagonism with US President Roosevelt, who managed to engineer the continuity of empire after the war. It is therefore useful to pause briefly on de Gaulle's immediate post-war policy toward empire, in order to explain and understand the nature of this remarkable restitution.

A key moment in the post-war re-invention of the French empire was the French Africa Conference held in the Congolese town of Brazzaville during January and February 1944. It was at this summit of French African governors that the basic

parameters of the French Union were first layed out, and the post-war policies toward the colonies were first officially discussed. Indeed, it is worth recalling that the meeting took place only weeks after de Gaulle had become the President of the Committee of National Liberation at Algiers (*Comité Français de la Libération Nationale* - CFLN), the body which officially became provisional government of the French Republic on 2 June 1944. Aware of the profound effects of the world war upon the colonial populations, and the need for the newly-created CFLN to swiftly establish its authority over the French empire, de Gaulle sized the Brazzaville Conference as an opportunity to both confirm imperial unity and forge the necessary policies for the empires survival after liberation. As one historian of the period has put it:

> L'essentiel, pour de Gaulle comme pour tous ceux qui étaient à ses côtes à Alger comme à Londres, était que la France garde sa responsabilité de son domaine colonial, qu'elle décide par elle-même de sa transformation et de son avenir...[15]

Essentially, the proceedings of the Brazzaville Conference focused on two areas. The first, and perhaps most significant for our purposes, was the constitutional framework which was to define France's relations with its colonies. This had already been the subject of considerable discussion among the French political community in Algiers, but it was the CFLN's Director of Political Affairs for the Colonies, Henri Laurentie, who was made responsible for the Conference's agenda.[16] For Laurentie, the future

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[15] P.-M. de la Gorce, *L'Empire Écarteé: 1936-1946* (Paris: Editions Denöel, 1988), p. 413.

[16] Further details of the background and development of the Conference can be found in Institut Charles-de-Gaulle (ed.) *Brazzaville, janvier février 1944: aux sources de la décolonisation* (Paris: Plon, 1988) and part 1 of M. Shipway, *The Road to War: France and Vietnam, 1944-1947* (Providence and Oxford: Berhahn Books, 1996).

of the French colonies lay in the construction of an imperial Federation which might maintain the unity of empire, while allowing its distinct parts to develop their own 'political personality' (*la personnalité politique*). At the Conference, this aim was expressed in the following way:

> On veut que le pouvoir politique de la France s'exerce avec précision et rigeur sur toutes les terres de son Empire. On veut aussi que les colonies jouissent d'une grance liberté adminstrative et économique. On veut également que les peuples coloniaux éprouvant par eux-mLmes cette liberté, et que leur résponsabilité soit peu formée et élevée, afin qu'ils se trouvent associés à la gestion de la chose publique dans leur pays.[17]

To this end, the governors recommended the radical overhaul of the pre-war administrative system and the declaration of a French Federation (*Fédération Française*) which would grant the colonies extensive representation in the Constituent Assembly. This was to be complemented by the abolition of the existing consultative bodies within the colonies, and their replacement with Councils of Indigenous Notables and local Assemblies elected on the basis of universal suffrage for both Europeans and non-Europeans. The combination of these reforms, it was hoped, might square the circle of maintaining the empire without excluding the eventual development of what, in the absence of an appropriate term in their own language, the French authorities called 'self-government'.

The second general arena of action the Conference dealt with was that of socio-economic reforms. Here, the leading intellectual light was de Gaulle's Governor-General for Africa, Félix Eboué, who in the early 1940s had set down the basis of the Free French 'New Native Policy'. The general thrust of these proposals

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[17] "Recommendations adoptées: première partie" in de la Gorce, *L'Empire Ecarteé*, p. 470.

were, according to Martin Shipway, centred around the

> Moral renewal of the colonial regimes [which] was to stem from respect for African civilisation, recognition of traditional structures and a more equitable relationship between Africans and Europeans ... The circular placed new stress on issues such as family and social customs, the role of an educated African elite, whom Eboué termed 'évolués' ... and the status of mixed race, so-called 'métis'.[18]

In this spirit, the final recommendations of the Brazzaville Conference sought to promote the gradual reform of 'traditional' legal and social customs related to marriage, education and political institutions in the direction of "[t]he principles which constitute the common basis of French civilisation [*sic*]."[19] Thus, the Conference called on the abolition of polygamy, an administrative control of dowries, the extension of citizenship rights to 'evolved natives' and the incorporation of all children into the French educational system. Perhaps of greatest significance was the Conference's recommendation in favour of the abolition of forced labour and the establishment of a 'free labour market' subject to regulatory norms dealing with wages and working conditions.

It is difficult to evaluate the exact impact of the Brazzaville Conference upon subsequent political developments within the French empire. The Conference proceedings were expressly circumscribed to France's sub-Saharan colonies, and, despite the presence of North African observers, references to the Maghreb were omitted from the final transcripts.[20] Laurentie convened an Expert Commission and

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[18] Shipway, *The Road to War*, p. 24.

[19] "Recommendations adoptées", de la Gorce, *L'Empire Écartée*, p. 484.

[20] Shipway, *The Road to War*, p. 30.

Working Party in 1944 and 1945 respectively, with the aim of bringing the Brazzaville recommendations into the discussions of the upcoming Constituent Assembly. By most accounts, Laurentie's cherished project of a *Fédération Française* was given short shrift as the reformist ideals thought up in the politically convivial atmosphere of Brazzaville were put to the test of a much more volatile and hostile post-war Paris. All this suggests that the Brazzaville policy remained more of a rhetorical reference point, particularly for those left-leaning Gaullists wanting to uphold the General as a defender of French colonial peoples' interests, rather than a concrete blueprint for a post-war metropolitan-colonial relationship. Yet by 1946, one of the main political aims of Brazzaville -maintaining the colonial empire intact- was achieved in the shape of the French Union. Though watered-down, the basic federal principle of maintaining imperial unity while granting the colonial peoples some measure of self-government was upheld. Local Assemblies elected on universal suffrage were established, citizenship rights were extended to all colonial peoples and the latter were to be represented by some 204 deputies at the Union's Assembly.[21]

But this was certainly not the what nationalists, particularly in North Africa, had expected from the post-war conjuncture. Despite the immediate setbacks after the Allied landings (repression of nationalists, the rejection of Ferhat Abbas' 1943 and the Moroccan Istiqlal's 1944 Manifestos, and the deposition of the Tunisian bey), Maghrebi nationalists could look toward some conciliatory gestures on the part of de Gaulle's administration. The General's new government had issued a decree promising the extension of citizenship rights to Algerians; it had initiated the French withdrawal from their Levantine mandates in 1946; and most spectacularly, it had

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[21] Details of the status of "overseas France" in the 1946 Constitution can be found in Ageron,*Les chemins de la décolonisation,* in Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth* and G. Wright, *The Reshaping of French Democracy* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970).

accepted the proclamation of an independent Vietnam in September 1945. All this could conceivably be interpreted as signalling the weakening of France's imperial resolve. In the event, however, North African nationalists were faced with a reconstituted imperial entity, seemingly unperturbed by the anti-colonial consensus being forged at the international level. For all the expectations attached to American anti-imperialism and de Gaulle's repeated expressions of gratitude toward the colonial role in France's liberation, the immediate post-war years witnessed the virtual return to a *status quo ante* in North Africa.

This relative lull in anti-colonial activity in North Africa was short-lived. As we shall see below, Maghrebi nationalists, and Tunisians in particular, soon launched an international campaign for their cause which within the space of a decade bore the fruits of independence. World War II had brought wider international forces to bear upon metropolitan-colonial relations, and soon the advent of the Cold War was to reinforce the internationalisation of the Tunisian struggle for independence.

As we have seen, the military-strategic value of the Maghreb had become especially apparent in the course of World War II. Like in most other parts of the world occupied by Allied troops, the US lost little time in promoting its military and economic interests in North Africa after the war. The US was most successful in Morocco where by 1953 it had secured the use of the aero-naval base at Kenitra (formerly Port Lyautey) together with the construction of five military bases in other parts of the protectorate. Although no such extensive military presence was achieved in Tunisia and Algeria, both these countries came under the scope of NATO by virtue of France's signature of the Atlantic Treaty in 1949. American economic interests were also strongly represented in the region during the post-war years as many of the businessmen who had arrived with the Allied landing continued their activities in the import-export sector, or as representatives of major US corporations (IBM,

International Harvester, Standard Oil).[22]

Soviet interests in North Africa for their part, were more limited. The Maghreb had never been of significant political or strategic value to either the Soviet Union or the international communist movement. The prestige associated to the Soviet war-time feats and the USSR's nominal endorsement self-determination, however, temporarily increased the popularity of North African communist organisations in the immediate post-war years. As the Cold War divisions became entrenched after 1947, the communist influence in the region was inflated beyond all proportion, and the familiar simplification of political conflict along bipolar lines became the norm. By the early 1950s, the President of the French Republic, Vincent Auriol, would insist to Foster Dulles that, "Derrière Bourguiba il y a des communistes, derrière l'Istiqlal il y a des communistes".[23] At one level, the Soviet Union was naturally interested in fomenting the imagery of a communist-nationalist front. But pressures from a strongly nationalist PCF, coupled with the USSR's own focus upon legitimising the post-war division of Europe, forced Moscow to adopt an ambiguous position vis-a-vis North African anti-colonialism.

The Americans found themselves in a similar situation as fears of radicalised nationalist movements and the need to keep France firmly aligned with the US clashed with the persistent anti-colonial rhetoric. Like the Soviets, they deliberately exaggerated the efficacy of communist activity in the Maghreb. The combined ambivalence of the superpowers did not diminish the influence of the Cold War on North African politics; on the contrary, fearing that a radical alteration in the

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[22] Egya N. Sangmuah, "Interest groups and Decolonization: American Businessmen and Organized Labour in French North Africa, 1948-56", *The Maghreb Review* (Vol. 13, No. 3-4, 1988), pp. 161-174.

[23] Quoted in Juliette Bessis, "L'opposition France-Etats-Unis au Maghreb de la deuxième guerre mondiale jusqu' à l'indépendance des protectorats, 1941-1956",pp. 341-356, p. 351 in Ageron,*Les chémins de la décolonisation*.

status of French North Africa might benefit the rival, the two superpowers put a hold on any support for national liberation. As Yahia Zoubir has suggested:

> [b]oth superpowers pursued similar interests aimed at reconciling contradictory objectives to safeguard their own strategic, political and economic interests. Owing to the importance they accorded to their respective relationships with France, they sought to appease the colonial power while simultaneously trying to gain the friendship of the nationalist movements opposed to it. In this context, the primary consideration of the two superpowers was not to hasten the independence of Maghrebi countries but .... to delay it because of the uncertainty and power vacuum it would create ...[24]

It is important to bear in mind at this stage that part of the reason for the superpowers' "contradictory objectives" in the Maghreb lay in the political make-up of post-war France. The PCF had emerged from Liberation as the largest and arguably the most powerful political party in France - 'le premier parti de France' as its sympathisers called it. Its influence had been felt both within the Provisional Government at Algiers and at the two Constituent Assemblies which paved the way for the Fourth Republic. In fact, the PCF's success at legislative elections of 1945 and 1946 allowed them to obtain important cabinet positions for the first time.[25] If we add to this the Gaullist suspicions of 'Anglo-Saxon' hegemony, it becomes clear that the political climate of post-war France displayed a marked hostility toward the USA. Far from strengthening a pro-Soviet strand in French politics, however, this coalition of Gaullists and communists engendered a *sui generis* French nationalism, which, although seemingly antagonistic toward the US, was still firmly aligned with the

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[24] Yahia Zoubir, "US and Soviet Policies towards France's Struggle with Anticolonial Nationalism in North Africa," *Canadian Journal of History*, Vol. XXX, December 1995, pp. 439-466, p. 439.

[25] For further details see M. Adereth, *The French Communist Party, a Critical History: From Comintern to 'the colours of France'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

American-led western bloc.

The Cold war therefore impacted upon the Tunisian struggle for independence in an ambivalent fashion. On the one hand, as the two superpowers vied for the allegiance of a nationalist movement which had patently emerged from the world war morally and politically fortified, the issue of self-determination came to the forefront of Cold War politics. On the other hand, the fight for independence was stalled as the Maghreb, although a marginal region within the wider dynamic of superpower confrontation, became enmeshed in a logic of bipolarity that often blunted the sharp antagonisms between colonies and metropole.

This section will have hopefully provided a snapshot of the historical context which preceded Tunisian independence. Like all historical processes, there is no iron law of necessity which dictated the eventual decolonisation of French North Africa. The bloody war of liberation in Algeria (1954-62) testifies to the way in which historical developments often brush against the grain of the times. Nonetheless, I have tried to identify a number of secular developments which affected the evolution of Tunisian history during World War II and its aftermath. Foremost among these was the Allied presence in North Africa and the possibilities it offered for the internationalisation of the nationalist cause. Second, the remarkable reconstitution of the French empire in the form the French Union, and the cross-party consensus which underpinned it, further conditioned the nature of the struggle for independence during the following years. Last and by no means least important, the Cold War brought the politics of superpower confrontation to bear upon the specific metropolitan-colonial conflict.

Having laid down the broad parameters of the period, the following sections will examine in greater detail how the various Tunisian social movements interacted with the agents of international society. The first and, in the context of this thesis most significant aspect to explore is the place of internationalism in the unfolding of Tunisian independence.

6.2 Nationalism and Internationalism in the Struggle for Tunisian Independence

The preceding chapters have identified internationalism as a major component of the process I have termed the expansion of international civil society. It has been suggested that internationalism should be seen as a principle and a practice which has often guided the activities of modern political movements. In the specific case of North Africa, internationalism contributed to the extension of modern forms of political agency to the region during the 1920s and 1930s, thereby facilitating the political cooperation across national, ethnic and religious boundaries both within Maghrebi social and political movements, and between the latter and their Mediterranean counterparts. At that time, the main sources of internationalist solidarity arrived from three broad areas: Europe, the Mashreq and the wider Muslim world (especially the Ottoman Empire and later, Turkey). By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the focus of internationalist support expanded both eastward and westward toward Asia and America. The nationalist cause in North Africa became an anathema to the French left during the post-war years as it donned the mantle of French *grandeur* in an attempt to defend the autonomy of Paris vis-a-vis Washington and Moscow. The PCF in particular jettisoned virtually all its internationalist principles during this period, as it plainly misunderstood, and until very much later, actively opposed the surging movement for national independence in the Maghreb. It was therefore left to the Arab nationalists of the Mashreq on the one hand, and a host of other anti-colonial or Third World nationalist movements on the other, to furnish Bourguiba's campaign for independence with the necessary international credibility for its eventual success.

In March 1945, Habib Bourguiba slipped out of Tunisia and headed toward

Cairo via Libya. Bourguiba's decision to move eastwards had been heavily conditioned by the presence in Alexandria of his old accomplice, Hooker Doolittle, and more importantly, by the news that negotiations for the establishment of a League of Arab states were being held at the Egyptian capital. In fact, Bourguiba initiated his trek to Cairo barely a week after the League was officially founded. That this was no mere coincidence became evident during the succeeding years as Bourguiba, now joined by fellow North African nationalists, established an Arab Maghrebi Bureau in Cairo with a view to extending their cooperation with the Arab League and other African or Asian organisations sympathetic to their cause. A year into his Egyptian exile, Bourguiba was already intimating the exact purpose of his presence in the Mashreq. In a famous letter to his Algerian counterpart, Ferhat Abbas, Bourguiba clearly spelt out the expectations he attached to the post-war order:

> [i]l y a un autre evénément formidable qui a vu le jour a la fin de la guerre et qui aura une influence decisive sur l'orientation des Arabes au Maghreb: c'est l'unification du monde arabe ... Ma présence au Caire et l'action inlassable que j'y mene en vue de lier le problème de l'Afrique du Nord a ceux du Moyen-Orient arabe ont accelerée singulierement l'evolution des esprits.[26]

Interestingly, the Neo-Destourian president was also sharply aware of the favourable international climate:

> La conjoncture internationale nous offre une chance unique d'en finir avec la vie ... que nous imposera tojours le colonialisme français. Des compétitions internationales particulièrement sévères nous ouvrent des perspectives

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[26] Quoted in S. El-Mechat, *Tunisie: les chemins vers l'indépendance* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), p. 260-61.

insoupçonées.[27]

Although the ensuing events did not entirely match up to Bourguiba's optimistic calculations, the Maghrebi presence in Egypt did pay its specific dividends to the nationalist cause. For one, it afforded the Neo-Destourians a first opportunity to establish contact with the newly-created Arab League.[28] Tthe Secretary-General of the League, Azzam Pasha, was instrumental in securing the necessary logistical support (passports, funding, transport facilities, contacts) for the Maghrebi operation in Cairo to succeed. Furthermore, as we shall see below, the Arab League played a significant role in putting the issue of Tunisian independence before the United Nations via the Afro-Asian group in the General Assembly. This assistance to the North African cause was, however, tempered by the constraints of realist diplomacy. Azzam Pasha's original commitment to League membership for Maghrebi nationalist groups turned into a cautious postponement, contingent upon the outcome of the League's discussions with France over Syrian and Lebanese independence. In the event, de Gaulle's predictable objection to a North African representation in the League was accepted without protest by the Secretary-General, thus frustrating one of the main Neo-Destourian aspirations.

These initial failures at the intergovernmental level were somewhat compensated by the Neo-Destour's successful interaction with other Arab social movements present in Cairo. The principal vehicle for this international political cooperation was the Arab Maghrebi Bureau.[29] In February 1947 the major North

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[27] *Ibid.*, p. 263

[28] For further details of Bourguiba's experiences in Cairo see S. Belhassan and S. Bessis, *Bourguiba: La conquête d'un destin (1901-1957)* (Paris: Jeune Afrique Livres, 1988) and N. Salem *Habib Bourguiba, Islam and the Creation of Tunisia* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

[29] See T. Khatib, *Culture et politique dans le mouvement nationaliste marocain au Machreq* (Tetouan: Association Tetouan-Asmir, 1996)

African nationalist groups celebrated the founding congress of the new body with an agenda aimed at coordinating an international campaign in favour of North African independence. This was to be achieved by presenting a united front of Maghrebi nationalists in different international fora like the UN or the Arab League, and by increasing intra-Maghrebi cooperation in the battle for independence. For the first time, North African nationalist movements were envisaging a joint political initiative which had as its explicit purpose the extension of the domestic struggle to the international arena. In the pursuit of these aims, the Arab Maghrebi Bureau in Cairo became, for a few years, the centre of an international political network linking not only Arab nationalists east and west, but more importantly, projecting a semblance of Maghrebi unity to the rest of the world. The bureau's press office scored some successes in drawing the attention of several Egyptian dailies, while a reduced staff, led by Bourguiba's confidante Dr.Habib Thameur, organised contacts with various Arab governments and political movements such as Sayyid Qutb's Society of Muslim Brethren. The Arab Maghrebi Bureau never attained the objectives it had set for itself, one historian of the period concluding that,

> Le Bureau du Maghreb arabe avait fonctionne comme une structure de regroupement mais sans réele coordination entre les differents mouvements ...L'attitude incertain de la Ligue arabe, l'absence de moyens a la hauteur des pretensions, avaient abouti a l'éclatement de ce noyau, berceau de l'unité.[30]

Yet judged from the comparative perspective of other such experiments in transnational political cooperation, the Arab Maghrebi Bureau can be seen as a notable example of post-war internationalism. Bourguiba and his supporters had, in a small space of time and with limited resources, managed to significantly raise the profile of their campaign both among the statesmen and the social movements of the

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[30] El-Mechat, *Tunisie,* p. 43.

Middle East and beyond.

While Bourguiba and the Neo-Destourian leadership lobbied their Mashreqi brothers in the east, an entirely different campaign was being waged by the nationalis t trade union movement in the west. The Tunisian experiment in autonomous trade unionism which, as we saw above, had been aborted in 1938, resurfaced with the founding of the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens* (UGTT) in January 1946. There is considerable debate surrounding the origins and exact orientation of the UGTT. In essence, the new union sought to revive the idea of 'autonomous' (ie. non-French) trade unionism first expounded by M'hamed Ali's CGTT. The central premise of this approach was that trade unionists should not confuse their own distinctive activities and interests with those of existing political parties. In an early statement of policy, the new union's Secretary-General, Ferhat Hached called on the membership to, "[é]xpliquer à vos nombreux camarades notre pensée et les buts à atteindre: donner à l'ouvrier le moyen de défendre son travail et sa vie de travaill eur, par ses propres moyens at sans faire le jeu de politiciens qui se servent de lui en prétendent les servir ..."[31] Behind this syndicalist denunciation of 'politics' and 'politicians' lay, however an fundamentally corporatist project which, like Bourguiba's Neo-Destour, sought to bring Tunisian capital and labour together in the struggle for national liberation. Although, in fairness, it should be noted that the two organisations only established formal contacts at a much later date, Hached had from the outset made no secret of his nationalist standpoint:

> Wir betrachten Kapital und Arbeit als zwei füreinander unersetzliche Elemente und für die beiden Lebensnotwendigkeiten des Landes. Man muß deshalb einen Weg suchen, auf dem sich die beiden Elemente ergänzen könen ...Die

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[31] Cited in Abdesselam Ben Hamida, "Le syndicalisme Tunisien et la question de l'autonomie syndica t de 1944 à 1956" in , N. Sraieb *Le Mouvement Ouvrier Maghrebin* (Paris: Editions CNRS, 1985), p. 16, pp. 15-25.

Verbindung von Kapital und Arbeit garantiert darum das Aufblühen eines Unternehmens, das zum größten Wohl der Gesamtheit dient. [32]

The founding of the UGTT no doubt corresponded to the long-standing wish among sectors of the indigenous working-class of setting up their own representative trade union. As we have seen, the tensions between European and Arab workers had been a common feature of Tunisian trade unionism, and these resurfaced after 1945 in the context of the renewed campaign for national liberation. However, it is also important to emphasise the Cold War setting of this new development in Tunisia's social and political life. For the UGTT was also a virulently anti-communist organisation keen on highlighting this characteristic when extending the network of support for Tunisian independence via the international trade union movement.

In the immediate aftermath of the Allied occupation of Tunisia during January 1944, communist influence over working-class movements in the protectorate was all-pervasive. The high profile of the communists in the resistance movement and the provisional organs which emerged out of liberation, coupled with an economic climate favourable to left-wing organisations, led to the considerable rise in communist support within the reconstituted Tunisian trade union movement. The clearest manifestation of this communist advance took place at the first post-war congress of the CGT's Departmental Union in March 1944, where seventeen of the twenty-one elected executive committee members were communists. If we accept the figure of close to 40,000 members offered by the deputy Secretary-General of the Departmental Union, Hassen Sadaoui, the extent of communist influence over Tunisian working-class politics appears as being substantial.

It was in reaction to this radical development within Tunisian trade unionism that Ferhat Hached and his followers began considering the creation of a third

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[32] Quoted in W. Plum *Gewerkschaften im Maghreb: UGTT-UMT-UGTA* (Hannover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1962) , p. 22.

'autonomous' Tunisian union. As Mustapha Kraiem has suggested,

> Dans un pays qui connait depuis la fin de la première guerre mondiale une vigoureuse agitation populaire, et une répresion sévère contre les nationalistes, les militants autochtones étaient marqués par l'impact du problème national. Le slogan d'indépendence syndicale était en réalité une façon de dénoncer la politique du parti communiste.[33]

Prior to the Departmental Union's congress, Hached had built up his power-base in the Sahelian port of Sfax, establishing a host of new unions with a view to influencing the results of the congress. With the communist victory over their own candidate, however, the pro-Hached unions decided to dissolve, thus leaving the CGT without substantial representation in the Sahel and the south. In their place, an *Union des Syndicates Autonomes des Travailleurs du Sud Tunisien* was founded in November 1944 thus laying the ground for the emergence of the UGTT a year later. The communist response to this, in turn, was the creation of their own 'autonomous' movement in October 1946 as the remnants of the CGT's Departmental Union became the *Union syndicale des travailleurs de Tunisie* (USTT).[34]

At the inception of the Cold War, therefore, the Tunisian trade union movement was split in two. As in 1924 and 1937-38, the organised Tunisian working-class was divided along ideological and ethnic lines: one union, with an essentially nationalist character was supported by the bulk of Arab workers; the other, of a fundamentally communist persuasion, represented a mainly European membership. These deep rifts, the historical origins of which we have touched on in previous chapters, were soon to be felt at the international level as the two organisations vied

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[33] Mustapha Kraiem, "CGT et syndicalisme Tunisien aprés la prise de Tunis par les alliés 1943-1944" *Revue Tunisienne des Sciences Sociales* (Vol. 12, Nos. 40-43, 1975), pp. 279-308,p. 301.

[34] B. López García, *Política y Movimientos Sociales en el Magreb* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1991), pp. 80-82.

for the legitimate representation of Tunisian labour before the international trade union movement.

The immediate aftermath of World War II witnessed the unification of the international labour movement under the single banner of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). In a spirit reminiscent of the short-lived Popular Front period, and in the context of a continued post-war Allied collaboration, the largest trade unions in the west and the Soviet Union were joined by labour unions from Africa, Asia and Latin America in the founding congress of the new international federation in October 1945. This unprecedented unity in the international labour movement proved to be short-lived as only four years later, anti-communist unions, led this time by the American Federation of Labor (AFL) established the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) thereby leaving the WFTU under Soviet dominance. The details of this schism, and the reasons for its unraveling need not detain us here.[35] What is of interest for our purposes is the relationship between the Tunisian unions and these two institutions of international civil society.

In a clear expression of its desire to internationalise its cause, the UGTT agreed to issue an application for membership of the WFTU at its inaugural congress in 1946. This in no way compromised the UGTT's anti-communism, for as we have seen, the WFTU was at this time a non-sectarian organisation. Despite this, it took four years for the World Federation to accept the UGTT into its ranks, chiefly due to the French CGT's attempt at turning its Tunisian sister-organisation, the USTT, into the sole representative of Tunisian labour. The WFTU responded to the UGTT's membership requests by criticising its nationalist and Islamist bias and sending successive delegations to Tunisia with the aim of unifying the two competing unions. With the failure of these maneuvers and most importantly, as a result of the

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[35] For two opposing but equally informative accounts see, D. McShane, *International Labour and the Origins of the Cold War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) and Peter Weiler "The United States, International Labor and the Cold War: The Breakup of the World Federation of Trade Unions" *Diplomatic History* (Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter 1981), pp. 1-22.

disaffiliation of the anti-communist unions from the WFTU, the UGTT finally became a member of the World Federation in early 1949.[36] By this time, however, it was clear that Ferhad Hached's union was entirely in the wrong camp. After a troublesome eighteen-month membership the WFTU, the UGTT made a long-awaited decision in July 1951 to switch its allegiance to the rival ICFTU, where Hached was given an executive post. Although, as we have seen, this accorded with the UGTT's ideological inclinations, it also chimed with the union's strategy of securing international support for the nationalist cause.

Egya Sangmuah has mustered considerable evidence to suggest that the UGTT's decision to leave the WFTU and join the ICFTU was heavily weighed by pressures and incentives from the both the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the US Department of State. According to Sangmuah,

> State Department officials associated with North African policy favoured maintaining 'active relations' with American trade unions, foreign unions, and the ICFTU, and assisting or welcoming assistance from these organizations where their objectives coincided with those of the US ... In Tunis, Consul General John D. Jernegan was instrumental in influencing the UGTT National Council to break away from the WFTU in July 1950 ...When he sensed some hesitation on the part of UGTT leaders, Jernegan 'implied strongly' that the United States supported Tunisian nationalism. Jernegan then used diplomatic channels to get the CIO to speed up negotiations with UGTT.[37]

Regardless of the accuracy of these assertions, there can be little doubt that by 1951

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[36] Wilard A.Beiling, "WFTU and Decolonization: A Tunisian Case Study"*Journal of Modern African History*, (Vol. 2 No.4, 1964), pp. 551-64.

[37] Sangmuah, "Interest Groups and Decolonization", p.169.

the Tunisian nationalist movement had accomplished the goal of generating support for its cause in the west. That same year, Ferhat Hached and Habib Bourguiba traveled to the United States invited by the AFL representative in Europe, Irving Brown. At the AFL Congress held in San Francisco, Hached made a speech that left no room for equivocation:

> Unsere tunesische Arbeiterklasse und unser tunesisches Volk, mit zahllosen Schwierigkeiten belastet, denen wir in dem ununterbrochenen Kampf um soziale und nationale Freiheiten begegnen, haben sich vom Kommunismus abgewandt, der in seiner Demagogie die Unruhen vergrößert, um das Elend der Arbeiter und die berechtigte Unzufriedenheit der Bevölkerung für Ziele auszunutzen, die Sie [the AFL] nur zu gut kennen. Unsere Gewerkschaftsbewegung hat darum dem kominformistischen Weltgewerkschaftsbund den Rücken gekehrt und ist der großen Gewerkschaftsorganisation der freien Arbeiterwelt im IBFG beigetreten. Aber wir begehen große Irrtümer, wenn wir die kommunistische Gefahr für endgültig gebannt halten. Wir waren nicht aufrichtig, wenn wir behaupten wollten, die tunesische Volksmasse sei hinter dem einzigen Bollwerk der muselmanischen Religion geschützt und vor jedem Eindringen des Kommunismus gefeit[38]

Now that the Tunisian nationalist movement had curried the favour of one of the superpowers, the ground was left open for an appeal to the wider international community. With the support of their American allies in the labour movement and in the Administration on the one hand, and the backing of the newly independent African and Asian states on the other, the nationalists launched their campaign in the United Nations. It is to this aspect of the relationship between Tunisian civil society and

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[38] Plum *Gewerkschaften im Maghreb* p. 23.

international society which we now turn.

6.3 The United Nations and Tunisian Independence

The institutions of international society have played a central role in the history of modern social movements in Tunisia, and indeed in the rest of the Maghreb from their very inception. Both the League of Nations, and more significantly, the United Nations were the site of North African nationalist agitation over the years. Moreover, as previous chapters have indicated, key documents of international society like US President Wilson's Fourteen Points or the Atlantic Charter became reference points for the international legitimation of the anti-colonial struggle. To be sure, this was partly a consequence of organisations like the League of Nations or the UN having a direct remit over colonial affairs through the mandates system and the Trusteeship Council, respectively. Yet it also reflected a genuine endorsement of the norms and values of international society on the part of these social movements, the full theoretical implications of which were considered in chapter three. For the purposes of the present discussion it may be sufficient to identify the milestones in the Tunisian campaign for independence at the UN, thereby exploring the interface between North African civil society and one of the most important institutions of post-war international society.

The Tunisian campaign for independence at the UN experienced a long period of gestation conditioned by two basic factors. First and foremost was the fact that the colonial question was placed at the center of the UN's agenda. While it is likely that North African social movements would have, as in the past, turned to an international organisation like the UN to further their own cause, this possibility was greatly encouraged by the new organisation's explicit support for the self-determination of colonial peoples. This was further enhanced by the establishment of an Afro-Asian group of states at the General Assembly which made the Maghrebi nationalist cause

their own. Second, the decision to extend the campaign for independence to the UN was a direct consequence of the rejection by Paris of a bilateral solution to the Franco-Tunisian dispute. Although all the Tunisian nationalist factions appreciated the need for an internationalisation of the conflict, the Neo-Destour had held up the hope in the immediate post-war period of engaging Paris in bilateral negotiations for independence along the lines of those held at Fontainbleau with the Vietminh. It was only when this option was entirely discarded that the nationalist movement focused its attention on the UN.

In April 1950, Habib Bourguiba visited Paris for the first time after his three-year exile in Cairo. At meetings with Tunisian residents and the diverse elements of French public opinion, Bourguiba outlined a seven-point plan for Tunisian autonomy including a National Assembly to be voted on universal suffrage and the creation of a Tunisian executive. Only two months later the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, delivered a speech on occasion of the appointment of the new Resident General, Louis Périllier, which for the first time employed the term 'independence':

> M. Périllier, dans ses nouvelles fonctions, aura pour mission de comprendre et de conduire la Tunisie vers le plein épanouissement de ses richesses et de l'amener vers l'indépendence qui est l'objectif final pour tous les territoires au sein de l'Union française.[39]

That this was no mere slip of the tongue or a hollow promise became evident as the new Resident General re-confirmed his plans to open the protectorate's administration to Tunisians thereby extending Franco-Tunisian 'co-sovereignty'. By virtue of a Franco-Tunisian protocol of August 1950, a new cabinet under the premiership of Sidi M'Hamed Chenik appointed four Neo-Destourian ministers, including the party's

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[39] Cited in R. LeTourneau *Evolution politique de l'afrique du nord musulmane 1920-1961*(Paris: Armand Colin, 1962), p. 118.

Secretary-General Salah Ben Youssef as Justice Minister. In February 1951, Périllier instituted a series of reforms which enhanced the role of the Prime Minister and the legislative Grand Council -henceforth containing a balanced French and Tunisian membership- on domestic affairs. With their position now strengthened at the very helm of the Regency, the nationalists set out to push for further reforms in the direction of greater autonomy and eventual independence. A Tunisian delegation headed by Chenik arrived in Paris on 16 October 1951 and presented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a plan geared toward extracting greater concession from the French authorities on Tunisian sovereignty. These echoed Bourguiba's earlier requests: the creation of an exclusively Tunisian cabinet, the further 'Tunisification' of the civil service and the election of a National Assembly.[40]

The nationalist political offensive did not go uncontested by the reactionary members of the settler community, the so-called colonial *préponderants*. With pressure from both within the French administration and the metropolitan interests in Tunisia, the prospects of a negotiated move to independence faded rapidly. Paris rejected the Chenik demands in December 1951, and the new year brought the dismissal and imprisonment of the Tunisian Prime Minister, together with that of most of the nationalist leadership. The riots which ensued and the launch of an armed insurrection in the north of the country marked the end of a period when the prospects of Tunisian independence being negotiated on a bilateral level appeared as realistic, and the beginning of what, in hindsight, was the last Franco-Tunisian crisis under the colonial regime.

It is within this context that the Tunisian campaign at the UN must be understood. Aware that their aims could not be pursued exclusively at the domestic level, the various strands of Tunisian nationalism had crafted an extensive network of international relations since the end of the war. As we have seen, both the old and

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[40]   LeTourneau *Evolution politique* and D.   L Ling, *Tunisia: From Protectorate to Republic* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1967) , chapter 5.

the Neo-Destour had used the Bureau du Maghreb Arab as a site for the development of contacts with other Middle Eastern political movements and organisations, most notably the Arab League. After his brief French sojourn in early 1950, Bourguiba set out on a tour of Asia, stopping at the World Islamic Congress in Karachi, New Delhi (where the Neo-Destour opened an information office) and Jakarta.[41] During the following year, Bourguiba took his campaign to London, Stockholm, and finally to the US. Here, Bourguiba sought to complement the work of the Tunisian Information Office in New York set up by the Chenik cabinet with the aim of lobbying the UN. The end result of this fervent diplomatic groundwork was presentation of the Tunisian question before the world organisation during 1952 and 1953.

As with any constitution, the UN Charter is a complex document open to multiple interpretations. The principles and procedures enshrined within its various chapters were the consensual outcome of a prolonged clash of ideas and interests among the great powers emerging out of World war II. On the specific issue of colonial self-determination, these differences were ultimately resolved in the form of two chapters in the UN Charter specifying the nature of the trusteeship system and the highly ambiguous chapter XI, "The Declaration on Non-Self-Governing Territories".[42] The latter declaration made no reference to the term 'independence' as the Russian and Chinese delegations at San Francisco had initially demanded, but rather settled for the broader concept of 'self-government' which should "[t]ake account of the political aspirations of the [non-self-governing] peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions...". While chapter XI may have disappointed those anti-colonialists expecting the UN to lead an all-out campaign against colonialism, it did at least place the colonial question firmly on the international agenda. In the words of one commentator, "The controversies in the colonial sphere which heatedly occupied the UN's attention in the early formative

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[41] For further details see El-Mechat, *Tunisie: les chemins vers l'indépendance* , pp. 107-110.

[42] For a detailed account of the disputes among the Allied powers on this issue see Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, especially chapter 35.

years seem innocuous enough compared to with what was to come later, but comparatively they acted as a series of wedges to pry the door wider and wider open."[43]

The first instance of this opening up of the colonial agenda at the UN came with the establishment in 1946 of an *ad hoc* Committee on Information relating specifically to Article 73(e) of the Charter.[44] According to this article, the colonial powers were obliged to:

> transmit regularly to the Secretary-General for information purposes ... statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible...

The presence in the successive Committees on Information of members of the Afro-Asian bloc allowed the question of North African independence to brought before the different organs of the United Nations. During 1952 and 1953, the situation in Tunisia was discussed at the Security Council and the General Assembly at the request of members of the Afro-Asian group. In April 1952, letters from ten delegations (Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Yemen) requested the inclusion of the Tunisian question in the Security Council's forthcoming agenda. Three Security Council meetings held during that same month considered the Afro-Asian demand and on 14 April Council members voted against the inclusion of the Tunisian question in the Council's agenda with 5

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[43] Rupert Emerson, "Colonialism, Political Development and the UN" *International Organization* (Vol. 19, No. 3, Summer 1965), pp. 484-503, p. 487.
[44] Details of these Committees and the role of the Afro-Asian bloc in their formation and development can be found in Y. El-Ayouty, *The United Nations and Decolonization: The Role of Afro-Asia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971) .

votes in favour, 2 against and 4 abstentions.[45] Two subsequent letters signed by the group of Afro-Asian states dated 20 June and 30 July 1952, requested a Special Session at the General Assembly and a Consideration of the Tunisian question at the Assembly's Seventh Session, respectively. Only the second bid received a favourable response and after two meetings of its First Committee, the General Assembly adopted resolution 611(VII) expressing its confidence that the "Government of France will endeavor to further the effective development of the free institutions of the Tunisian people" and "that the parties will continue negotiations on an urgent basis with a view to bringing about self-government for Tunisians."[46] In March 1953, the political situation in Tunisian was brought to the attention of the President of the General Assembly for a third time. On this occasion, the Afro-Asian group, with the support of other representatives, put forth a draft resolution which had as the third of its recommendations the following statement:

> That negotiations be undertaken without delay with the representatives of a Tunisian Government established through free elections held on the basis of universal suffrage ...with a view to enabling the Tunisian people to exercise all the powers arising from their legitimate rights to full sovereignty.[47]

The resolution suffered various important amendments and was put to the vote on December 17 1953 only to be rejected with 31 votes in favour, 18 against and 10 abstentions.

This brief summary of the Tunisian campaign at the UN offers some sense of the contribution the world organisation made toward the internationalisation of the Franco-Tunisian dispute. While Paris had sought to keep the crisis within the confines

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[45] For more details see, G. Day, *Les affaires de la Tunisie et du Maroc devant les Nations Unies*(Paris: Editions A. Pedone, 1953); M-C Smouts,*La France à l'ONU* (Paris: Presses de la FNSP, 1979), pp. 232-235 and *Yearbook of the United Nations 1952* (New York :United Nations), pp. 266-270.
[46] *Yearbook of the United Nations 1952*, p. 278.
[47] *Yearbook of the United Nations 1953* (New York :United Nations) p. 209.

of the internal politics of the French Union, repeatedly invoking the concept of 'co-sovereignty' allegedly enshrined in the Treaty of Bardo, the Tunisian nationalists turned to the supreme institution of post-war international society, arguing the case for independence with recourse to international law. Whether this strategy was ultimately responsible for Tunisian independence or not is an open question; the important point for the argument of this chapter is simply to register the political significance attached to the UN by the nationalist movements.

6.4 Conclusions: Civil Society and International Society in Post-War Tunisia

The preceding sections have sought to present a panoramic account of the way in which Tunisian social movements interacted with wider international society during and after World War II. The chief purpose of this exercise has been to illustrate how the nature of the struggle for national independence -the major dynamic behind Tunisian postwar history- was heavily conditioned by a host of international factors. As we have seen, the social and political transformations wrought by war on a global scale did not escape Tunisia. The defeat and division of France, the Allied occupation of North Africa and the nominal anti-colonialism of the two emerging superpowers all conspired to produce a post-war conjuncture highly favourable to nationalist aspirations. This in turn was buttressed by the consolidation of the first truly universal world organisation, the UN, and the growing defence within its various organs of the right to national self-determination. Finally, and perhaps most important for the argument of this thesis, Tunisian social movements, the Neo-Destour foremost amongst them, drew on a wide network of international support -formed by both state and non-state actors- in the pursuit of its political goals. It has been our contention that the sum of these interactions add up to the working of an international civil society. The reasons for this are two-fold.

In the first place, the course of post-war Tunisian history charted above

indicates how far Tunisian social movements, and the nationalists in particular, were imbricated within the wider processes of international society. To be sure, as previous chapters have demonstrated, this was a feature which characterised modern social movements in North Africa from their origins at the beginning of this century. The post-war international order simply offered a wider array of international institutions which social movements could engage with, as regional organisations like the Arab League or international non-governmental organisations such as the WFTU or the ICFTU found greater prominence within world politics. In short, the international relations of Tunisian social movements during the post-war years exemplify the intense interaction between state and non-state actors which, I have argued, can be elucidated with reference to a concept like international civil society. By employing this category in the analysis of the Tunisian campaign for independence, a more comprehensive, and arguably a more accurate rendition of this process can be offered, as the complex international factors which conditioned its unfolding are fully accounted for.

The second important issue raised by the idea of international civil society in the context of post-war Tunisian history relates to the concepts of sovereignty and national self-determination. By the post-war years, these became keywords in the political idiom of Tunisian, and indeed North African social movements. It has been one of the aims of this chapter to show how these concepts were not just abstractions of international law, or rhetorical keywords invoked by liberal intellectuals and politicians. They certainly were this; but they were also concepts which were given concrete social and political content by the social movements we have been considering in this thesis. It is not necessary to buy into a 'whiggish' interpretation of the expansion international society, nor an overly positivist understanding of international law to appreciate the real political weight terms like 'sovereignty' and 'self-determination' carried in the anti-colonial struggles. Echoing the theoretical points made in chapter three, this chapter will have hopefully offered some support

for this contention, by tracing the nationalist campaigns at the UN and other international organisations, and indicating how Tunisian civil society appropriated the tools of international society for its own purposes.

In conjunction, the foregoing narrative chapters should have also substantiated the theoretical claims made earlier in the thesis. We saw in chapter four how the socio-economic and political transformations set in motion by French capitalist imperialism eventually generated a complex array of social movements in Tunisia. Though many of these drew their inspiration from Tunisia's rich historical legacy in reformist experiments (both secular and religious), it was the new social processes and structures engendered by colonialism that were ultimately responsible for this explosion in social and political activity in the Regency. Chapter five sought to emphasise the importance of both the practice and the principles of internationalism in this development. By focusing specifically on the Popular Front years, an attempt was made to illustrate the relevance of internationalism in the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia, and in the unfolding of the country's inter-war history. Lastly, the present chapter has aimed to underline the crucial interaction between the agents of Tunisian civil society and the emerging institutions of post-war international society. Here, the burden of the argument has rested upon the mutual dependence of inter-state and non-state actors in international relations, and in particular, the importance of the norms and values of international society for those social movements seeking to attain state sovereignty. The implications, both analytical and normative, of this complex historical interaction between Tunisian social movements and the wider world will now be briefly reexamined the concluding chapter of this study.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions: The Uses of International Civil Society

The foregoing chapters have aimed to offer a novel interpretation of the concept 'international civil society'. By considering the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia, I have sought to illustrate historically the process whereby the forms, and to a certain degree the contents of modern political agency are transmitted internationally. The purpose of this exercise has been twofold. In the first instance, the objective has been to situate the historical and sociological study of non-state actors in international relations at the centre of the analytical concerns of our discipline. Though drawing generously from the successive waves of transnationalist literature in IR, I have sought to go beyond these approaches, highlighting their theoretical and historical shortcomings and arguing that a more rigorous investigation of the relations between states and civil societies under the rubric of 'the expansion of international civil society' can render the central arguments of transnationalism more forceful. More specifically, the claim has been that the term 'international civil society' should be associated not only with the agents that operate outside the immediate control of the state, but also to those social forces that have shaped the international society of states. It is for this reason that a special emphasis has been placed upon the *interaction* between the agents of civil society and those of the state, rather than on their mutual exclusiveness and opposition. From this perspective, the expansion of international civil society is seen as a process that reinforced the institutions and boundaries of the modern sovereign state as much as it helped to undermine them.

This first major concern of the thesis therefore speaks to those IR theorists interested in the origin and evolution of international society, and to the role of non-state actors in this process. To this extent, the preceding chapters represent an engagement with the more orthodox preoccupations of our discipline - those dealing with international society, sovereignty, nationalism and international institutions. Throughout this study, however, a second important issue has been at stake, namely the normative or political implications of using the term international civil society. By

investigating the systematic interaction between the agents of civil society in Tunisia and their counterparts in other parts of the world, I have sought to uncover the existence of an international relations 'from below'. I have considered such activity as part of the experience of internationalism during this century; that is, the conscious attempt by collectivities and individuals to transcend national, ethnic and religious barriers in the pursuit of specific political goals. To be sure, such internationalist cooperation between social movements of the various shores of the Mediterranean and beyond was not always harmonious. One of the aims of the narrative section of the thesis has been precisely to underline those tensions and antagonisms between the avowedly universal political objectives of say, the Tunisian trade union movement, and their more parochial, nationalist practice. Moreover, this study has deliberately focused upon the more benign and progressive social movements that inhabit international civil society, without considering the numerous reactionary and anti-democratic organisations that spring from this arena of our social and political life, and that often also employ an internationalist rhetoric.

Neither of these considerations, however, should compromise the relevance of internationalism as a political principle and practice, both for our understanding of the international system and for the construction of novel ways of engaging in world politics. The second underlying objective of this thesis, therefore, has been to explore the expansion of international civil society as a starting point for the imagination of new modes of political agency; to draw from the historical experience of social movements that have operated socially and politically across national, ethnic and religious boundaries in order to inform an internationalist politics for the coming century.

This concluding chapter is perhaps the best place to make more explicit the normative and political content of international civil society. I shall consider the significance of international civil society for contemporary world politics by arguing that international civil society represents a social and political space that progressive movements must appropriate and defend if the emancipatory aspirations of modernity

are to be realised, however imperfectly. Looking at the specific case of the Maghreb, I offer some examples of how the forces of civil society are attempting to organise internationally across the different shores of the Mediterranean. With this brief incursion into the current application of the term' international civil society' to the western Mediterranean region, I hope to identify both the political promises and pitfalls inherent in the category.

Before doing so, however, it is necessary to offer a restatement of the basic features of international civil society as it has been defined in this study. Special emphasis is again placed upon the complex interface between the agents of civil society and the institutions of the state within an international context. Here, the paradoxical nature of the relationship between state and non-state actors will be explored with particular reference to the tensions between nationalism and internationalism in the expansion of international civil society.

7.1 The Meanings of International Civil Society

Throughout this study, the idea of international civil society has been defined with regard to three of its basic components. At the most elementary level, international civil society describes that arena of world politics where modern social movements pursue their political goals. It was argued in chapter two that specifically modern attributes can be identified in the modes of political engagement characteristic of civil society. Moreover, the claim was made that such modern forms of political agency have from their inception been international in nature. In other words, the modern social movements that have for the past three centuries been the mainspring of civil society should be viewed as international phenomena and not, as is traditionally done, within an exclusively national context.

A full explanation for the emergence and development of these modern movements, however, requires making reference to the socio-economic and political forces unleashed by the global reproduction of capitalism. Thus, international civil

society has also been treated throughout this thesis as an arena permeated by capitalist social relations that generate antagonistic class interests. It is through the international articulation of these antagonisms, I have argued, that modern forms of social and political agency take shape.

Lastly, the preceding chapters have insisted that the term international civil society does not assume the existence of a world community of non-state actors seeking to undermine the international system of states. To be sure, the constituent agents of international civil society often represent a threat to state sovereignty insofar as they, by definition, operate across existing national, and more occasionally ethnic and religious boundaries. Yet such transgressions are neither constant nor unidirectional: as was argued in chapter three and illustrated in the narrative sections of the thesis, the social movements that inhabit international civil society are as likely to reinforce the existing boundaries of the sovereign state as they are to undermine them. Indeed, the experience Tunisian struggle for independence analysed above is paradigmatic in that nationalists clearly pursued the affirmation of existing Tunisian borders, yet simultaneously mobilised all the available international resources - transnational solidarity campaigns, international law, international institutions- in order to achieve this goal. In short, much of this thesis has endeavoured to show that the study of international civil society is closely tied to the examination of the origins and development of the international society of states. From this perspective, international civil society is not a category exclusively associated to the study of non-state actors, but rather to the historical interaction between states and civil societies.

These, is sum, have been the basic features of my understanding of international civil society. There is one very specific aspect of the concept which merits closer attention in these closing paragraphs of the study, namely the relationship between international civil society and the state. Chapter three investigated this relationship with reference to the idea of international society. It was argued there that the norms, values and institutions of international society helped to reinforce the political goals of Tunisian civil society and that the latter in turn

contributed toward the legitimisation of postwar international society. As in the rest of the thesis, the emphasis of that chapter was upon the mutual interdependence between these two spheres of social action, rather than upon their radical opposition. This overlap, however, raises some interesting contradictions in the definition of international civil society as it has been employed thus far. If social movements participating in international civil society choose to focus specifically upon a particular national struggle, do they thereby cease to be part of this domain of international politics? Once state sovereignty has been achieved, are the bonds with international civil society severed? What are the consequences for international civil society of social movements becoming the backbone of one-party states? These and other questions point to the seemingly irremovable tension between the universal pretensions of a concept like international civil society and its concrete manifestations in particularist movements like, for example, nationalist parties.

The way out of this false impasse lies in recognising that the universal can find expression in the concrete. In more specific terms, there is no necessary incongruity in positing an international civil society that encompasses nationalist as well as internationalist social movements. All of these, I have argued, were moulded by the international dimensions of civil society outlined in the second chapter of this thesis. Consider for instance the case of Tunisian nationalism. As previous chapters have indicated, the origins and development of Tunisian nationalism were inextricably tied to an ideological, institutional and historical interaction with the outside world. The Neo-Destour and its predecessors derived much of their programme from a combination of European liberalism, Mashreqi Islamic reformism and Arab and Turkish nationalism. They borrowed the organisational structure and the modes of political protest from their European counterparts, and put to good strategic use the impact of world-historical events such as the outbreak of the two World Wars or the creation of international organisations like the UN and the Arab League. To this extent, it is thoroughly misleading to interpret the rise of Tunisian nationalism as a purely autochthonous phenomenon (as much nationalist historiography would have

us believe) or to see it as being at odds with the expansion of international civil society. On the contrary, explaining the nature of Tunisian nationalism (or any other form of nationalism for that matter) requires investigating the international reproduction of ideas and practices characteristic of modern civil society. In this respect, studying the expansion of international civil society provides fertile ground for the consideration of the international genesis of nationalism - one of the major forces shaping the contemporary international system.

From an historical perspective therefore, the concept of international civil society can readily incorporate agents of civil society with a narrower political agenda like that of nationalist movements. Far from undermining this arena of world politics, nationalist social movements have historically been the product of those international forces that I have identified with the expansion of international civil society. The more pressing question now becomes how such a historical experience can become integrated into a *conceptual* model that adequately accounts for the interaction of centrifugal and centripetal forces such as nationalist and internationalist social and political movements. In other words, how can the category of international civil society simultaneously accommodate social movements that seek to go beyond the sovereign state with those that aim to establish bounded national states?

One answer to this paradox offered in this study has been to distinguish between the form and the content of those social movements that operate within international civil society. On this account, the expansion of international civil society is premised not on the homogenisation of political programmes, but on the adoption of certain comparable modes of political engagement. What upholds the existence of international civil society is not an abstract universal harmony of interests but an identifiable commonality in the mechanisms of social and political protest -what I have referred to as modern social and political agency. Thus, international civil society aspires to become a category capable of recognising the dynamics of modern social and political agency in international relations, without thereby positing some necessary unity between the movements that are its protagonists. In fact, this study

has sought to underline that international civil society is a domain of conflict and contradiction as much as it is an arena of cooperation and solidarity. While the normative impulse of this category plainly seeks to identify an international social and political space that may foster transnational alliances, there is -it should be stressed again- no requirement that such a communion of interests emerge out of the expansion of international civil society.

A second response to the question of how international civil society can co-exist with state sovereignty focuses upon the contribution of modern social movements toward the construction of a modern states-system. Here the argument is that the origin and development of state sovereignty is intimately related to the expansion of international civil society. As chapter three sought to illustrate, the notion of popular sovereignty and the political struggles it inspired made the territorial state a privileged site of modern social and political activity. If it is accepted that all forms of political engagement require the delimitation of a particular community where conflicting interests are played out, then the national state should be seen as the dominant political community during the modern epoch. The social agents characteristic of civil society were instrumental in lending legitimacy to the legal and political institutions of the modern national state, both by contesting and affirming the validity of territorially-bounded political entities. It therefore follows that the reproduction of modern social and political agency throughout time and place is an international phenomenon simply by virtue of the fact that it reinforced the status of the modern territorial state as the highest source of political sovereignty.

In these two respects therefore, the meaning of international civil society is associated not only to those international social and political actors that lie outside the confines of the state, but also to those agents that interact, and in some cases, reinforce the institutions of the modern sovereign state. The full potential of the concept will only be realised once international civil society is used to explain both the universal but heterogenous reproduction of modern agency across the globe, and the simultaneous process of state-formation. Far from representing a logical

contradiction in the definition of the category, this section will have hopefully demonstrated that international civil society need not be associated exclusively to the domain of non-state actors, but that it can also explain the historical and conceptual configuration of the present international society of states. Indeed, the argument throughout the thesis has been precisely that it is the nexus between these two domains -that of states and civil societies- as opposed to their separation, that bears most promises for our comprehension of international relations.

7.2 The Question of Internationalism

In all these discussions, one concept -that of internationalism- has loomed in the background as one of the key features of international civil society. It was argued in chapter two that the experience of feminist, working-class, liberal and even Islamic internationalism was both cause and effect of the expansion of international civil society and that internationalist organisations such as the International Congress of Women or the Comintern played a significant role in the international relations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The latter were certainly a product of the political and socio-economic transformations generated by international capitalism, and to that extent were a consequence of the expansion of international civil society. At the same time, however, such organisations also contributed to this process by actively promoting the establishment of kindred groups across the globe and by internationally disseminating political messages like those of class struggle or women's emancipation. It would be therefore be very difficult to account for the expansion of international civil society without incorporating the activism of internationalist social movements as a major component of this process. Whilst guarding against an excessively voluntarist perspective on the role of internationalism, it is nonetheless crucial to recognise the importance of self-conscious collective agency in the expansion of international civil society. Modern social movements have historically propagated universal ideologies across existing political boundaries; they

have produced demonstrative effects in other parts of the world; and perhaps most importantly, they have organised internationally in order to extend the limits of political action beyond the territorial state. In each of these three respects, the internationalist activism of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social and political movements should be considered as one of the basic motors behind the expansion of international civil society.

The historical moment chosen in this thesis to illustrate the relevance of internationalism in the expansion of international civil society was the brief period of the Popular Front. As we saw in chapter five, the economic depression, the sharpening class antagonisms and the accompanying rise of fascism in Europe all impacted heavily upon the politics of the Maghreb during the 1930s. The Popular Front victory in France in May 1936 swelled the ranks of the North African working-class organisations and generated similar coalitions across the region. The principles and the practice of working-class internationalism instigated much of this activity as ethnic and national differences were momentarily put aside, both among social movements within Tunisia, and in the relations between Paris and the Regency's population. At the time, the chief political enemies of most Tunisian social movements were big business and fascism. Thus, insofar as this period displayed the basic features of an international relations 'from below' associated in this thesis to the idea of international civil society, it did so mainly as a result of the social and political cooperation inspired by the principles of internationalist solidarity.

The conjunctural nature of the short-lived Popular Front should not blind us to the fact that the internationalist ferment of this period sprung from a broader experience of international interaction dating back to at least the turn of the century. Chapter four sought to chart this gradual implantation in Tunisia (and the Maghreb at large) of the ideas and the modes of political engagement characteristic of modern civil society. While much of this was the product of complex historical processes - including most obviously the violent imposition of French political and cultural codes through imperial conquest- the internationalist activism of working-class and pan-

Islamic organisations was also instrumental in securing the extension of political links to the Maghreb. For better or for worse, it is highly unlikely that trade unions, nationalist parties or Islamic reformist associations would have emerged in Tunisia (or anywhere else in the Maghreb) without the existence of an internationalist theory and practice that encouraged cross-ethnic and transnational solidarities. Even nationalism -a phenomenon seemingly at odds with the principles of internationalism-must be seen as a by-product of an attempt by European and Mashreqi social movements to extend their political ideas and organisational structures to the Maghreb. As we saw in the previous three chapters, the broad range of social movements that were protagonists of Tunisian colonial history emerged as a result of a systematic interaction with the outside world. Almost invariably, this interaction included an internationalist component so that, for example, Tunisian trade unionists and nationalists could openly acknowledge the influence and support of their European or Mashreqi counterparts in the pursuit of their own specific political goals. Whether considered at the leadership level or amongst the rank-and-file, much of the evidence presented in the historical chapters of this thesis suggests that the experience of internationalism was instrumental in furthering the expansion of international civil society to the Maghreb.

An investigation into the expansion of international civil society, therefore, must not only consider the process of capitalist accumulation on a global scale and the accompanying interaction with the forces of international society; it must also encompass the history and evolution of internationalism as a political principle and as an organisational practice in international relations. Modern forms of political agency have been reproduced internationally as a simultaneous reaction to three inter-related processes: the variegated expansion of capitalist social relations; the constraints and opportunities thrown up by the expansion of international society; and the possibility of practical and ideological political cooperation across borders. It is the latter of these -what I have labelled internationalism- that has been most muted in this thesis. Yet it is precisely the experience of internationalist politics within the

domain of international civil society that grants the latter concept a normative or political character. For without guaranteeing, as was said earlier, a necessary harmony of interests among progressive social movements, international civil society is a privileged arena for thinking through and realising projects of internationalists solidarity. The political promises (and limitations) inherent in the concept of international civil society can be illustrated by briefly considering the specific case of internationalism in the contemporary western Mediterranean.

7.3 The Contemporary Implications of International Civil Society: the Western Mediterranean Today

A cursory survey of the current socio-economic and political situation in the western Mediterranean reveals a complex and differentiated landscape. While the northern Mediterranean states (Spain, Portugal[1], Italy, France) are preoccupied with the controversial process of European economic and monetary union, the so-called third Mediterranean countries of the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) have set their hopes externally on a misnamed Euro-Mediterranean Partnership while facing different degrees of domestic turmoil. In the mid-1970s, two of the northern Mediterranean states -Spain and Portugal- were just emerging out of protracted dictatorships, while Italy was experiencing its own 'anni di piombo' or 'lead years' where class confrontation took a violent turn. Almost twenty-five years later, liberal-democratic regimes have been established in Spain and Portugal, and Italy appears to have undertaken a radical overhaul of the political institutions that dominated its post-war history, chiefly resulting from the demise of the Christian Democrats and the break-up of the Communist Party.

The Maghreb too, has witnessed significant changes in its political structures. Perhaps the starkest and cruellest transformation has been that of Algeria. The

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[1] Portugal has no Mediterranean coastline, but for political and historic reasons it has been included among the so-called 'Club Med' members of the European Union.

economic and political reforms introduced by the then president Chedli Benjedid in the 1980s had the opposite effect from that originally intended as the country descended into a bloody confrontation between the state and its Islamist opponents (further complicated by factional disputes within the two camps) since the cancellation of the second round of legislative elections in January 1992. In the other two north African countries, the post-colonial order secured through a combination of coercion and consent also experienced some important transformations during the 1980s. In Morocco, the absolutist monarchy of Hassan II survived successive attempts from the military and left-wing opposition at overthrowing the regime, and the country is presently witnessing a gradual move toward greater democratic accountability and transparency under a socialist-led government. Tunisia, has unfortunately shifted in the opposite direction. The overthrow of Habib Bourguiba in November 1987 by his prime minister and former Minister of Interior, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, initially raised hopes of a greater openness in the country's political system. Ten years down the line, however, Tunisia is a one-party police state where only the relative success of the country's economy is capable of sustaining Ben Ali's autocratic regime.

All these political fluctuations have been accompanied by the persistence of mass unemployment and underemployment, particularly amongst the youth; by gross inequalities in the distribution of wealth; and by the concomitant threat of violent uprising in the face of these conditions. Furthermore, the signing of Association Agreements with the EU under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiative launched at Barcelona in 1995 has only further accentuated the asymmetric relationship between Morocco and Tunisia and its northern Mediterranean neighbours. Most of the Maghrebi ex-colonies continue to be dependent politically and economically on Europe while the sizeable North African population in the continent still suffers from socio-economic and political discrimination.

For all its complexity therefore, the social relations among the peoples and states of the western Mediterranean continue to be defined by structural inequalities both within and between the Mediterranean states. Given this sombre socio-economic

and political outlook, what are the prospects of the progressive agents of international civil society overturning these entrenched disparities in the western Mediterranean? More broadly, how can the concept of international civil society be of use in interpreting and changing the existing international order in this region?

The second of these questions is perhaps the easier one to answer. From the perspective adopted in this study, international civil society is the domain of class conflict mediated through the international capitalist system and the international society of states. To this extent, the category 'international civil society' claims to be part of a wider gamut of Marxist concepts deployed in the analysis and transformation of our social and political reality. The extension of capitalist social relations to the Maghreb through imperialist penetration marked the beginning of the economic and political subjection of this region to European capital and its institutional representation via the colonial state. The attainment of sovereignty after World War II led to the adoption of economic development policies which aimed to sever an excessive dependency on the ex-metropole. Yet for a number of historical and political reasons, such ambitions proved to be illusory and today the North African working population is subject to the same ruthless forces of the capitalist market as any other part of the world. While the term 'international civil society' is unable to explain the dynamics of global capitalism, it is nonetheless capable of telling us how the market became international in the first place. Thus, it has been suggested throughout this study that the expansion of international civil society is synonymous with the international reproduction of capitalism. So long as civil society is identified with the capitalist market, the notion of an international civil society should be unproblematic: the long-standing and ever-increasing economic exchanges between the north and the south of the Mediterranean are a testimony to its existence.

But this is not the main strength of the category. One can, after all, both describe and explain the process of international capitalist production and exchange by referring to the much simpler term 'international capitalist economy or the 'global economy'. The major benefit of using international civil society in this context is that

it allows us to understand the dynamic character of these exchanges by registering the resistance to and contestation of the extension of capitalist social relations. For while French colonial capital may have attempted to create a world after its own image in Tunisia, it was unable to do so due to the resistance (political and otherwise) that it encountered. The expansion of international civil society introduced the law of the capitalist market to the Maghreb, but it also introduced class consciousness and class antagonisms which conditioned the nature of capitalist exploitation in this part of the world. It also eventually generated a nationalist movement strong enough to contest the political and economic domination of French capital. It is in this sense that the expansion of international civil society comes to represent more than simply the implantation of the capitalist market in the Maghreb; it also accommodates the social and political struggles against this market, which in turn affected the very nature of the socio-economic and political relations between the colonies and the metropole.

International civil society, then, is a historical-sociological category which can offer an explanation to the present socio-economic and political conjuncture in the Mediterranean by identifying the international structures and processes that engendered phenomena such as colonialism, nationalism, working-class organisations, independent sovereign states or unequal economic exchanges between the northern and southern shores of this sea. Though far from comprehensive, this list is arguably representative of the most significant forces behind contemporary politics in the western Mediterranean. Some of these phenomena are, to be sure, accounted for individually by other approaches to the politics of the region (historical, political-scientific, economic). The novel contribution of the term international civil society lies in the comprehensive character of its scope and its emphasis upon the international facets of the region's politics. By encompassing the dialectical interaction between states, classes, social movements and dominant and subaltern political authorities within a single concept, the idea of civil society enables the difficult but necessary task of focusing upon the nexus between these different spheres of the region's social and political life rather than seeing them in isolation. Moreover, with

the incorporation of an international dimension, the category allows us to eschew essentialist and territorially-bounded analyses of western Mediterranean states and societies. In combining these diverse elements, the term international civil society aims to present a richer account of how sovereign states, classes and social movements were created in the first place, from there to argue that these are the key forces shaping the contemporary regional order. Thus, on this rendition, for example, the ideological disputes underpinning the current Algerian crisis would be explained with reference to a broader international context, and not simply within a domestic framework as is commonly done. Similarly, the signature by Morocco and Tunisia of Association Agreements with the EU are seen as resulting not only from shifts in the bilateral and multilateral relations among western Mediterranean states, but also (and primarily) as a product of the reconfiguration of class forces within these respective states. One of the key benefits of a concept like international civil society is that it can uncover the linkage between the domestic and international factors that give rise to such social and political processes.

These considerations lead us to the earlier question posed above, namely: what are the political implications derived from this analysis? A central argument in this thesis has been that analysing the workings of international civil society necessarily involves illuminating the possibilities of transnational social and political solidarity. The narrative section of the study considered the record of such solidarity during the colonial period, but recent initiatives suggest that similar experiments have resurfaced in the western Mediterranean over the past decade. The 1995 Barcelona Conference in particular, occasioned a flurry of transnational activity among non-state actors from the different shores of the Mediterranean which according to some signalled the beginnings of a 'Mediterranean civil society'. Three meetings held in Barcelona in parallel to the official conference reflected this renewed international activity among social movements from the region: the Alternative Mediterranean Conference (AMC), organised by a collective of Catalan social and political organisations ranging from anti-racist movements to solidarity campaign groups, and from trade unions to

INGOs; the EuroMed Civic Forum, convened by the Catalan autonomous government (*la Generalitat de Catalunya*), together with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU's Social and Economic Council; and finally the 'Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of Left and Progressive Forces', a meeting arranged by *Iniciativa per Catalunya* , the Catalan federation of the Spanish political movement *Izquierda Unida* (United Left).

All three conferences were, to different degrees, critical of the official inter-governmental conference and the declaration that emerged out of the proceedings. Aside from advocating a broader remit for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (incorporating, for example, women's rights, environmental issues and questions of migration flows), the main purpose of these gatherings was to demonstrate the existence of a Mediterranean civil society parallel to that of a Mediterranean society of states. Thus, for example, the EuroMed Civic forum's stated aims were to bring together "[t]he new actors emerging in the international domain (chambers of commerce, corporations, trade unions, universities, media, NGOs, women's associations, and also the regions and cities) [in order] to channel the initiatives geared toward reinforcing the links between the two shores of the Mediterranean."[2] Furthermore, it was emphasised that "despite cultural, economic, demographic and political differences, the important role played by **civil society** within the European and Mediterranean sphere makes it a key tool in the pursuit of greater mutual understanding."[3]

These three examples of transnational social and political activity in the western Mediterranean demonstrate the potential of building links across national, religious and ethnic boundaries. Yet they also reveal some of the limitations inherent in a view of social and political change that overemphasises the role of non-state actors in international relations. For one, the agents of 'Mediterranean civil society'

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[2] Forum Civil EuroMed "Documento de Trabajo" (working paper), *Institut Català d'Estudis Mediterranis*, Barcelona , Spain, 26 June 1995, p. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

have had little visible impact upon the region's most pressing socio-economic and political problems, like for example, the crisis in Algeria or the escalating unemployment among the region's young population. Furthermore, there has been little continuity in the organisational and programmatic frameworks established at Barcelona in 1995.

Any discussion of international civil society fostering internationalist activity in the western Mediterranean must therefore be tempered by a recognition of the limits to such activity . In particular, one of the central themes of this thesis, namely that states and civil societies are strongly intertwined, should be borne in mind. As we saw in the introduction, most theorists of international or global civil society operate on the assumption that the state and civil society occupy separate spheres of social and political life. Thus, civil society is presented as a social domain with its own structures and dynamics, which can somehow be detached from the logic that permeates the international society of states. The fact, however, is that states and civil societies are two inter-related parts of a greater whole, namely capitalist society: there is no such thing as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) or a social movement that stands outside wider social relations, including those involving the different branches of the state. The point, therefore, is that any emancipatory politics emerging from within the ranks of international civil society in the western Mediterranean must also account for the role of the state in the struggles for progressive change in the region.

The implications of this become readily apparent when we investigate the role of Mediterranean civil society in extending human and civil rights across the region. Some social movements pin their hopes on the creation of trans-Mediterranean human rights networks in the image of the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly, that may be able to pressure for an improvement in the condition of civil and political liberties in the area. There is some evidence to suggest that such initiatives are already underway, spurred on by the Barcelona Conference. But the problems arise once the representatives of such organisations return home from their participation in

international conferences. If we take the case of the Maghreb as an example, the different human rights groups working in the region can certainly be associated to a burgeoning 'Mediterranean civil society', and their participation in Barcelona-related meetings will in all probability have strengthened their domestic standing. Yet, as Susan Waltz has recently argued, these movements cannot be seen in isolation from the wider socioeconomic and political processes in North Africa: they are political actors with close links to different party-political projects and often, to different sectors and factions of the state.[4] In so far as they are representatives of civil society, therefore, they are also significant players in the political and socioeconomic life of their respective states. An analysis of Mediterranean civil society which neglects this constant interaction between states and civil societies risks painting an overly optimistic picture of the possibilities for democratic change based solely upon transnational links among civil societies.. More importantly, the political strategies emerging from the different gatherings of Mediterranean civil society seem to suggest that change in the existing regional sociopolitical structures will come about through the extension of a transnational civil society which somehow contests the state-led forms of integration. Yet civil society will become a source of radical transformation in the Mediterranean only if it comes to terms with the interaction of states and civil societies within the wider political and socioeconomic context of the region. If the forces of Mediterranean civil society are to challenge the status quo, one of the first steps in this direction should involve critically evaluating their position vis-à-vis the international society of states. A second, and perhaps harder step, will be to revise their expectations about the power and effectiveness of a supposedly autonomous transnational network of civil societies within the western Mediterranean region.

7.4 The Uses of International Civil Society

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[4] Susan R. Waltz, *Human Rights and Reform: Changing the Face of North African Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

The ultimate test of the validity of any concept in the social sciences lies in its capacity to explain and to transform our collective social and political lives. The term 'civil society' has in recent years been subject to uses and abuses that have, on these terms, rendered this classical concept of western political thought invalid for contemporary purposes. Civil society has been burdened with so many meanings and has had such high political expectations attached to it, that it has paradoxically become an increasingly shallow concept capable of explaining very little and transforming even less. This tendency to underestimate the very specific and often politically radical nature of civil society both in theory and in practice has been a feature of IR theory as we saw in the introductory chapter. The present study has evidently participated in this retrieval of civil society and its application within the domain of IR. Yet it has also aimed to restore some of the historical and sociological complexity of the category, often in critical dialogue with those IR theorists that employ the term. What will have hopefully emerged out of this process is a conception of international relations that gives collective social and political agency a central explanatory role in IR. I have argued that modern social movements have been international phenomena from their inception and that they represent a key component of the past and the present structure of the international society. Furthermore, it has been suggested that a proper historical and sociological investigation of this experience can serve present and future struggles for the construction of political solidarities across national, ethnic and religious boundaries.

The thesis has focused on the very specific case-study of Tunisia. Though a small country without a central role in the unfolding of contemporary world events, Tunisia's history during this century is in many important senses representative of the international forces that have shaped the modern world. To that extent, there is no obvious reason why the study of the expansion of international civil society to Tunisia could not inspire similar studies of other colonised areas of the world. Indeed, the choice of case study -a predominantly Arab-Islamic society, historically dominated by successive occupying powers- has deliberately sought to dispel any doubts as to

whether the expansion of international civil society is an exclusively European or north-Atlantic phenomenon. So long as the concept of international civil society can be deployed in the analysis of international social movements and their role in the construction of international society, it will have proved its explanatory utility for IR. If it manages to inspire further studies into the processes that instigated the rise of modern social and political agency in other parts of the globe, it will have also made a broader contribution to the social sciences.

The tallest order for international civil society, however, rests upon its capacity to inform the future internationalist politics. This study will have hopefully illustrated the historical and conceptual reality of an international social and political space where progressive agents can operate. As we have seen, this arena of international civil society is open to contestation by divergent and often distinctly unpalatable political projects. But the fact that the concept of international civil society can be appropriated by oppressive political movements should not blind us to its historical and sociological reality.

The expansion of capitalism has generated variegated social formations -albeit articulated by the overarching logic of capitalist production and exchange- which in turn yield myriad social forces. Political identities forged around notions of nationalism, ethnicity, race or religious affiliation have often found expression within the ambit of international civil society. Nonetheless, rather than writing such movements off as remnants of the past, it is crucial to explain -and criticise- these phenomena precisely with reference to the complex reproduction of global capitalism. At the same time, however, socialists and other progressive movements must counter these social forces in world politics by retracing and revising their own powerful tradition of internationalist thought and action that has sought to organise politically around universalist principles that transcend nationality, ethnicity or creed. I have argued that the idea of international civil society can serve to accomplish these two inter-related objectives. Conceptualising the complex and contradictory nature of the expansion of international civil society could represent the first step in the

identification of the social and political sources of this new socialist internationalism.

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