

12 DECEMBER 9AM-10PM: ORIENT-INSTITUT BEIRUT (OIB)

9.00 Welcoming Address: Stefan Leder. Introduction: Laure Guirguis

9.30-12.30 (ARAB) NATIONALISM AND THE LEFT: CONVERGENCES, TENSIONS, APORIA

Discussants: **Marlene Nasr and Musa Budeiri**

Dyala Hamzah

Editing “Marxism” in and out of Pan-Arab Histories and Lives. Tarikh al-umma al-‘arabiyya and Darwish al-Miqdadi (1897-1961)

In the Interwar period, many Pan-Arab activists found themselves at the helm of the budding national educational systems being set up under colonial tutelage, in Mandatory Palestine, Syria and Iraq. In their capacity as educators, they were able to train, shape the worldview of, if not indoctrinate altogether, cohorts of students who would take the nationalist reins of leadership in the post-colonial states. Among these activists, many were Palestinian or Syrian scholars like Muhammad Izzat Darwaza, Anis al-Nusuli, Akram Zu‘aytar and others, who found themselves transitioning out of the tradition of Islamic historiography and into the modern discipline and genre of history as they were being tasked to write the first Pan-Arab history textbooks for primary and secondary schools.

The challenge of having to write an ideologized or nationalistic version of a yet non-existent source-critical history of a nation in the making was daunting on more than one count. Philip Hitti’s (1886-1978) assessment of the state of the art back in the early 1920s paints a part of the picture. Having studied at the Syrian Protestant College and then at Columbia university in the 1910s, the future father of Middle East Studies in the US had returned after WWI to teach “Arab history” at his *alma mater* – a subject which was simply “not taught in Beirut”. In an interview which he gave shortly before his death, Hitti had recounted how everything had been missing back then in terms of reference works, research facilities, teaching material and textbooks.

A former student of Hitti himself, Palestinian historian and educator Darwish al-Miqdadi (1897-1961) would go on to author primary and secondary school textbooks in Baghdad in the 1920s and 1930s, albeit not in the tone and manner of his master’s “oriental” *History of the Arabs* (1937) (for such was the name of the discipline Hitti was entrusted to teach at AUB). Amongst the very active Arab nationalists mobilizing at AUB within the secret society al-‘Urwa al-Wuthqa, which he joined upon its foundation in 1918, Miqdadi returned to Palestine after graduating in 1922, only to continue mobilizing in the name of Arab independence at the Arab College in Jerusalem, where he taught till 1924. Under the employ of Sati’ al-Husri in Baghdad (mid 1920s - mid 1930s), this lesser known early figure of Pan-Arabism was however to become one of its most consummate exponents and articulate ideologues in page after page of his secondary school textbook *Tarikh al-umma al-‘arabiyya* [1st ed. (Baghdad: Matba'a al-Ma'arif, 1350/ 1931); 2nd ed. (1351/ 1932), 3rd ed. (1353/[1934]), 4th ed. (Baghdad: Dar al-Haditha. 1355/[1936]). rev. ed. (Baghdad: Government Press, 1939).

The story of his next career-stops and writings had seemed until now a forgone conclusion: Miqdadi epitomized those fascistic Arab nationalists with more than just an eye to Nazi Germany in his case, since he had actually sojourned in the capital of the 3rd Reich between

1936 and 1939. Even the history of the multiple editions of his *Tarikh* seemed to support that derogatory view since the initial “semi-Marxism” of the *Tarikh*, so meticulously analysed by Dawn (1988) and “the concept of class conflict” therein clearly “underwent a gradual attenuation” between the first and fifth edition, in which even the racial theory at the heart of Miqdadi’s reworking of the Winkler-Caetani’s Semitic Wave Theory had to do away with the superiority of the Semites.

On the basis of some new sources however as well as the uncovering of faulty evidence in some of the cited sources by Reeva Simons and others, this paper attempts a thicker description of the intense ideological contest at work in the Middle East of the 1920s and tentatively suggest to take Miqdadi’s “semi-Marxism” as more than just a “left-wing syntax”. Miqdadi’s activities in Iraq fall within the period framed by the beginnings of communist circles around al-Rahhal in 1924 and the first reconstruction of the Iraqi Communist Party in 1941. An outstanding trip he takes to Berlin in the summer of 1931, well in advance of his later stint in Germany, coincides with the peak of Münzenberg’s League Against Imperialism’s activities as a transnational anti-colonial hub. When he eventually settles in Berlin in 1936 and founds the Arab Club there and its affiliate Arab Student Association, Miqdadi is trailed by a Gestapo agent tasked with unmasking potential communist activity within those two venues. On the basis of a reading of the journal *al-Futuwva* (1934-1936), the organ of Nadi al-Muthanna, as well as of the sole edition of Miqdadi’s *Tarikh* which had been missing from Ernest Dawn’s reading (the 4th edition), this paper tentatively suggests that Miqdadi’s “semi-Marxism” was as a true ideological component of Pan-Arabism as the racial theory was but that it ultimately got dissolved under the effects of that much more powerful solvent.

Matthieu Rey

Baathism: An Original Experiment with Leftist Ideas (1943-1970)

In this paper, I would like to focus on the relations between 'leftist' values and the baathist movement in Syria between 1943 and 1971. I would like to determine what values were important to explain the conduct of the politicians and, and particularly, we will explore what « socialism » as a value meant for the different leaders. This can shed light on how this value became hegemonic in the baathist vocabulary in the late 1960s. For this purpose, this presentation states that values are constructed through a symbolic struggle and that their understanding depends on the relations between them.

From 1943 to 1955, a first step was taken. In 1943, a group of activists gathered in Damascus to discuss how to help the Arab renaissance. They built the underpinnings of the Baath party. The latter emerged from the electoral context of 1947. Michel Aflaq, one of its founders, stated its main political goal in a series of articles. He put forward three key values: unity, freedom and socialism. However, he did not deliver a precise definition of the latter. Moreover, these values were wrapped in a moral rhetoric. Throughout the political competition of the years 1947-1949, these values were refined. Leaders took other values into consideration: for example, « free elections » were presented as granting access to power and thus as paving the way for a fundamental change in society. Shishakli’s coups brought institutions to a standstill. It also forced leaders to go into exile. In exile, Akram al-Hawrani joined Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din Bitar. This meeting led to a major reshuffle in the Baathist apparatus and values. After the collapse of Shishakli, free elections took place and Baathists massively entered the parliament. A new era started.

Between 1954 and 1963, Baathists defended a new set of values, such as neutrality, non-alignment, peasants' rights, and state control of the national economy. At the same time, a new Arab context emerged: Nasser became popular by fighting against the Baghdad Pact. Neutrality became the major issue of the Baathist fight, combined with national protection of the Peasant. In this context, the Baath party entered in crisis as its institutions did not work normally: no congress was held and agreement over Hawrani's integration remained informal. These several changes created a highly unstable situation. The military branch of the party became hegemonic as political struggles developed. This led to the union between Egypt and Syria. A new regime ruled Syria for the next three years during which the state took control of the economy and launched a land reform. However, it failed to stabilize the new political situation. In 1961, dissident officers broke down the coup. In 1963, the Baath party finally took power through a coup.

For the next seven years, the logic of the coup Reshaped politics and the way it was practiced. Each coup led a team down. Each coup accelerated the rotation of the elites. Each coup brought a new set of values to be experimented. This reframed the major motto of the Baathist leadership. This finally allowed peasant values and struggles to take over urban values.

Sune Haugballe

Reconstructing Discord through Everyday Ideology: Khaled Bakdash and the Palestine Question

The scant existing literature on Khaled Bakdash, long-time leader of the Syrian and Lebanese Communist Parties, sees him as the embodiment of the way in which the Soviet world communist movement, in Tareq Ismael's words, has "dominated" Arab communism, leading to the uncritical acceptance of the canons of Soviet Marxism and the concomitant failure to formulate independent social analyses of the specific conditions of Arab societies. The evaluation of Bakdash as "implanted" is symptomatic of a broader tendency to place non-Western communists on the fringe of local knowledge production, if not completely dismiss them.

This paper argues that such sweeping conclusions rest on methodological dominance of top-down history, in which party doctrine is made equivalent with (the lack of) party-society relations. If we instead pay attention to the biographies of Arab communists, and to their internal disagreement and debates, a different picture emerges, namely: that of discord and everyday ideology. Inside the Lebanese-Syrian Communist Party, a rich contestation of the leadership took place throughout its history, including questioning of the Moscow line. The paper focuses on the deep disagreements surrounding the Lebanese-Syrian Communist Party's fatal decision to support the international partition plan of Palestine in 1947, despite previous resistance to partition within the party. By reading biographical literature on Bakdash in Arabic and contemporary debates in sources such as *al-Sakha* and *al-Tariq*, the paper attempts to reconstruct the full extent of disagreement that was terminated when Farjallah Helou was forced to toe the party line in his infamous *mea culpa*, *risalat Salim*, and ensuing doctrine under Bakdash' dominance. How did Bakdash deal with this discord? Which personal experiences and contacts to Palestine and Palestinians within the party influenced the debate? What is the role of ideology in determining the party in line on such a crucial question as Palestine?

The analysis will point us to an understanding of ideology that is compatible with subjectivity. This, I argue, can be accomplished through a shift in the conceptualization of

ideology, from a pre-given, fixed textual corpus, in the narrow and reductive sense of ‘Communist Party ideology’, to a ferment working in the individual and producing a great deal of variation, as it interacts with the subjective aspects of a given individual. In line with recent ideology theory and social history, not least the latest work of Michael Freeden, I use this perspective to restore the individual as an agent, but as an ideological agent. Instead of privileging discourse as the sole historical agent, I suggest a circular or dialogical notion of ideology and subjectivity, where the individual unpacks, personalizes, and in the process remakes him/herself into a subject with distinct and meaningful biographical features. I argue that such an approach to ideology can situate subjectivity as central in the ongoing reevaluation of Arab left histories. By re-framing ideology, we also avoid facile dismissal of Arab communists such as Bakdash as ‘overly ideological,’ which is really just a way to close down scholarship about them and their place in modern Middle Eastern history.

10.30-11.00 Coffee Break

Jeffrey Byrne

Of Cosmopolitanism and Color: Reconciling Arabism, Pan-Africanism, Maghribism, and Socialist Internationalism in Algeria’s Postcolonial Revolution

Drawing on new evidence from Algerian, Yugoslavian, and other national archives, this paper explores the tensions between nationalism and internationalism in postcolonial revolutionary Algeria. After gaining independence in 1962 (and even beforehand), Algeria became a key actor in Third Worldist diplomacy and a vital hub in a global support network for national liberation movements and armed revolutionary forces. Palestinian, Angolan, South African, and Venezuelan revolutionaries—to name but a few examples—all took ideological inspiration and practical support from the Algerians in this era. Algiers connected Cuba, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and communist China to myriad anticolonial causes, continents apart. At the same time, however, Algeria’s new elites struggled with the question of their own national identity. Although they were publicly dedicated to the causes of Arab nationalism, pan-Africanism, Maghribism, Afro-Asianism, and socialist internationalism, all at the same time, in private Algerian officials recognized that they needed to decide which of these causes should take priority over the others. Powerful factions in Algerian society interpreted foreign policy as identity politics: support for Palestine was seen as an expression of Arabism, for example, and Angola as Africanism. Frustrated with the Third World’s racial politics, President Ahmed Ben Bella told Yugoslavia’s Josip Broz Tito that “we are white like you, maybe a little browner”. Meanwhile, by the mid-1960s, the visible influence in Algeria of foreign economic advisors from countries such as the United States, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and France provoked a backlash from unhappy Algerian workers and farmers, who felt doubly threatened by the competing capitalist and socialist visions of globalization. Paradoxically therefore, Ben Bella’s successors waged war on “cosmopolitanism”, even as Algeria’s revolutionary example achieved even greater influence worldwide.

Gennaro Gervasio

Between Pan-Arabism and Communism: the Radical Left in Egypt in the 1970s

The Arab Radical Left emerged after the *Naksa* (1967), as a reaction to both the failure of the self-proclaimed progressive and revolutionary regimes (al-Azm, 1967) and to the ‘traditional’ Left, which had mostly supported them.

The trajectory of the ‘New Left’ (al-Yasār al-Jadīd) in Egypt is part of this new Arab radical trend but it is also peculiar since the Egyptian Communist Parties had officially dissolved themselves in 1965 to join Nasser’s (pseudo) revolutionary platform. In this respect, while both Nasser and the ‘official Left’ – represented by the monthly *al-Tali’a*— survived the June Defeat somehow, a new wave of younger and more radical Marxists – partly composed by those who refused to disband the parties in 1965- made its appearance in the universities and, later, in the factories, thus challenging the established ‘revolutionary credentials’ of the regime and of the ‘older comrades’.

Based on mostly unpublished archive materials and personal interviews, this paper aims at shedding the light on the theory and political praxis of the Egyptian Radical Left in the 1970s. In particular, I will focus on the experience of the ‘extreme left’, embodied by the *al-Tanzīm al-Shuyuṭ al-Misrī (TshM)*, formed in Cairo in late 1969, which later became the Egyptian Communist Workers’ Party (ECWP, *Hiṣb al-Ummāl al-Shuyuṭ al-Misrī*) in 1975.

This very interesting group attracted many radical intellectuals, especially in Egyptian campuses, and helped to spread the ideas of the new radical Third World Left (Vietnam, Cuba, Mao’s China, etc) in Egypt and in the Arab East.

In spite of this internationalist opening, though, this paper argues that both TShM and ECWP remained trapped within a nationalist and pan-arabist discourse, by de facto focussing on the ‘national question’ at the expense of the ‘social question’ (Gervasio, 2010). Whilst this choice provided the group with a revolutionary platform and some popular support between 1971 and 1977, it is also partly responsible of the failure of the ECWP and of the Egyptian Radical Left to react and resist to Sadat’s internal and foreign policy dramatic changes, especially in the aftermath of the Peace Treaty with Israel (1978).

11.40-12.30 Discussion

12.30 - 02.00 Lunch

2.00-3.45 GENEALOGIES OF AN ARAB TRADITION OF RADICAL THOUGHT

Discussant: **Dyala Hamzah**

Giedre Sabaseviciute

The Journal Al-Adab and Transnational Intellectual Network between Beirut, Cairo and Baghdad

Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, calls to put culture in the service of decolonization have increasingly affected Arab intellectual scene. Introduced in Egypt in 1947, Jean Paul Sartre's idea of *littérature engagée* rapidly gained prominence among Arab writers to become a dominant topic in literary debates for the next two decades (Klemm, 2000). It was also the time when many Arab writers became directly involved in political anti-colonial movements, such as communist and socialist parties all over the region, the Baath party in Iraq and Syria, or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

This presentation suggests taking a closer look into debates on commitment in literature through the analysis of the literary journal in which they were mostly taking place, *al-Adab*. Founded in Beirut in 1953, *al-Adab* provided a common platform of discussion for Arab intellectuals coming from different national backgrounds and enrolled in conflicting political movements. As such, the journal formed an intellectual transnational network encompassing literary circles in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. The journal functioned as a connecting point bringing together writers who, despite their conflicting political sympathies, shared the conviction that culture should play an active role in the decolonization.

This paper seeks to explore the ways in which a transnational nature of the network formed around *al-Adab* journal affected its ideological content, and specifically the notion of committed literature (*al-adab al-multazim*). Departing from the perspective that views journals as spaces of intellectual interaction and network formation, it argues that *al-Adab* functioned as a “trans-party” platform allowing intellectuals to cross the ideological boundaries that might have separated them in their home countries. The openness of the journal to competing notions of literary commitment helped to institutionalize *iltizam* as a norm in postcolonial literature. This opened the way to different uses of the concept, including its appropriation by the Islamist intellectual scene. This presentation seeks to contribute to the study of intellectual cross-fertilization and the circulation of ideas in postwar Arab world, where Leftists, Islamists and ideologically uncommitted writers sought to explore multiple Arab postcolonial futures.

Jens Hanssen

The Arab Radical Tradition in Comparative Perspective

My contribution to this conference is an exercise in comparative Third-World intellectual history that is based on David Scott's observation of the apparent paradox in the concept of a 'radical tradition'. I explore the shifting meanings of radical thought and practice and their modes of transmission from generation to generation and/or across the Afro-Asian geographies of anti-imperialism. Bringing radical intellectual trends from the Middle East between the 1950s and the 1980s into conversation with contemporaneous transformations in East Asian and Afro-Caribbean Leftist traditions generates historical as well methodological questions I wish to pursue: What were the extent and limits of Third-

world solidarity; what are its lessons for contemporary intersectional activism? How does the particular structure of colonialism affect the transmission of a radical tradition? What is the place of violence and self-reflection? What are the language politics of a radical tradition? What role does geographical, social and cultural location play? How does diasporization affect the political claims of the radical tradition? What would a post-socialist frame of analysis see that a post- or decolonial frame does not?

Michaëlle Browers

Counter-Hegemonic Interventions in a Time of Authoritarian Modernism: Egypt's Movement of Peace Supporters

Building upon previous scholarship on Egypt that documents the ways in which radical reformist thought was captured by what Roel Meijer (following James Scott) has aptly termed "the hegemony of authoritarian modernism," my larger project explores the extent to which this assessment holds true in other modernizing so-called radical or revolutionary Arab regimes (i.e., Syria, Algeria, Iraq) after independence. While the aim of the project is largely to expand and underscore the central claim of Meijer's--and others scholars of this period who articulate the same phenomena in different terms--for the purposes of this workshop, I will reconsider a group of intellectuals and publications around the Egyptian Movement of Peace Supporters (*haraka ansar al-salam*). I argue that in the pamphlets and petitions of this group, in their publications, such *al-Katib* (1951-1952) and in the political, literary and artistic works of figures associated with this work we find critical interventions that, I argue, articulate a transnational counter-hegemonic project. Much attention has been paid by scholars of the left on how HADITU (*al-haraka al-dimuqratiyya lil-taharrur al-watan*), the broader communist movement out of which the Movement of Peace Supporters was formed, was the only Egyptian communist movement to support the 1952 Free Officers' coup. However, little substantive attention has been paid to the character of the ideas that this collaboration around international peace generated both before and after 1952. An impulse toward, if not always a tradition of, radical thinking about peace, justice and liberation is articulated by figures associated with the Peace Supporters and, in some cases, it not only withstands but is strengthened by the closure of political space for leftists intellectuals after 1952.

03.00-03.45 Discussion

03-45 - 04.15 Coffee Break

04.15-05.00 *Years of Revolutionary Joy* الثورة السعادة سنوات

Dar al-tanwir, Beirut, 2015

Discussion with Dalal al-Bizri

قوة الذاكرة وتواضعها

عندما شرعتُ في كتابة تجريتي الشخصية، السياسية والحزبية، فتحتُ على نفسي نافذة كتابة جديدة، لم أعهد لها. وكان عليّ، من أجل ذلك، أن أستعين بذاكراتي المحضة .
صحيح أنني قبل ذلك، أثناء كتابتي البحث السوسولوجي، أو المقال السياسي، كنتُ أحتاج إلى ذاكرتي؛ ولكن، فعل التذكّر، مع البحث والمقال، هو أبعد عن "الشخصي"؛ فوق أنه عمل ذهني ثانوي، على ما يُعتقد،

قياساً إلى التحليل، والإستدلال والمقارنة، والإستنتاج، والتفسير، والرصد، وتفكيك الرموز، والمجادلة، والموقف، في حال المقال يُضاف إليها كلها الفرضية العلمية، في حال البحث .

أما في كتابة تجربتي الماضية هذه، فكان التذكّر فيها فعلاً أساسياً، محورياً، بل فعلاً يتوسل الأفعال الذهنية الأخرى. الأمر لم يكن هيئاً: فالتاريخ الذي أتمّسه بعيد، عمره يقارب نصف القرن، ولم أكن واثقة أبداً من أنني سوف أتمكّن من إعادة إحيائه .

كانت مغامرة ذهنية جديدة، قررتُ خوضها، من دون أن أكون متأكدة من بلوغها شطّ الأمان، شطّ النص المكتوب. وعندما غصتُ في هذه المغامرة، نسيتُ الأمان، نسيتُ التعب، وصرتُ مشدودة إلى ذاكرتي بكل ما أملك من طاقة داخلية .

وقد تبيّن لي، أثناء لحظات تعثّر هذه المغامرة خصوصاً، أن التذكّر هو فعل ذهني بامتياز، يعتمد على مكّات عقلية وروحية وعاطفية، إليك خلاصتها :

هناك أولاً مشغّل الذاكرة. هي ترسّبات من الماضي، حيّة، ولكن نائمة، يوقظها وجه، أو مكان، أو إحساس، أو إنطباع، أو مناخ، أو رائحة، أو كتاب، أو أغنية... هذه الومضات، القريبة البعيدة، عائشة في داخلي، سارحة لوحدها، مثل حديقة خلفية، لم يصبها اليباس طوال سنوات غيابي عنها، أو نسياني لها. عندما كنتُ أستحضر هذه الومضات، أستعيد مناخها، أو تلاوينها، أو نجومها، بغية الكتابة عن هذا الماضي، كانت هذه الحديقة تتفتح، فيفوح عطرها الأخاذ .

وما كان عليّ لحظتها سوى الإستعجال لتسجيلها، كي لا أضيّعها؛ ثم تنبّيتها كنقطة إنطلاق لفصل من فصول ذاكرتي هذه. لكن الومضة، ولو كانت فاتتة، إلا أنها ليست كافية. هي عبّبة، مجرد عبّبة لأبواب مغلّقة، حافظة الذاكرة، وحاميتها من النسيان ربما. وأنت واقف أمام باب من أبوابها، وتسال ذاكرتك عن المزيد، عليك أن تتحلّى بعقل المنقّب عن الآثار، من دقة وخيال وتركيز ومرونة. عليك أيضاً، مثله، أن تنزود بفرشاة صغيرة، أطرافها ليّنة، ومطرقة رقيقة، وتضرب بنعومة على باب الذاكرة، وأن تحمل معك وميضك إلى ما هو أوسع مجالاً، أدق، أعمق؛ إلى مشارف الحديقة .

وأثناء الحفر البطيء هذا، أكون شخصاً مزدوجاً: مع أن الذاكرة هي ذاكرتي أنا، ولكنني أشعر، وأنا أنقّب عنها، كأنني "آخر"، شخص آخر، غريبة عن نفسي. وهذا الغريبة تأخذ بيدي إلى أعماقي أنا، حيث يربض حدسي. عندها، أعود فأجد نفسي. حدسي هو نفسي، هو المحرك الأقوى لذاكرتي، أو لوجهة ذاكرتي، هو ضميري المعرفي الصافي، الذي يظل يؤكد، أو ينفى، أو يمتحن، أو يعدّل، أو يرمّم .

كل هذا يحتمل الإختلال، أو الفشل. تخونني الذاكرة، أحياناً. وأشعر بالخيانة عندما أنتبّه، في لحظة ما، أنني أسقطتُ حاضري على ماضي السحيق. وفي هذه الحالة أعود إلى الأرشيف، للنتبّت مما أتذكّره، أو شطّبه، أو التدقيق في تفصيله من تفاصيله .

ولكن، هذا لا يكفي، إذ كيف لي أن أعرف، على الرغم من إخضاع ذاكرتي لإمتحان التاريخ الأرشيفي، أنّ لا خيط أيديولوجياً يجمع بين كل ما أسرده، أو نوعاً من المحاباة للنفس، أو الهوى السياسي، أو التحيز لشخصيات، أو النفور من غيرها؟ وهل تكفي إجابتي على هذا السؤال، بأنني، في كل الأحوال، لا أفعل سوى إعادة فهم سنوات معينة من حياتي: كيف حصلت هكذا؟ لماذا؟ ما الذي قرّر مجراها؟ العصر، الإرادة، القدر، الطبايع؟

ولكنني، أيضاً، أقول لنفسي بأن " خيانة الذاكرة " هي من إختراع المؤرخين، الذين ينشدون الموضوعية المطلقة والحقائق الدامغة. أما أنا، فأدعي العكس تماماً: لستُ موضوعية مع ذاكرتي المحضة. لا أستطيع أن أكون .

الآن، أنهيتُ كتابة الجزء الثاني من هذه التجربة. وهو يروي تتمّتها. أما عنوانه فهو " دفاتر الحرب الأهلية: 1975-1990 " .

05.00-06.00 PARADOXES AND LEGACIES OF THE SOUTHERN YEMENI LEFT

Anne-Linda Amira Augustin, Abdulsalam Alrubaidi, Fawwaz Traboulsi

Discussion around “South Yemen under the Rule of the Left. A Personal Testimony” by Fawwaz Traboulsi (Riad El Rayyes Books, Beirut, 2015)

جنوب اليمن في حكم اليسار. شهادة شخصية

In 1967, the National Liberation Front ended British colonial rule in South Arabia and established the People’s Republic of South Yemen. Three years later the state was renamed the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). The early years of the PDRY were defined by internal struggles in the National Front (NF), but eventually the radical left got the upper hand over the right-wing in the “Glorious Corrective Move” of June 22, 1969.

The Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) was founded in 1978 and ruled the country until unification with North Yemen in 1990. On the basis of ‘scientific socialism’, the YSP established a state with free and obligatory education for all children. It also tried to eradicate illiteracy and empower women’s rights with the Family Law of 1974. Furthermore, the constitution guaranteed jobs in the public sector and free health care. Nevertheless, in the end, the socialist project failed. Infighting amongst elites was a major reason for the downfall of the YSP and the PDRY. In one of the darkest periods of South Yemeni history, thousands of South Yemenis died in a ten days war following an assault on the Politburo of the YSP on January 13, 1986. Although South Yemen has a troubled past, the achievements of the PDRY still have an influence on political mobilization today.

This presentation is twofold. First, we will analyze the internal and external relations of the YSP establishment; the elites’ struggles over power up until 1990 will be viewed within the framework of a reading of Fawwaz Traboulsi’s personal testimony “South Yemen under the Rule of the Left”. Second, we will present quotes taken from interviews during intensive fieldwork in Aden and the surrounding governorates in 2014 and 2015. These quotes will illustrate how activists of the Southern Movement view and discuss the elites’ struggles and the social achievements of the PDRY state.

Abdulsalam al-Rubaidi

The Yemeni Socialist Party and its Struggle for Power

As a response to British colonial rule in South Arabia, the National Liberation Front (NLF) imposed a Marxist-oriented policy. The NLF drew inspiration from nationalist-leftist movements acting under the banner of Pan-Arabism and international socialist ideas. However, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen became the only Arab state to adopt ‘scientific socialism’ as its theoretical ideology. The Yemeni Socialist Party wanted to transform South Yemen from a traditional tribal country to a modern socialist society.

Although the YSP declared proletarian internationalism and a one-party system free of hierarchical structures, tribal and regional affiliations still played a significant role in determining the politics of the state. Therefore, both the NF and its later successor, the YSP, were internally fragmented. Adeni functionaries butted heads with influential rural personalities (cp. Traboulsi 2015: 57-58) and southerners squabbled with northerners (cp. Traboulsi 2015: 111-112). Alliances were forged on the basis of tribal and regional affiliations and the YSP’s ideology in practice was tainted. The war of 1986 was a telling indication of state failure.

Although various South Arabian Sultanates and Shaykhdoms came together under one legitimate and centralized entity in 1967 (cp. Traboulsi 2015: 39), different regional and personal actors determined the national and international politics of the state. Some supported a centralized national party and others opposed the idea. Some, such as President Salim Rubayya ‘Ali (Salmin), advocated for improving relations with neighboring Arab countries and China (cp. Traboulsi 2015:69). Others, such as President Abdulfattah Ismail, believed in maintaining strong relations with the Soviet Union above all else (cp. Traboulsi 2015: 101).

This presentation will investigate the paradoxes of the YSP establishment, which claimed to support proletarian internationalism on the one hand but wrestled with tribal and regional conflicts on the other hand. The personal testimony of Fawwaz Traboulsi, a man closely linked to the political elite of South Yemen, will illustrate the paradoxical dynamics inherent in the process of building a strong Marxist state in the Arabian Peninsula.

Anne-Linda Amira Augustin

The Effects of the PDRY State on the Southern Movement Today

In 2006 and 2007, the Southern Movement “al-ḥirāk al-ḡanūbī” protested in regions that once shaped the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen. In these demonstrations, former soldiers of the PDRY armed forces, civil servants of the South, and young unemployed people demanded the regime of ‘Ali ‘Abdallah Salih end their forced retirement and/or unemployment. Since losing the war in 1994, the South had suffered and the protests signaled that enough was enough. The Southern Movement demanded social reforms, but the Sana’a regime dismissed the movement and suppressed activists by force. But the ḥirāk resisted and grew into an umbrella entity. Various individuals and groups found a platform to give a voice back to the independence struggle.

As part of the struggle, the PDRY still has an influence on the ‘social imaginary’ (Taylor 2004) of the activists. Especially young activists are inspired by the PDRY and envision a state that guarantees social welfare to its citizens. According to these activists, the PDRY did have well-functioning state structures. Nevertheless, they reject one-party rule by the elite and they reject the old ‘socialism’, which for them is synonymous with totalitarianism.

This presentation will present quotes from interviews to, thereby, revealing the Southern Movement’s perceptions of PDRY-Marxism. The presentation will shed light on how (young) activists critically assess the PDRY, the former socialist elites, and the influence of Pan-Arabism. The quotes make it apparent that the young activists hold the elites responsible for today’s political dilemma in Southern Yemen.

06.15-07.15 THE DHOFARI REVOLUTION: MODEL AND EXCEPTION?

Roundtable with Abdel Razzaq Takriti, Dr Kamel Mhanna, Fawwaz Traboulsi, Abdulnabi Alekry

07.30-10.00 Screening and Dinner-Aperitif

A Hundred Faces for a Single Day (1969), 60’, by Christian Ghazi

In this film, Christian Ghazi combines narration with documentary footage, providing give a critical perspective on the Lebanese society in the early Seventies. This film presents a

new form of audio and visual narration, which draws its inspiration from various cinematographic trends, and especially from the “Nouvelle Vague”.

This screening is a courtesy of Mansion

Mansion (Abdul Kader Street Zokak El-Blat. Beirut)

Mansion is a 1930s 800m2 villa transformed into a self-dependent multipurpose shared house, offering 10 working studios, basic equipment and facilities for permanent residents and programs in residence (artists, researchers, architects, designers, activists, families, etc.) It regularly hosts cultural events open to the public. A silkscreen workshop, a library, and a main communal space including a garden, are also open for public use. The main purpose of the house is to promote communal and public inhabitation and practices in a city overrun by gated communities and ruled by “open-market strategies”. Open spaces that are not public and abandoned, like Mansion was, left as urban dead points by the war and the neoliberal reconstruction, present some substantial possibilities for public interactions, artists, researchers and activists encounters and production, and communal inhabitation.

13 DECEMBER 10AM - 7PM: ORIENT INSTITUT BEIRUT

10.00-11.50 LEFT-WING TRENDS IN THE 1960-70s: INTELLECTUAL LINKAGES AND DISJUNCTIONS BETWEEN THE THREE WORLDS

Discussant: **Yasmeen Daifallah**

Margaret Scarborough

Abdel Khaliq Mahgoub: The Question of Sudanese Spontaneity between European, Arab and African Marxist Milieu

On the heels of Bandung, in 1956, the Sudanese Communist Party leader Abdel Khaliq Mahgoub (1927-1971) warned that the specter of the English colonizer would persist in post-liberation Sudan and condemned the new government for what he deemed its neo-colonial position vis-à-vis the Southern Question. At the same time, he also assessed the significance of the changes in the Soviet Union for the liberated colonies and their Marxist programs. Calling for a new social democracy in Sudan, he implicated his fellow intellectuals' complicity in regressive agendas.

By the time of his compelling defense before a military court in 1959, a year after the Abboud coup had dissolved Sudan's first independence government¹, Mahgoub would recall that his turn to Marxism came as a response to the failure of Sudanese nationalists to offer an adequate theory that could guide the public to what he called liberation “in the fullest sense of the term”. It was only when analyzing the lessons of colonialism and the history of nationalism, however, that Mahgoub began to more fully explore the “conditions of possibility” for a “healthy” functioning Sudanese society. Throughout his writings and analyses, we see where he critiques disconnects between thought and action in earlier Marxist and Socialist projects. Moreover, he recognized that no system was entirely replicable outside of its original context. Finding existing frameworks insufficient to the challenging task at hand, Mahgoub developed piecemeal what Abusharaf has called a “vernacularization” of Marxism, a rigorous critical approach informed by an awareness of “the significant problematics of language, interpretation, relevance, and [...] the particularities of a unique social formation” (Abusharaf 2009:485).

¹ “By virtue of Marxism your honor”, published in 1966.

In an attempt to better understand the characteristics of Mahgoub's vernacularization, this paper addresses its transnational elements, including its literary intersects. Whereas his early thought (*New Horizons*, 1957) shows the influence of European Marxist thinkers, including Stalin, Lenin and Togliatti, the writings of the 1960s grow more concerned with the specificities of the local. In 1960, for example, from Kobar Prison, Mahgoub writes a history of the Sudanese Communist Party, then, in 1961, a studied examination of the Islamic Brotherhood. Following the inspiring failure of the 1964 October Revolution, sparked by a student protest which grew into a mass strike, Mahjoub began to analyze the theories and outcomes of post-colonial struggles and states and to formally broach the question of a new, post-independence Sudanese Revolution. In 1966, he published the pamphlet *Socialist Schools in Africa* (1966). Here he frames the Sudanese social-democratic project as a distinctly African one, closely affiliated to Pan-Africanism and the concerns of Negritude and Black Marxism. He stresses, however, that each country had to find its own path to a working political form. Sudan, for instance, could find sources of inspiration in its Islamic and Arabic heritage, and should reject any tribally (and thus ethnically)- based forms of socialism.

Mahgoub advocated a tolerant stance on the SCP's relationship to religion, with the vision of a state form receptive to religious pluralism: a position that conflicted with the views of other Arab Marxists as well as some of his own party members. He insisted that the complexity of Sudanese social reality allowed no alternative to this openness if social democracy were to function at the level of national unity. His efforts to establish a sustainable but fluid political project also led him to formulate his thoughts on party organization and education. His writings on these subjects continue to influence the ethos and praxis of the contemporary SCP. And it is in light of them especially that this paper reads Mahgoub as a diffracted response to Luxemburg and Fanon. Did Mahgoub theorize a Sudanese spontaneity? If so, what were the conditions of its possibility?

Haggag Ali

An Egyptian Leftist Reading of the Frankfurt School in the 1970s

The critical theory of the Frankfurt School is associated with the establishment of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt in 1923. The institute dedicated itself to such urgent issues as misery, injustice, alienation, revolution and the role of art and literature in human emancipation. With the rise of Nazism in Germany, members of the School had to flee to the United States, where they continued their research and publications. Among the first generation of this School are Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Eric Fromm. Though the ideas of the Frankfurt School go back in history to 1923, it was only in the 1960s that the Arab scholars started to show an interest in its relevance and/or irrelevance to their own societies.

In the early 1970s, the radical leftist discourse of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School was discussed within the Egyptian/Arab discourse on revolution and change. Almost all works by Herbert Marcuse were translated into Arabic in the early 1970s by Syrian and Egyptian intellectuals, including *Reason and Revolution* (1960); *One Dimensional Man* (1966); *Eros and Civilization* (1969); *Negations* (1969); *An Essay on Liberation* (1971); and *Revolt and Counter-Revolt* (1972).

The Arabic periodicals of *Al Hilal*, *Alam Al Fikr*, and *Al Fikr Al Muasser* were the major windows to the ideas of the Frankfurt school, particularly the critical contributions of Herbert Marcuse. Egyptian contributors to the discussion of the radical leftist discourse

of the Frankfurt School included the Egyptian secularist intellectual Fouad Zakariyya, editor in chief of *Al Fikr Al Muasser*, the then Egyptian leftist Hasan Hanafi, and the communist intellectual Mahmud Amin Al Alem.

The major book that underlined the Egyptian leftist position towards Herbert Marcuse was Mahmud Amin Al Alem's *Herbert Marcuse aw falsafat al tareeq al masdud (Herbert Marcuse or the Philosophy of the "cul de sac,"* Beirut, 1972).

It is true that Marcuse's radical leftist discourse was discussed by Mahmoud Amin Al Alem within the Egyptian/Arab leftist discourse on revolution against both capitalism and imperialism, yet he rejected Marcuse's revision of Marxism as well as the overall response of the Frankfurt School regarding the nature of the expected revolution, its methods and potential actors.

It can be argued that the Egyptian leftist reading of the Frankfurt School rejected its main ideas at that time for four main reasons: first, its critique of positivistic science (lest such a critique might open the door to 'irrational trends' in Egyptian/Arab society); second, its equation of both socialist with capitalist systems (representing both of them as oppressive, totalitarian and mechanistic systems that lead in the final analysis to the alienation of man in the factory of production and the market of consumption; and therefore both call for protest, revolt and negation); third, its Jewish background, particularly Herbert Marcuse's 'sympathy' with Israel and the Jewish Question; and fourth, the fact that he prone modernism in art and literature as opposed to social realism, thus promoting 'false consciousness' instead of resisting it.

Against this background, this paper attempts to answer the following questions: how an Egyptian leftist relate himself to international leftist discourse? How episteme transfer of radical leftist discourse affected the vision of an Egyptian leftist regarding the aspiration for an Arab revolution? And how ideological bias could have an impact on the reception of radical leftist discourse in an Egyptian context?

Idriss Jebari

'Perspectives,' the Tunisian Student Movement (1963-1974) and the European New Left

The Tunisian leftist movements' links with European, and especially French ideological developments were defining during the sixties and seventies. Michel Foucault, who spent a few years in the sixties teaching at the University of Tunis, famously lauded the courage and activism of student protesters and qualified his time there as an inspirational "true political experience" that shaped his later work. Additionally, the original founders of the leftist intellectual movement and discussion group *Perspectives Tunisiennes* began as students in Paris (1963) and were inspired by the leftist theoretical debates taking place in the *Quartier Latin*. Even after they moved their activities back home in 1965, their journal was often published and smuggled into Tunisia from France, where their members took refuge during waves of state repression.

In both cases, student mobilization provided a launch pad for the application of the leftist movements' theoretical discussions. The European New Left (ENL), despite the challenges to fit this complex movement into a single understanding, was characterized by an effort to update Marxist analysis to integrate multi-faceted sources of social and political oppression. It was also shaped by French intellectuals who "Looked to the East" (Wolin, 2010) and saw the possibility opened by Mao's "Cultural Revolution" for a revitalization

of Marxist doctrine that would integrate the “oppression of daily life” and develop a theory of radical, participatory democracy.

This theoretical update provided the ideological bases and slogans for the student protests in Paris (and the famous May 1968 protests), including the political struggles against imperialism (and especially the War in Vietnam), and domestic issues such as gender equality and the fight against racism. Similarly in Tunisia, members of the *Perspectives* group held a similar fascination for leftist theoretical debates: during the *Groupe d'Etude et d'Action Socialiste* (GEAST) period (1963-1967), when its members read journals and essays from France and held their own theoretical discussion groups, which they then used as theoretical frameworks to produce critical analyses of Tunisia's economic and socio-cultural model. In the second period, the *Perspectives* movement grew closer to Maoism and then the pragmatism of mobilization, until the successive waves of repression until 1974 led to an irreconcilable splintering of the movement. Since professors constituted a bulk of its membership, its activities were often held on university campuses, drawing students in the energies of student activism.

The apparent similarities and link between the two historical experiences at a similar period invite further problematization of the nature of intellectual exchange between the two movements. How could these two countries, one being a western industrialized country and the other an Arab formerly colonized country share the same leftist reading of their political destinies, especially with regard to student mobilization? To which extent did the leftist ideological principles developed by the ENF and adopted (or adapted) by the *Perspectives* movement in their own argumentation fit into the experience of the Tunisian student movement?

In responding to these questions, this paper will adopt three reading axes: first, I discuss the overall framework of reference that emerged from the *Perspectives* movement and the extent to which it represents as a continuation of the ENL's ideological principles. The underlying question is whether *Perspectives* merely imported theoretical frameworks. We will look at the content of their rhetoric on three aspects: the movement's position on Tunisia's foreign policy, and especially its alliance with the “imperialist camp”; a critique of modernization theories and the Destourian's socio-economic model pursued under the Minister Ben Salah on agrarian policy; and the question of culture and emancipation around the topics of secularism, education, gender rights.

Secondly, I discuss alternative elements that shaped the Tunisian leftist experience, which pertained to the local circumstances of this movement. Here, two factors drew particular attention: the role of social conservatism and the authoritarian nature of the state. Bourguiba's personality and vision for the Tunisian national project meant he pursued a progressive social and economic national project. He also ruled through a single-party and rejected contestation, especially from those we called his “unruly children” (to borrow his recurrent expression). Thus, he sought to undermine the growing leftist contestation by jailing its leaders and by reconfiguring the public space by promoting a discourse on an “authentic” Tunisian identity, underlying its Arab and Islamic character, to further highlight the “foreign nature” of leftist ideas, and drive them away from public support. This section will discuss the challenges for the *Perspectives* movement to counter the changing nature of public discourse and adapting their ideological tone.

Thirdly and finally, we will review the impact of this leftist movement's on student mobilization during this long decade, seeking to assess the impact of theoretical debates on the nature of student mobilization. Student groups were of great importance to Bourguiba from the anti-colonial struggle and he instructed the security apparatus to

prevent the collusion of *Perspectives* with the whole student body, most notably by targeting organizers and infiltrating student organizations and by allowing the development of Islamist-oriented student orientations on campuses. This last section will contrast the massive strikes of 1968 and the Korba protests of 1972, which show a decrease of the transnational leftist ideological component in favor of the greater influence of the labor movement and the Islamist structures of organization.

This paper will rely on sources pertaining to the *Perspectives*, namely a reading of the publication from 1963 to 1968, when most founding members were jailed and the first stage of the doctrine was established. It will be completed with the published seminar on the memory of the movement organized by the Temimi Foundation in 2008, and accounts of influential former members such as the memoirs of Gilbert Naccache or Abdelmajid Charfi. Finally, student protests and repression will rely on the complete weekly accounts provided by the *Jenne Afrique* magazine (1963-1974).

The period from the launch of the *Perspectives* movement in 1963 to its demise in 1974 also corresponds to the height of leftist student activism in Tunisia. It provides an engaging opportunity to question the ways transnational ideological exchanges influenced mobilization strategies, especially student mobilizations, whose political role and depository of the memory of social mobilization has transcended Tunisia's contemporary history.

Alexander Flores

Coping with Decline: Trajectories of the Arab Left and their Perception by European Leftists

The Arab defeat in the June war of 1967 was an enormous setback for the countries of the Arab East. This did not stop large parts of the Arab left to draw “revolutionary” consequences from it. They radicalized their position and turned further to the left, and some nationalists who had not been leftist before now declared themselves Marxists. Revolutionary enthusiasm prevailed, and an ideological hotchpotch was brewed in which certain elements were invariably present: A pointed pan-Arab nationalism, a Marxist confession of faith with a stress on the necessity of social revolution, strong solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, always conceived as an armed struggle, and an equally strong feeling to be part and parcel of the Third World and its struggle against imperialism. The slogan of this camp was: Against imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. Being nationalist and Marxist, the proponents of this ideology typically were also strictly secularist in outlook. It was a sign of times that even some Arab CPs, traditionally so reticent to adopt nationalist causes and armed struggle too eagerly, came round to a much more nationalist stand concerning Palestine and armed struggle.

This broad ideological position can be discovered with many groups and authors at the time; an especially clear example is the area where the left and the quintessential Palestinian resistance movement, Fath, overlap: the leftist groups within Fath and their spokespersons, most prominently Munir Shafiq and Naji Allush. The latter was a prolific writer, he was also for some time editor-in-chief of the review “Dirasat Arabiyya” and director of the Beirut publishing house “Dar at-Tali’a”, both mouthpieces of the said trend.

All this implied considerable optimism regarding the revolutionary perspectives in the Arab world. It proved unfounded. Instead of favouring a revolutionary policy, developments on the ground moved into the opposite direction. The Palestinian

movement was severely curtailed in Jordan; the Egyptian government repeatedly moved to the right since 1971; the October war enhanced the position of the Arab regimes at the expense of the Palestinians; the bulk of the latter began to adjust their position in the direction of a settlement that would leave Israel in its Zionist structures in place; the oil crisis and its financial outcome enormously strengthened precisely the Arab reaction one wanted to fight. All this meant a consolidation of the political setup reigning in the Arab world. The first stages of the civil war in Lebanon saw probably the last radical attempt to overcome the ossified confessional structure by way of a thorough secularization. The attempt failed; instead, the confessional system was reinforced. In one word, after a perceived revolutionary situation around 1970, corresponding perspectives got considerably blurred during the 1970s.

Consequently, around 1980, political statements sobered or in any case got much more variegated than they had been. It appears that the intellectuals that had found common ground in a moment of enthusiasm now went into different directions – again or anew. Islamism was one of them. Many people that had been secularists before now turned integralists. In Egypt where the phenomenon was especially clear, the people concerned were called “turathiyun gudud” – people like Tariq al-Bishri, Muhammad Amara, Adil Husain, Khalid Muhammad Khalid and others. Even a Christian like Anwar Abdalmalik took that direction although he used a slightly different language. Closer to Beirut, Munir Shafiq took that turn, too. He had been the leading spirit of the Maoists in Fath during much of the 1970s. Disappointed with the new direction of Fath politics, he turned to radical Islam in the late 1970s and became something like the brain behind the radical Islamic Jihad organization in Palestine. He, originally Christian, converted to Islam for the purpose. This, incidentally, shows us how little genuinely Islamic the stand of “Islamic Jihad” was if its mastermind was an erstwhile Christian. Naji Allush left Fath altogether and served for a while as secretary general of Abu Nidal’s group before setting up his own organization.

Regarding the communists, Manfred Sing has scrutinized some of their itinerancies after 1989, yet from his findings it becomes clear that some of them already parted ways much before that, and in quite different directions. And there also were people who did not go into an Islamist direction but went the diametrically opposite way: they took the path of radical secularism and enlightenment. Some, although by no means all of them, did not mind to side with the US and Israel in their struggle against Islamism and Islamic obscurantism.

So to sum up, around 1980 there remained little of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The leftist intellectuals and groups that had united around a certain ideology before, for the most part took their distance from that ideology and went into different directions. The ideological hotchpotch got re-divided into its constituent parts, and people adjusted to less-than-revolutionary circumstances.

And what about the European view of all this? I would like to look at it through the lens of “Khamsin”, “Journal of revolutionary socialists of the Middle East”. It was edited first in Paris, then in London by a group of Arab and Israeli leftists. This was probably the only remaining Arab-Israeli initiative after the dialogue between Matzpen and the DFLP of the early 1970s had broken down. The content of the journal (founded in 1975) in the period under review was mainly to follow and comment upon developments in the Middle East from a revolutionary socialist point of view. So for instance the no. 1 of the journal (Paris 1975) contains a debate about the proposal of a Palestinian state alongside Israel by different Arab and Israeli participants as well as a critical analysis of the strategy of the

Arab oil-producing states. Its no. 4 contains a scathing critique of the policies of the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left in the first stages of the Lebanese civil war as well as an analysis of the limited capacity at industrialization of the Arab bourgeoisies. A similar topic is dealt with in the no. 7 of the journal (London 1980). The last two contributions mentioned here are signed Mohammad Ja'far – the pen name of an Iraqi Trotskyist who later, under the pen name Samir Khalil, wrote the book “The Republic of Fear” about Saddam Husain’s reign in Iraq and, under his real name Kanaan Makkiya, provided arguments for the American-British intervention in Iraq in 2003 – just an example of how far certain political changes can go.

And just to cite another European voice: In August 1971, when after a failed coup d'état in the Sudan the communist party leader Abdalkhaliq Mahjub had been executed, Maxime Rodinson published an article in “Le Monde” in which he criticized the Arab radical left (and its European sympathizers) for its ultra-nationalism it wanted to pass as revolutionary but ran the danger of subordinating the social revolution to the national issue. In that framework, Rodinson exposed the weakness of the radical leftist expectations and, already in 1971, predicted the inevitable move to the right of the Arab leaders.

“Do not paint nationalism in red!” Lenin already said to Zinoviev and his comrades who were about to go preach *jihad* in Baku in 1920. The legitimacy of national struggles is not in question, but the danger of forgetting their limits is great. One day maybe, in a last rebellion of Marxist conscience, certain people will remember the gallows of Mahjub, “a solitary gallows from which was hanging their likeness”.²

12.00-12.50 DIGITAL HISTORIES OF THE UNDERGROUND: TEACHING THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION

Abdel Razzaq Takriti

This presentation will examine the histories of transnational revolutionaries from a pedagogical angle, focusing on the experience of building the Palestinian Revolution website hosted by the University of Oxford, a collaborative effort engaging with the largest and most persistent Arab revolutionary experience in modern history. Such major projects give rise to pedagogical problems that are not only specific to Palestine, but that are also shared by other anti-colonial struggles. Educators are confronted by the dispersal of documentary written sources; the dearth of accessible oral sources; and the lack of a special curriculum for teaching these sources. A fourth dilemma is that this kind of history is mostly ‘hidden’, created by movements, parties, and individuals that were operating within clandestine underground networks, carefully concealing their work and ensuring that no traces of their actions were left behind. In addition to examining these dilemmas through detailed interaction with the website, this presentation will consider their implications for modern Palestinian revolutionary historiography as well as broader approaches to the study of anti-colonial revolutions.

² Maxime Rodinson, *A l'ombre des potences de Khartoum*, in: id., *Marxisme et monde musulman*, Paris: Seuil 1972, 567

02.00-05.30 (COUNTER-) REVOLUTIONARY CIRCULATIONS IN THE INTERPLAY OF TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS AND LOCAL CHALLENGES

Discussants: **Laure Guirguis and Aline Schlaepfer**

Orit Bashkin

Iraqi Jewish Communists in Iraq and in Palestine - Trans-regional Communism and the Question of Palestine

My paper traces the development of anti-Zionist thought amongst Iraqi Jewish communists. I begin in the second half of the 1940s, when middle class and poor Iraqi Jews join the ranks of the illegal Iraqi communist Party and became important members. I pay special heed to the League for Combating Zionism which, albeit active for a brief period of time, played a seminal role in the conceptualization of a radical Jewish-Arab identity. I then follow these Iraqi Jewish communists to Israel, where in the early 1950s, more than 80,000 Iraqi Jews rotted in Israeli transit camps, living in tents and wooden shacks. In response to these conditions, many of the former Iraqi Jewish communists joined the Israeli Communist party, *MAKI* (*miflaga kumunistit israelit, al-biṣṣ al-shuyū'i al-isra'ili*). During the 1950s, the members of the party, Jews, Muslims and Christians, consistently challenged state's decisions relating to the Palestinian and migrant Jewish populations, especially the military regime under which Palestinians lived, Palestinian land confiscations, and, Israel's decision to embark on war with Britain and France, against Egypt, in 1956. In the 1950s, MAKI won some 20% of votes in slums, poor cities, and especially the transit camps. My paper centers on two moments; the demands of Iraqi Jewish leftists to publicize the atrocities of the massacre of Kafar Qassem in 1956 and to punish those in charge, and the communist battle in the 1950s and 1960s on behalf of poor Mizrahi and Palestinian children, to whom the state refused to provide the most basic services. I argue that looking at the neglected activities of Iraqi Jewish communists suggests a different periodization of the region's history, in which leftist trends and commitment to leftist, communist and Arab Jewish ideas, persist even after these radicals left their Arab nation states. I likewise suggest that trans-regional and trans-national networks are essential to understanding communist activities; we need to look regionally, and indeed globally, to understand how these radicals framed their identities. My paper is based on archival materials, as well as items presented in the martyrs museum in Kafar Qasim [mathaf al-shuhada].

Philip Winkler

The "Che Guevara of the Middle East". Khalid Ahmad Zaki and the Revolutionary Struggle in Iraq's Southern Marshlands

In the late 1960s a splinter group of the Iraqi Communist Party concluded that the mother party's long-standing policy of collaborating with "national-bourgeois" regimes was not appropriate anymore for the current situation and thus decided to take up arms against the government. Partly inspired by the example of Che Guevara and the Cuban revolution, Maoist strategy and other Third World revolutionary movements, they tried to leave the trodden paths of traditional communist party tactics, which they assessed as having been detrimental to the communists' fortunes in the past.

The group was led by Khalid Ahmad Zaki, a young communist firebrand who left his safe haven in exile in London to start a courageous yet futile guerilla war against the Iraqi regime and was killed in battle shortly thereafter. Despite its early and tragic failure, his project of armed struggle in Iraq's southern marshlands – an area that has always been hard to control for the government and thus had a long-standing reputation as a stronghold of opposition and resistance – inflamed the minds of many an Iraqi that was hoping for a more revolutionary and radical approach on communist tactics.

From the mainstream Iraqi Communist Party's point of view, the undertaking seemed unrealistic; they refuted it as "adventurism" and accused Zaki of an "idealistic" approach, not founded on a close examination of the actual conditions and circumstances in Iraq and thus bound to fail. Whereas they had been entangled in Iraq's specific politics and developments and at the time where facing an inner-party rift about the question of whether to collaborate with Iraq's government or not, Zaki came from a very different background. Having lived in London – where he had worked as a member of Bertrand Russell's entourage – for many years, he had been part of the world of the European Left, influenced by its currents and discussions during the 1960s, its views of international revolutionary solidarity and its penchant for revolutionary struggle in the Third World. The Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese struggle and the rebellion in the Congo aroused his interest and fascination, and eventually he heeded Che Guevara's famous call to "create two, three...many Vietnams" and decided to start a guerilla war on his own. But interestingly, unlike the global revolutionary from Argentina to whom Zaki was soon likened by his supporters, he decided to do so in his own homeland Iraq, a country which, at the time, was hardly of any interest to the European Left.

Based on pamphlets and documents as well as on personal accounts of Iraqi communists active back then, this presentation endeavors to give an account of Khalid Ahmad Zaki's activities and to discuss the interplay between the local developments in Iraq and the discussions and ideas of the "global left" in the 1960s in their respective impacts on his short-lived revolutionary struggle in the marshes.

Maher Charif

Palestinian Communists: The Problem of the Relationship Between the "Particular" and the "General" in the Palestinian Struggle

النضال في " العام " و " الخاص " بين العلاقة وإشكالية الفلسطينيين الشيوعيون
الفلسطيني

عبر الفلسطينيون الشيوعيون واجهها التي الإشكاليات أبرز من " العام " و " الخاص " بين العلاقة إشكالية كانت الطويل تاريخهم

ثلاثة مستويات على الإشكالية هذه مع الفلسطينيين الشيوعيين تعامل كيفية الورقة هذه في وسأعالج
التنظيم مستوى على الإشكالية هذه مع الفلسطينيين الشيوعيين تعامل أتتبع، أولاً، كيفية

في الوطني التحرر عصبية" هو واحد تنظيمي إطار في ينضون الفلسطينيون الشيوعيون عام 1948، كان فقبل
الفلسطينيون الشيوعيون الفلسطيني، توزع الشعب النكبة، وتشتت الفلسطيني، نتيجة الكيان تمزق وبعد "فلسطين
الشيوعي والحزب الأردني الشيوعي الإسرائيلي، والحزب الشيوعي الحزب: رئيسية ثلاثة تنظيمية أطر على
ممثلاً شرعياً وحيداً للشعب الفلسطينية التحرير بمنظمة الاعتراف أن من الرغم وعلى. غزة قطاع في الفلسطيني
الضفة في المستقلة الفلسطينية الدولة إقامة شعار العشرين، وتبنيها القرن سبعينيات منتصف في الفلسطيني
الفلسطينيين الشيوعيين يوحّد شيوعي حزب تأسيس إعادة مسألة البحث بساط على طرح غزة، قد وقطاع الغربية
تواصل طويل نقاش الفلسطينية، مدار القضية خصوصية ظلت، نتيجة المسألة هذه واحد، فإن تنظيمي إطار في

تأسيس إعادة عن بالإعلان 1982 فبراير/شباط في حسمها جرى أن سنوات، إلى ثماني من يقرب ما مدى على الفلسطيني الشيوعي الحزب

والوطني الطبقي بين العلاقة مستوى على الإشكالية هذه مع الفلسطينيين الشيوعيين تعامل وأتبع، ثانياً، كيفية يزعمون التي الاجتماعية الفئات مصالح عن الدفاع أجل من نضالهم بين الفلسطينيين الشيوعيين جمع كيف عن "المعبرين" مع تحالفات نسج يستلزم الذي الوطني التحرر أجل من نضالهم الطبقيّة، وبين الناحية تمثيلها، من الشيوعيون تعامل ذلك، كيف من للاحتلال؟ والأهم مناهضة وطنية جبهة أوسع وإقامة أخرى اجتماعية فئات عديدة، ويكون مواقع على الفلسطينيين بتوزع تتميز خاصة أوضاع ظل في الطبقيّة المسألة مع الفلسطينيين محددة اجتماعية اقتصادية وتشكيله واحد دولتي كيان ضمن انضوائهم اللاجئيين، وعدم من معظمهم الخاص" بين العلاقة مستوى على الإشكالية هذه مع الفلسطينيين الشيوعيين تعامل أتبع، ثالثاً، كيفية بينما "العربي العام" و "الفلسطيني

الفلسطينيين النشطاء معظم الوطني، وانضوى بعدها على الفلسطينية للقضية القومي البعد طغى 1948 نكبة فيعد ساد، الذي الشعار فلسطين"، وهو تحرير إلى الطريق العربية الوحدة": شعار خلف العربية القومية الأضر في رسمياً عن أعلن أن إلى فبراير 1958، وذلك/شباط في سورية مصر بين الوحدة إعلان كلية، بعد شبه بصورة الأحداث تتابعت النكبة، ثم بعد الأول الفلسطيني الوطني التنظيم عام 1959، بصفتها في "فتح" حركة تأسيس الوحدة إلى الطريق فلسطين تحرير "شعار قاعدة على الوطني "فتح" منطق سيادة أمام الطريق مهدت التي يونيو 1967، واجهت/حزيران هزيمة الأحداث، بعد مسرح على الفلسطينية المقاومة حركة وبيروز. "العربية تتعلق تحديات من عنها تفرع الفلسطيني، وما النضال في "القومي" و "الوطني" بين العلاقة إشكالية الحركة هذه العربية الأنظمة الأخرى، ومع العربي التحرر قوى مع علاقاتها وبطبيعة الحركة هذه باستقلالية والتحديات؟ التطورات هذه كل من الفلسطينيين الشيوعيين موقف كان فماذا

Nicolas Dot-Pouillard, who apologizes for not being among us

On the Ideological Borders: the Fatah's Student Brigade (Katibatullabiya), between Maoism, "Asian models" and Islamism (1972-1979).

The experience of the Fatah's Student Brigade – also known as the Jarmaq Brigade- during the mid-seventies seems to be a « *savage anomaly* ». It was led by some cadres of the leftist trend of Fatah movement, such as the Palestinian thinker Mounir Chafiq or the military leaders Bassam Sultan al-Tamimi and Marwan al-Kayali, fiercely opposed to the PLO's "Ten points programme" (1974). The Student Brigade was a symbol of a "revolutionary transnational romance" embedded in the experience of the Palestinian national movement in Jordan and Lebanon. Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Somalia or Tunisia: its rank-and-file members came from the entire Arab world, but not only: since its birth, the Student Brigade worked closely with Iranian activists.

Without being a Maoist movement inside Fatah, the Student Brigade was fascinated by the Asian Marxism and the "third-worldist" models, whether Vietnamese or Chinese, trying to apply the concepts of "mass line" (Khatt al-Jamahir), "principal contradiction" and "secondary contradiction" (Tanaqud al-ra'issi, Tanaqud ath-thanawi) to the Palestinian and Lebanese realities. The experience of the Student Brigade in the mid-seventies draws political diagonals and connected networks between the Arab world, Iran, China and Vietnam – where its military cadres were sometimes trained.

With the direct aftermaths of the Iranian revolution on the Lebanese and Palestinian political fields, the activists of the Student Brigade converted progressively to political Islam. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, in 1982, is a turning point: the Marxist references of the Student brigade progressively disappear. By 1984, its leaders, now far away from Lebanon, launch the Islamic Jihad Brigades (Saraya al-Jihad al-islami).

The political project of the Student Brigade is far from being a sort of “Liberation Theology”, between the Left and Islam – even if some of its members tried, at a moment, to mix Marxist concepts with a religious background – especially Shi’a, due to the deep implementation of the Brigade in South Lebanon. Until now, the experience of the Fatah’s Student Brigade remains an enigma. Its transnational dimensions are inseparable from a typical Nationalist experience – that of the Fatah movement. Its ideological stances are also on transnational borders, between Arab Marxism, “third-worldist” aspirations, “Asian models” and political Islam. If this experience is a typical product of its time and conjuncture – the mid-seventies- it is significant that, for more than a decade, it is subject to new historical readings and testimonies: former activists and leaders of the Brigade are now publishing their political biographies, documentaries are realised on the Brigade, reviews, such as the Journal of Palestine Studies, regularly publish papers and interviews on the first stage of the movement. It is not a coincidence: the current remembrance of the past political experience of the Fatah’s Student Brigade maybe allows us to understand better the end of a cycle – that of the Arab left- and the beginning of a new one – that of political Islam.

03.00-03.30 Coffee Break

Malika Rahal

The Algerian PAGS Inside Out: Circulating Between Clandestinity and Legality from Dakhil to Kharij

In Algeria, the Communist party (PCA) is the only political organization that was able to survive the hurricane of the War of Independence, outside of the National Liberation Front: the FLN managed not only to succeed in obtaining independence, but also in winning against competing forces also in favor of independence. The PCA had gone underground in 1955, after being banned by French authorities. It created its own small number of combatant units, the *Combattants de la Libération*. The PCA-FLN agreement of June 1956 involved integration of the PCA combatant force into the National Liberation Army (ALN), and the interruption of any organic links with the party leadership that remained in Algiers. Upon independence, the PCA briefly became legal again, succeeding in rapidly gaining popular support. Many activists were freed from jail; others came back from abroad, others were sent abroad to rekindle relations with other communist parties in France, the USSR or Czechoslovakia.

However, as early as October 1962, political parties outside of the FLN were banned, and the PCA returned to underground activity. In 1965, after opposing Colonel Houari Boumediene’s military coup, PCA leaders founded the PAGS, Parti de l’Avant-Garde socialiste, which came to be known as the sole heir to the PCA. The study of the PCA, and later the PAGS, in relation to the FLN raises many questions about the nature of the FLN, about plurality and unanimity within the Algerian nationalist movement during the War for Independence, questions which are no longer new. However, because of its continued existence, looking at the communist movement after 1962 raises similar questions about the post-independence period: What is in fact the nature of the FLN? Is it a party, a Front, or perhaps a vanguard party? It raises questions pertaining to the nature of the Algerian regime in the first years of independence: was it in fact a socialist regime? And if so, why were communists repressed? Finally, questions about the strength of the unanimity

surrounding the FLN, and therefore about the very possibility to oppose the FLN-regime: until when did the “magic” of the FLN last?

In my paper I would like to explore these questions by examining circulations between clandestine activity and legality, as well as between inside and outside of the country. I will discuss just how clandestine PCA and PAGS actually were, but also how their activists used their presence abroad as attempts to exist “more legally” than they did inside the country on an international level. In several instances, the party seems to have considered its sections abroad, in France or the USSR, as safe havens against repression: for instance, copies of the party archives were regularly sent to its members in Prague as a means to protect them against arrests and destruction. During the repression of the student movements between 1967 and 1971, party students appealed to their section in Paris to launch an international campaign with the hope of protecting them against repression. Internally, this raises the question of just how clandestine PCA and PAGS actually were, as their positioning was often dubbed “critical support” to the regime.

However, on the international level, it raises another question: have the PCA and the PAGS been able to position themselves as communist parties recognized by the international communist movement? Despite repression against them under president Ahmed Ben Bella (1963-1965) and even more so under Houari Boumediene (1965-1978), it appears that the PCA-PAGS was in competition against the FLN for the role of “socialist party of Algeria” in the eyes of international communist institutions. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union as well as the French Communist Party seem to have found it difficult to be critical of the FLN in the first years of independence. And more generally, French (leftwing) intellectuals seem to have been fascinated with the FLN as the sole embodiment of Third-Worldism and the downfall of colonialism.

Based on interviews conducted with about 30 former activists in Algeria, France and Canada (where several of them are exiles). These interviews include those of activists who represented the PAGS in Prague (at the *Nouvelle Revue Internationale*), in Moscow, at political training sessions or international meetings, or in Paris. I have for instance conducted about 80 hours of interview with former Secretary general of the PAGS, Sadek Hadjerès: feeling that the conditions of living and working entirely underground in Algiers proved to paralyze his action, Hadjerès left for Prague in the 1980s. He hoped to find international support. However, the life he describes in Prague is that of someone who lived underground even outside of the country, as it was important for the Czech Communist Party, and more generally for the international communist institutions to hide any support to the PAGS from the FLN. As it turned out, working abroad was not always liberating.

Elliott Colla

Elegy for a Movement: Amal Dunqul's “Ughniyyat ka’aka hajariyya”

For much of January 1972, Egyptian university students staged massive protests on their campuses, holding mass assemblies and sit-ins of a magnitude not seen since the protests of 1968. When police shuttered Cairo University and Ain Shams University on January 24, the students took to the streets. By that evening, they had occupied Midan al-Tahrir. There they spent the night engaging residents and pedestrians with song, argument and poetry. The next morning at dawn, Central Security Forces drove the students from the center of the square. The repression was brutal. State media censored the event, in part by ignoring the students and their demands, in part by representing the protesters as a danger to public

safety. Exactly 39 years would pass before protesters would again attempt to set up camp in Midan Tahrir.

Though Amal Dunqul was no activist, he joined other intellectuals who visited the encampment to see for themselves what the students were saying. The experience would move Dunqul to write one of his greatest poems, “Ughniyyat ka’aka hajariyya.” The poem was published in the avant-garde journal *Sanabil*, edited by Muhammad ‘Afifi Matar, where it caused such a stir that the magazine was shut down with the following issue. Dunqul’s poem marks an intense and original conversation with the classical motif of the abandoned encampment (*al-buka’ ala al-atlal*), but it also goes beyond this. By 1972, Dunqul was experimenting with a form of elegy, which he sometimes called “*al-buka’iyya*,” in a nod to Federico García Lorca’s poems of lament (*llantos*).

My paper will read Dunqul’s poem in three contexts: first, as a reaction to the event of the 1972 student protests and in dialogue with their demands; second, as a particular form of elegy drawing on both classical strands of elegy and the work of Lorca; and third, as a form of lamentation performed under censor. Drawing on Judith Butler’s reading of *Antigone*, I will argue that Dunqul’s poem defied the prohibition on public displays of grief, and would insist that mourning and lamentation were not just a privilege of the strong and victorious, but a basic human right.

Nate George

“The Day of Judgment Has Fallen Upon this Generation”: The Front for Freedom and Man in Lebanon and Global Counterrevolution

No consideration of the Arab left could be complete without considering the hostile environment within which it operated, and the extent to which it was shaped by the agency of antagonistic forces. Following Arno Mayer, this presentation argues, “there can be no revolution without counterrevolution.” Lebanon was one of the principle arenas of political struggle in the late-Cold War Arab world, and it featured durable, militarized, mass movements with extensive foreign support dedicated to halting the march of tricontinentalist revolution. These forces were assembled under the banner of the “Front for Freedom and Man in Lebanon,” which gathered Maronite political bosses, paramilitary political parties, religious orders, and counterrevolutionary intellectuals in opposition to the Lebanese National Movement and the PLO. Rather than understanding the Front in a purely local context, as most studies have done, this paper casts the Front as a cross-fertilization of local, regional, and international forces. A sure guide to bringing out this history is through an examination of the Front’s leading theorist, Charles Malik. Though he carried no weapon in his long and distinguished career, which encompassed the Ivy Leagues and the halls of power alike, this man’s words and deeds guided the Front’s political strategy—and provided much of its rhetoric. Malik embodied ties between the organizations of the Front, the Lebanese government, the US ruling elite, a variety of student movements, Lebanese diaspora activists, American Evangelical Christianity, the Vatican, and obscure secret societies. Based on extensive research in Malik’s unpublished papers, this presentation will examine Malik’s stances on external alliances, Lebanese politics, and his distinctive and influential conception of Lebanese exceptionalism, centered on its contribution to the “Free World” as a whole. Malik’s ideological and material links reveal his entanglement in civil wars on local, regional, and international levels; the centrality of US empire in structuring civil wars in the Third World; and the contribution of “peripheral” intellectuals to ideologies in the “center.”

Elizabeth M. Holt

Covert Cold War in the Arabic Press: Archives of 1950s and 1960s Beirut and Cairo

In 1950, the United States Central Intelligence Agency covertly founded the Congress for Cultural Freedom, inaugurating what was to be a global American cultural front in the Cold War, a broadly coordinated propaganda of “soft power” articulated through a growing web of conferences, concerts, art exhibits, and highly influential literary and cultural journals. Drawing extensively from hundreds of photographs and thousands of letters from the International Association for Cultural Freedom archive at the University of Chicago, this talk documents how the CCF infiltrated the Arabic cultural press from just after the 1955 Bandung conference and its call for Afro-Asian Solidarity through the CCF's collapse in 1966/7.

Cultivating "presence" in the Arab cultural scene (as it had in post-war Europe, and in India, Africa, and Latin America after Bandung), the CCF targeted Beirut and Cairo, opening new offices in each city by the late 1950s. Their aim: to create a non-Communist Left in the region by hosting conferences and establishing Arabic newsletters and journals in the name of a duplicit propaganda of cultural freedom on a global scale. Unsigned reports in the IACF archive cite the American intelligence community's growing fears of the influence of both Bandung and Moscow on Arabic culture and politics in Beirut and Cairo in the late 1950s and 1960s, noting with alarm the rise of Soviet-funded Afro-Asian solidarity.

Files survey the Arabic press, its newspapers, journals, and editors categorized by political position and Cold War sympathies; while preparations for the 1961 Rome Conference and the CCF's Arabic journal *Himār* (1962-67, edited by Tawfiq Sayigh) leave as paper trace failed earlier initiatives, along with the contact information of dozens of the most influential Arab intellectuals, artists, and politicians of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Yusuf al-Khal, Adonis, Naguib Mahfouz, Leila Baalbaki, and Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser, along with the Arabic-English translator Denys Johnson-Davies.

This talk considers the texture of this rich archive, tended by secretaries who must have known that the CCF was a front for an American intelligence operation -- replete with cocktail party invitations; airline and hotel stationeries from all over Africa, Asia, and Europe; unsigned intelligence reports on secret political organizations; and files amassed through the daily operations of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Paris, Beirut, and Cairo -- to offer scenes in a covert counter-history of the Arab left.

05.30-06.00 Coffee Break

06.00 pm Keynote Speech: Gilbert Achcar

اليسار العربي الجديد في الستينيات والسبعينيات: بماذا يشترك مع اليسار الجديد العالمي
وبماذا يختلف عنه؟

The New Arab Left of the 1960-70s and the Global New Left: Commonalities and Differences

Discussant: **Elizabeth Suzanne Kassab**

لقد شهد العالم موجة تجذّر يساري في أوساط الشبيبة خلال الستينيات بلغت ذروتها سنة 1968 وفي السنوات القليلة اللاحقة. ولهذه الموجة العالمية مسببات مرتبطة بالحالة الاقتصادية التي عقت الحرب العالمية الثانية وبالتطورات السياسية العالمية التي شهدتها الستينيات، وهي مسببات تشترك فيها المنطقة العربية. لكن هذه الأخيرة تختلف عن الموجة العالمية في محدداتها الخاصة المتعلقة بالمسألة القومية بالمقام الأول والتي تجعل من سنة 1967، سنة «الهزيمة» في الصراع العربي - الإسرائيلي، السنة المفصلية في التجذّر العربي الذي ميّزته جدلية خاصة بين الحركة القومية والحركة الشيوعية الإقليمية.