

THE EDITOR'S DESK

The desire to reform the established order of Middle Eastern society to meet changing conditions and needs has been manifested and expressed by different groups and classes over the centuries. Stephen Duguid, of Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada, seeks to understand the reforming Middle Eastern technocrats of today by examining the evolving personality and career of one of their most distinguished leaders in 'A Biographical Approach to the Study of Social Change in the Middle East: Abdullah Tariki as a New Man'. It is interesting to note that the conflict which finally developed between the reforming members of the Saudi establishment and technocrats such as Tariki had its parallel elsewhere in the Middle East over a century before, when the entire area still lay under Ottoman dominion. During the nineteenth century, leadership in the Ottoman reform movement passed through the hands of at least three groups who were relatively hostile to one another: first, reforming Sultans and their chief ministers, who sought to preserve the autocracy of the Sultan and his Ruling Class by modernizing the instruments of their rule; then intellectuals and a few bureaucrats wished to add social and political reforms to the technical ones by ending the traditional distinction between the rulers and subjects and involving the latter in their own rule, but who in the end were too closely tied to the Ruling Class to do more than begin the process by which its autocracy was undermined; and finally the truly modern reformers, for the most part raised from relatively humble beginnings through the modern armies and schools created by the reformers, who because of their lack of direct vested interests in the past were willing and able to introduce significant changes in Middle Eastern government and society. The latter were first personified by the Young Turks, and then by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the other founders of the Turkish Republic. It took another generation before similar groups were to gain real power in the Arab world, but with the emergence of men such as Tariki during the past decade, it is clear that the Arabs also are not too far behind in this respect. The interesting question which remains is whether the Arab technocrats will seek to make themselves into a new Ruling Class ruling autocratically in order to introduce rapid modernization, as did the 'men of the *Tanzimat*' in Ottoman times, or whether they will move more directly to parallel the efforts of those who sought to democratize society at the same time that they modernized it.

While Duguid concentrates on the personalities of change, Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb dwells on its institutional, social, and legal aspects in the second part of his overview, 'The Heritage of Islam in the Modern World'. Sir Hamilton analyzes reform in terms of its destructive effects on the traditional substratum of society developed in the Middle East over the centuries in order to deal with those areas of life not cared for by the established institutions of government. A major problem involved in reform policy is, then, that of adequately replacing

the religious and secular orders and guilds as well as the Islamic religious law, whose close interconnexion has created serious problems in relation to the piecemeal approach of the reformers to the present time.

Both Duguid and Gibb analyze the process of reform in situations where the established institutions have survived along with dominant classes vigorously resisting changes in their privileges and positions. On the other hand, Sami Hanna, of the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, describes the entirely different situation that existed in Ottoman Egypt during the French Expedition (1798–1801) originally led by Napoleon Bonaparte. Here the ruling class of Ottomans and *Mamlûks* was entirely destroyed by the French conquest. The main problem of the French was not so much that of meeting entrenched resistance, but rather of finding out what were the established institutions and practices so that some order could be restored. In the absence of any alternative, the French had to rely on the advice of the only leaders remaining among the Egyptian people, the religious substratum of Egyptian society, the '*Ulemâ*', and to a lesser extent Coptic financial experts. For the first time in centuries, native Egyptians were involved in their own rule, and without any established ruling class to resist, change could be introduced far more rapidly than was the case elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. An Egyptian taste for self-rule was stimulated but then frustrated, first by the French themselves and then by the rise of the Moḥammad 'Alî dynasty.

Issa J. Boullata, of the Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut, discusses the intellectual aspect of reform in the works of 'Badr *Shâkir* al-Sayyâb and the Free Verse movement' in Iraq during the years following the Second World War. Here we find a school of poets in many ways parallel to the reforming 'Young Ottoman' intellectuals in the nineteenth century, seeking to make literature a weapon of political and social change by developing new forms and themes in order to propound revolutionary ideas of the new Arab society which they hoped to create.

Turning to medieval Islam, we find the problems of rapid change and reform appearing even in the eleventh century. At this time, Middle Eastern society was disintegrating following the collapse of the 'Abbâsid caliphate. Without adequate defenses, the area was menaced by destructive invasions of uncivilized nomads from Central Asia, and heretical *Shî'*ism threatened to displace the established *Sunnî* institutions of Middle Eastern society. The Seljûk Turks were attempting to rescue and revive Orthodox Islam by establishing the Sultanate as the secular backbone of the Caliphate. The process of reconciling this with Islamic law and with the dignity of the Caliphs was the key to the formation of the principal institutions of Seljûk government and society, many of which survived with little change through the Ottoman period into modern times. George Makdisi, Professor of Arabic at Harvard University, describes in his study of 'The Marriage of *Ṭughril* Beg' the problems encountered by one Sultan in his relationships with the Caliph of his time. In the end, it was the conflict of Sultan and Caliph which prevented the Seljûks from fully restoring the amalgum of Middle Eastern civilization and so led to a new age of disintegration which was brought to an end only by the rise of the Ottoman Empire. STANFORD J. SHAW