

I *Millenarianism, renewal, justice, rights and reform, 1798–1914*

Introduction

The period from the late eighteenth century to the First World War is distinctive because it marked the time when the polities of the MENA region were under considerable pressure from the European powers, but still retained basic forms of sovereignty and relative autonomy, and engaged in various forms of self-strengthening and centralization. These kinds of sovereignty, statehood and hegemony were to be lost or completely transformed in the period surrounding the First World War, when colonial rule became general and new forms of political community based around the national principle came into being. From the mass uprising against the French occupation of Egypt (1798–1801), to the constitutional revolutions in the Ottoman empire (1908) and Qajar Iran (1905), and the revolutionary millenarianism of Al-Hiba in Morocco (1912), diverse strands of contentious mobilization owed much to the crises, reform and transformation of centralizing dynastic states whose hegemony was based on Islamic law, divine favour, the sultan's justice, and guarantees of customary autonomies and practices, cultivation and trade.

During this 'long' nineteenth century, the major, polyglot, multi-national, de-centralized, agrarian and trade-based polities of the MENA, the Ottoman empire, Qajar Iran and Alawi Morocco, lost the autonomy *vis-à-vis* Europe that they had previously enjoyed. Some parts of these states were taken over outright by European powers: Algeria after 1830, Tunisia after 1881, and Egypt after 1882. The Ottoman empire also lost territories in the Balkans through nationalist secession. Colonial rule mattered enormously, but was not the key driver of contentious mobilization, in spite of the tenacious protests in Algeria throughout the period from the 1830s to the early 1900s. Instead, the key context had to do more with centralization and even empire-building in the region itself. Partly in response to the changing

terms of war and trade, and partly to secure their own power, rulers engaged in major projects of dynasty building and state centralization, and military, fiscal and administrative change. In Tunisia, Egypt and the Ottoman centre, during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century 'new power states emerged containing centralized bureaucracies, European-style armies, and directed by elites made up in part of men educated in the West'. These states borrowed from eighteenth-century rounds of state-building by provincial dynasts, but they still changed the form of the state decisively.

These states greatly augmented the power of autocratic rulers over their subjects, who became increasingly subordinated to the demands of the central administration (Hunter 1999: 3).

In the eighteenth century, the Ottoman government was de-centralized, minimal, diverse, and with many layers of sovereignty (Shaw 1976: 165; Yapp 1987: 36–7). This point applied with even more force to the Moroccan and Iranian governments. By the early twentieth century, the Ottoman and Egyptian states were ruling with centralized administrative, fiscal and juridical apparatuses, and had autocratic capacity and a depth and breadth of intervention unknown in previous times (Shaw 1977: vii). In Alawi-ruled Morocco after the defeat of 1858/9 and in Qajar-ruled Iran there were attempts at centralization and 'reform', although these were less developed by the time these countries fell under varying degrees of imperial control, Iran in 1911 and Morocco in 1912.

In the Ottoman empire, rulers made a half-hearted attempt to change the basis of their legitimacy. The Tanzimat, the 'auspicious re-ordering' of the Ottoman empire (1839–76), seemed to be aimed at eliminating the priority of Islam in the justification for the state. In a bid to stem nationalist secession (above all in the Balkans) and keep the Europeans at bay, the European-educated men of the sultan's new civil service designed a policy that declared the juridical equality of all Ottoman subjects, regardless of faith or confession. It was a move around which much contentious mobilization was to revolve. Abdulhamid II's long tenure (1876–1909) reversed the policy, in some measure, bringing Islam in new forms back to the centre of the sultanate, a crucial context for the rise of the Young Turks.

During the nineteenth century, the region was integrated into a world economy dominated by Europe. The port cities, including Tanger, Alexandria, Beirut and Izmir, once villages, grew immensely at the

expense of the inland cities; merchants, land-owners, usurers and other agents and entrepreneurs of the emerging colonial economy made vast gains relative to other actors in the economy, ‘protected’ as they were under the Capitulations in the Ottoman empire, and favoured by the Qajar shahs, and to a lesser extent late-nineteenth-century Moroccan sultans. New physical infrastructures (communications, utilities, agro-processing, transport) were built, employing wage-labour. Migration for waged-work became more common. New European-style schools trained middle classes, who staffed new professions and bureaucracies. The social position of the religious establishment was challenged as *ulema* lost the monopoly of the pen, and outside of Iran, subordinated to the new state. Crafts and service trades in the cities were pressured, squeezed and re-structured, the urban guilds were co-opted and in many places disappeared, and many neighbourhood quarters lost their cohesion. In the rural areas, large commercially oriented estates were constructed, share-cropping arrangements multiplied, communal systems of land tenure were eroded, in places a wealthy peasantry emerged, and elsewhere small-holders multiplied.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were also the scene of a too-often-understated religious, cultural and ideological ferment and revival. The spread of Sufi orders where states were inadequate or weak, Islamic renewal, reformist Sufism, heterodoxy of various kinds, millenarianism, *ijtihad*-minded Shi‘ism, patriotism, Arabism, Turkism, pan-Islam, Islamic modernism, and ideas of constitutional and representative government appeared in different parts of the region, intertwining with and transforming long-standing notions of Islamic law, justice, rights, and custom. These ideas crossed borders using new and old communications technologies and played important and often under-appreciated roles in shaping popular movements.

Revolution, justice, autonomy and reform

Revolutionary mobilizing projects challenging elites, local dynastic and European colonial rule in Egypt–Sudan, Iran, the Arabian peninsula and North Africa were founded not on nationalism but on religion, whether in millenarian (Mahdist), purist (Salafi-Wahhabi), or neo-Sufi (Qadiri/Sanusi) colours. Millenarianism and Mahdism were above all important in Morocco and Egypt–Sudan throughout the period. In Sudan, Al-Mahdi (the son of a boat-builder) built a new state

(1883–98). In Morocco, the most radical uprisings before 1914, as Laroui rightly argued, were millenarian. These did not seek to replace the *makhzan* (central government) with a perfected *makhzan* or the reigning sultan with a pretender from the same dynasty or even an alternate dynasty. Nor were they about the ambitions of this or that provincial *qaid* or tribal leader, whether to participate in the politics of the central government or to consolidate a ‘more or less recognized’ sphere of autonomy (Laroui 1977: 160). These were not revolts of those under regulation protesting against the exactions and oppression of this or that governor or *caid*. Millenarian uprisings, instead, such as that of Al-Hiba in 1912, posited that the whole order was broken, at the most fundamental level, and that the new form of rule would redeem that order through a revolutionary transformation. It was about Mahdist uprisings, where ‘the poor enrol, the notables stand apart’, that contemporary Muslim historians were the most venomous, their orthodoxy usurped; and the sultan most worried, his legitimacy directly challenged (Laroui 1977: 160, and see 158 n. 91).

Elsewhere, Sufism took the lead. In Iran, the Bab movement of the 1840s drew on a stream of heterodox Sufism. In Algeria and in Cyrenaica renewed forms of Sufism were central in the movements of Abd Al-Qadir (in the 1830s and 1840s) and Ahmad Al-Sanusi (after 1911) alike.

Finally, in the Arabian peninsula, Salafi-Wahhabism, a form of purism that declared *jihad* against all other Muslims in the region, and was largely rejected by that region until the last quarter of the twentieth century, was nonetheless central in state-building efforts in central Arabia that broke with Ottoman rule from the mid-eighteenth century onwards.

In sum, it was access to new forms of the divine, not the development of nation-ness, whether through new interpretations of the scriptures, or new forms of ecstatic contact and charisma, that lay in the main behind the capacity to imagine and act in the name of radically new forms of political community and social order in most of the nineteenth-century MENA.

Another vital stream of contention placed less emphasis on Islam, was more defensive than revolutionary, and sought to restore or give altered content to the new and old terms, identities and principles linked to the *status quo*, and to re-interpret these terms in ways more favourable to particular constituencies. Defensive elements within the

state, above all Janissaries, mounted rear-guard actions against state centralization in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Another version of a conservative and defensive mobilization by a member of the Ottoman state, was that of Hajj Ali of Constantine against the French occupation in the 1830s. More subaltern were collective petitions and mobilizations from artisans, townspeople, peasants, wage-workers and others, from Vidin in Bulgaria to Nablus in Palestine to Cairo in Egypt against local exploiters, notables, merchants, land-owners *inter alia* who violated principles related to rich and transformed traditions of Ottoman statecraft and popular culture alike. These mobilizations were more radical, and appealed to the justice of the sultan, the rights of the subjects (*huquq al-ra'iyya*), the welfare of the people (*maslahat al-ahali*), and the demands of customary (*'adat*) and local practice. These movements were neither strictly economic nor strictly political, a fact which had to do with the way economic and political functions and forms of power were merged at a time of incomplete state centralization: local notables, guild heads, village heads, land-owners and others discharged state-like functions. These mobilizations drew on rich political and ideological resources, anchored in existing forms of hegemony, to pursue interests both ideal and material. The period of the Tanzimat was particularly important as it put forward new terms, above all equality, that mobilizing projects sought to claim for themselves, while developing new forms of centralized rule which protestors aimed to draw on in their fight against local exploitation. One of the most radical of such defensive movements, which in general could harbour many different forms of creativity, was that of Tanyus Shahin, a muleteer and Christian from Mount Lebanon, who led a mass, popular uprising against feudal injustice in 1858–60. In general, defensive mobilization, especially when its social bases and leaderships were subaltern, invoked secular traditions of rule, justice and custom, or the innovations of the Tanzimat, more than they invoked Islam. This is an important caution against vacuous or exaggerated generalizations about the all-important role of religion in 'pre-modern' commoner protest. As we will see, defensive mobilization tended to invoke Islam only when it was led by elements from within the state (such as Janissaries or Ottoman officials), or when issues of the defence of the political community as a whole were touched on. Where it was a question of justice amid local stratification, invocations of Islam dropped out, and the language of justice and rights was emphasized.

A third stream of contention throughout the century, especially in de-centralized contexts in North Africa and Iran, where the writ of the central state ran thin, and where local forms of autonomy anchored in tribes, Sufi orders, city quarters, guilds or communal traditions was strong, had much more to do with the defence of pre-existing (or the search for projected) sites of autonomy against the exactions or deprivations of a distant state, conceived of as a necessary evil, or as an entity to be avoided as much as possible. As a nineteenth-century 'Iraqi' tribal chant stated: 'It [the government] is a flabby serpent and has no venom' (Batatu 1978: 14). In Cyrenaica, in the mid-nineteenth century, the Sufi leader Al-Sanusi 'appeared to his adepts as a sort of avenger and a substitute for the decadent establishment' (Berque 1972: 35 n. 2). Communal traditions were strong among the peasantry in nineteenth-century Egypt. Some developed direct means of exacting justice; others broke with conventional society and sought to achieve liberty against the law. Autonomist and state-rejecting movements were often led by the poor and the marginal, but not always. The Druze uprisings of the 1890s and early 1900s, for example, represented efforts to generate new spheres of autonomy within Ottoman Syria for the relatively wealthy Druze warlords who had made their money in land and the grain trade in recent times, but who were excluded in other respects from notable Damascene society.

Finally, there were reformist movements, seeking some decisive (but not revolutionary) change in the terms of the hegemony of the dominant bloc, often in the sense of winning representation of, and a place in the state for, new and previously unrepresented groups. The 'Urabi movement in Egypt under patriotic and constitutional banners in 1881–2 was one example. Another was the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and the Young Turks in the Ottoman centre from the 1880s until the 'revolution' of 1908. These movements, in partial contrast with revolutionary, defensive and autonomist movements, were very often led by those who had made gains through the political and economic changes of the century, and sought to convert those gains into political power. They were often drawn from the ranks of the urban intelligentsia. New modes of organization, such as the learning, reforming or charitable societies that increasingly emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in the cities owed their genesis to these constituencies and their movements. These movements aimed to reform the state, but not to replace it, or charge it with new social and economic

functions, with the exception, perhaps, of the demand that the state now provide European-style education. These movements were influenced heavily by European liberalism and Islamic modernism alike. Before 1911, at least, nationalism in the sense of an independent and sovereign political community with no allegiance to dynast and rooted in nationness rather than religious community was only a very minor key in unruly popular politics. Only in the Balkans or among Armenians and Maronite Lebanese had it come to the fore. 'Urabi sought some form of autonomy under the rule of the Ottoman sultan; the Young Turks, at least before 1908, sought to restore the Ottoman empire not to abolish it, and to prevent nationalist secession, not to encourage it.

Algeria: Sufis, tribes and Janissaries, 1783–1816

Protests arising amid state imposition were by no means an innovation of the nineteenth century or simply a result of colonial encroachment or invasion. Well before the French invaded Algeria in 1830, there was a rich tradition of protest in the entire region against the central government which in late-eighteenth-century Algeria involved the Deys, appointees of the Ottoman sultan.

Weaknesses in the military and oligarchic system of the Algerian Deys before 1830 stemmed from various military and financial problems going back to the mid-eighteenth century. The loss of income from piracy, and the costs of defensive war, notably against Spain in the 1770s and 1780s, reduced the pay and prestige, and sapped the loyalty of the Deys' marines and infantry corps. In a search to keep up revenues, the Deys imposed severe fiscal burdens on the tribal population. Here, growing impositions stemmed less from systematic projects of centralization – as with Ali Bey Al-Kabir, a Mamluke leader of Egypt (1760–72), Al-Jazzar Pasha, Selim III in Istanbul and so on, or from factional quarrels, as in Egypt under various Mamluke houses in the eighteenth century, and more from a resort to expedients to shore up the ship of state. These burdens stirred resistance, championed in the countryside by the Sufi orders and joined by major tribes. Algeria's western province, for example, in the second half of the eighteenth century, was 'the scene of constant conflict between the important tribes of the region and the Turks' (Abun-Nasr 1987: 167). The Beys of the western province used harsh methods to subjugate the tribes and force them to pay taxes, as well as extracting large indemnities from them.

This was the background to the rebellion of two Sufi orders – the Darqawiyya and the Tijaniyya – against the Turks. The leader of the Darqawiyya *tariqa* in western Algeria, Abdul-Qadir b. Al-Sharif, became popular with the tribal population, ‘through espousing their grievances against the government and condemning the heavy impositions demanded from them’. Abdul Qadir Al-Sharif was in constant rebellion against the Turks between 1783 and 1805. In 1805, he succeeded in mobilizing the whole of the western region against them, and ‘declared his intention to conquer the whole of the country’. Major tribes supported him, along with the inhabitants of at least two important towns (Al-Mu‘askar and Tlimsan).

The Tijaniyya order, founded by Ahmad Al-Tijani in Ayn Madi, in the region of Al-Aghwat in 1782, was at loggerheads with the Turks from 1784. Al-Tijani was forced into exile in Fez in 1789. After his death in exile in 1815, his son Muhammad Al-Kabir formed a tribal alliance against the Turks in the 1820s with the aim of driving them from western Algeria. At the core of the uprising were the followers of the Tijaniyya order and the tribe of Banu Hashim. The latter were affiliated to the Qadiriyya order, and were the tribe to which the future leader the Amir Abd Al-Qadir belonged. In 1827, Muhammad Al-Kabir led tribal warriors into the plain of Gharis and attacked the Turkish garrison at Al-Mu‘askar; but Banu Hashim did not give the support they had promised, and he was defeated, taken prisoner, and later killed by the Turks. The Tijani order then believed that the conquest of Algeria by the French in 1830 was a fulfilment of Ahmad Al-Tijani’s prayer for the collapse of Turkish rule in Algeria (Abun-Nasr 1987: 167–8).

The unrewarding task of crushing such Sufi-led and tribal resistance, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, fell on the discontented infantry garrisoned in the cities. Moreover, the Deys turned to cash raised on wheat exports to plug revenue gaps, exports which stirred further grievances as, first, they took place at a time of famine, and, second, because the control of these exports was given over to two Jewish families from Livorno, whose privileges were resented. Such was the background to the troop rebellions of 1805–16. In 1805, a Turkish soldier assassinated one of the Jewish ship-owners close to Mustafa Dey (1798–1805). On receiving the support of a former *qadi* and senior *ulema*, the troops then assassinated the Dey himself. The troops went on to assassinate six more Deys by 1816. These events

‘reflected the disintegration of the system of government of the *deys* which could function smoothly only so long as it was dominated by a small number of officers who were obeyed by the troops and trusted by the *deys*’ (Abun-Nasr 1987: 164–7). They were about the incoherent attempts of a financially and militarily weakened dynasty to maintain itself by imposing burdens it did not have the wherewithal to impose, and thus stirring resistance it could not thoroughly repress.

Protest in eighteenth-century Egypt, 1786–1798

The situation during the last decades of Mameluke rule in Egypt bore some similarities to this, while the depth of the social and economic crisis in Egypt may well have been greater, with famine and dearth making regular appearances especially in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Especially after the fall of Ali Bey Al-Kabir (1760–72), protest was in some ways the result of a crisis in the state itself – it was neither a reaction to state strength nor an attempt to direct and reform state power. We find in Al-Jabarti a blistering critique of the multiple failures of the Mamlukes in regards to maintaining the safety and security of the roads for merchants and travellers, and the proper regulation of the markets, including that of weights and measures. On the other hand, the urban *ulema*, who were often wealthy through pious foundations and trade, tended not to lead or inspire popular protests: at best they played a mediating role, or they would weigh in with condemnation of discord; much of the time they ‘preferred to be let alone’ (Baer 1977: 228–9). Social historians have shown that during the eighteenth century the urban crowds, which included women, rose up to try to put an end to profiteering, or they opened the granaries through direct action, attacked merchant-profiteers, opposed exactions, and occasionally set out to seize property from the Mamlukes’ mansions themselves (Raymond 1968: 112–13; Raymond 1973: 794). Marsot mentions some examples from Al-Jabarti where the ‘guilds rose in protest at a forced loan’ in October 1787, and where ‘there was an uprising in protest at the arrest of the head of the guild of butchers’ in September 1790 (Marsot 1966: 275).

In the countryside, while there were plenty of intra-elite conflicts over the fiscal surplus, there was also a good deal of struggle centred on the amount of surplus (in taxes) that the diverse elements of the military-administrative elite could extract from commoners. In the

1770s, for example, after the fall of a local potentate in Upper Egypt, peasants refused to pay grain and land taxes; they were threatened with house demolition by the authorities (Abul-Magd 2013: 37). In 1778, in Tahta in Upper Egypt, the ‘*fellahs* of the surrounding country had risen in a body, and refused the imposts’ (a French naval officer, cited in Baer 1969: 95). Here arms were used and alliances forged with Bedouin. A key weapon available to peasants was flight. Marsot notes of Egypt before Mehmet Ali, an ‘entire village could escape into the hills in Middle and Upper Egypt and so avoid paying the taxes’ (Marsot 1984: 8). Flight did not only block surplus extraction, but it signalled defiance, and could further imply that a village might enter into the protection of this or that Bedouin tribe, who regularly received substantial payments from Mamluke or other authorities in return for their military quiescence or alliance.

Baldwin’s research has shown that ordinary people in Egypt, in spite of the de-centralized nature of the Ottoman empire in the eighteenth century, remained tenacious in their search for the justice of the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul (through petitions) and the correct application of the law (through recourse to the courts) (Baldwin 2010). Standing between the courts, the Ottoman *wali* (governor) and the sultan in Istanbul, however, were an array of vested interests, warring and even rapacious Mameluke households, exploitative tax farmers (Marsot 1984: 7–10), *qadis*, and merchants (Chalcraft 2007: 182ff.). In 1794–5, the inhabitants of a village near Bilbays in Sharqiyya (Lower Egypt), came to Cairo to lodge demands against the imposts imposed by a prominent ‘*alim* who was also a tax-farmer. Backed by ‘disturbances’, these demands won some tax remission (Baer 1969: 96). Others turned away from direct engagement with the authorities and towards neighbourhood solidarities, urban craft guilds and flourishing mystic orders for social, economic and religious succour. The sugar carriers of the imperial refineries in eighteenth-century Egypt, for example, sought to ‘distribute guild income equally among themselves’ (Ghazali 1999: 64).

The multiple crises in the authority of the Mamluke Beys, and the hopes among the population for better alternatives, are underlined by the events of 1786. In July of that year, the Ottoman commodore Hasan Pasha arrived in Alexandria with a small contingent of troops. He had been sent by the sultan in an attempt to re-establish justice and order – and for a brief period the main Mamluke lords became open rebels against the authority of the sultan. Hasan Pasha sent couriers to

the villages of the Nile delta, saying that the Ottoman sultan had decided to reduce greatly their taxes. He arrived at Bulaq, Cairo's chief harbour and crafts district on the Nile, 'to enormous popular acclaim and a cannon salute'. As Al-Jabarti wrote: 'The people were happy and full of joy and took him for the Mahdi [messianic saviour] of the age' (cited in Cole 2007: 96–7). Hasan Pasha, it turned out, was no saviour, and could not bring the Mamlukes to heel. He allowed taxes to rise, the sultan's writ remained weak, and the powers of the Mamluke households continued largely unchecked.

The Janissaries and the urban crowd, 1789–1826

The protests of the townspeople, *ulema* and Janissaries that unseated Ottoman Sultan Selim III (1789–1807) in May 1807, were about resistance to centralization in the shape of a new conscript and centralized army, a major threat to the existing infantry corps (Kafadar 2007; Shaw 1976: 273–4). The threat was new, but the repertoire of contention was not. For more than a century, uprisings centred in Istanbul involving Janissaries and their allies, mostly drawn from the townspeople, had been able to unseat the sultan. The Janissaries of the early nineteenth century could look back to at least two major eighteenth-century precedents for their actions. In 1703, an uprising against the new life-time tax farms deposed Mustafa II (1695–1703) and put Ahmed III (1703–30) on the throne (Shaw 1976: 227–8). One Janissary renegade, a certain Calık Ahmed, had even suggested in that year that the Ottoman dynasty be discarded in favour of a '*çumhur cem'iyeti*', for which the literal translation is 'popular assembly'. Kafadar notes that *çumhur* could mean 'rebellious crowd' rather than the whole population, and that this rebel probably had a 'Janissary oligarchy' in mind. However, it is not clear why Janissaries would refer to themselves in negative terms as a 'rebellious crowd', and there were plenty of other more conventional terms available to disguise an oligarchical putsch (Kafadar 2007: 133). The uprising of Patrona Halil in 1730 deposed Ahmed III (1703–30) and put Mahmut I (1730–54) on the throne (Shaw 1976: 240). In Izmir in 1788, urban artisans, guilds and townspeople rose against the tripling of taxes stemming from the outbreak of war in 1787, ousting a number of important officials and local notables (Clogg 1973: 24–5). The rising of 1807 can be seen as a continuation of this tradition, one born amid the seventeenth- and

eighteenth-century de-centralization of the empire, and based in links between an important section of the military and administrative *askeri* class and the ‘flock’ – the urban crowd.

The New Order declared by Sultan Selim III shortly after his accession to power in 1789, and prompted by military defeat and territorial loss to the Tsarist empire in 1774, led to immediate resistance from the Janissaries from the 1790s onwards. Notables who had their *timar*-holding seized joined with the Janissaries. Many *ulema* opposed non-Islamic innovations in the structure of the state. Urban artisans also opposed the fact that the sultan had set himself against the monopolistic rights of many guilds (Akarlı 1987: 228). Artisans were sometimes protected by Janissaries, depended on them for their livelihoods, or actually were Janissaries themselves, a legacy of the military de-centralization of the eighteenth century. Artisans sought more secure rights of control and access to the positions, working capital and premises where they worked (Akarlı 2004). The townspeople more generally were discontented by inflation (Shaw 1976: 273). The last minute concessions on officials by the sultan were too little, too late, the movement secured a legal ruling against the New Order and the sultan was deposed and replaced by Mustafa IV (1807–8). For the time being, the powers of the new army were pegged back.

The link between the Janissaries and their urban allies was articulated in the early nineteenth century by the idea that, in borrowing military techniques from Christendom, Sultan Selim III was deviating from the faith. Many believed he was, a position that was potentially explosive on the political level, and certainly brought many *ulema* into these struggles. After supporters of the centralizer Mahmud II managed to get him on the throne in 1808, against popular sentiment in the capital, a new uprising broke out in November 1808, above all against the powerful Bulgarian provincial notable Bayraktar who was the Grand Vizier responsible for bringing in new military corps. Janissaries were outraged by the threat to their position that his policies posed, stirred up by rumours of their abolition and by shock at execution of Prince Mustafa (by the sultan in order to eliminate a rival). The first public appearance of the corps was on the last night of Ramadan (1223 AH/14 November 1808). The Janissaries ‘obtained the support of the artisans’ (Shaw 1977: 4–5) as well as the urban crowd.

On this occasion, concessions were made. Mahmud II continued to manoeuvre cautiously, and to foster the development of new,

European-style military units at the heart of the state. The last stand of the Janissaries came on 14 June 1826. Objecting to the new corps, the Janissaries rebelled, being joined by thousands of artisans and others on Janissary payrolls fearing loss of salaries, or as *ulema* and others ‘offended by the sultan’s attempt to innovate one of the most traditional institutions of all’ (Shaw 1977: 20). The Janissaries were massacred. The sultan was careful to associate himself with Islam, as opposed to the ways of the infidel, a move that was in some respects an innovation, as the Islamic credentials of Ottoman sultans had rarely been subject to this kind of debate; in more secular mode, the sultan made sure that the Janissaries were linked with corruption and defeat (in the Greek war). Indeed, here the sultan was exploiting public discontent, as the ‘Ottomans still were unable to break into the Morea, contributing further to general public dissatisfaction in Istanbul with the Janissaries and the rest of the old army’ (Shaw 1977: 17–19). After the massacre, weapons of the weak were a last resort, and fires of unknown origin devastated the old part of city; even the buildings of the Sublime Porte were burned on 31 August 1826 (Shaw 1977: 28).

Uprisings and tax revolts in the Mashriq

The struggle at the core of the Ottoman state was resolved in favour of the forces of a new, European-style army and forms of state centralization. The outmanoeuvring and then the massacre of the Janissaries in 1826 put an end to the contentious capacities of the urban crowd outside the palace, breaking the old linkages between the Janissary military on the one hand, and urban crafts and service workers, certain notables, merchants and tax-farmers, and the *ulema* on the other. The new military order was – at least for the time being – fully under the control of the Porte. The defeat of the Janissaries, paved the way for the re-configuration of the Ottoman state, enabling it to achieve a power to overcome the de-centralized popular politics of the eighteenth century, and unleashing a prolonged wave of centralization, which involved a provocative assault on existing tissues of consent.

After 1826, for many decades, popular resistance would come from outside the centre of the new state. In the years immediately following 1826, ‘opposition to the sultan and his reforms began to spring up everywhere, not only among former Janissaries and conservatives but also among *ulema*, artisans, merchants, and even former partisans of

reform who were affected in some way or other by the sultan's financial and military policies'. Tax farms, heavy taxes, *ulema* loss of control over pious foundations and new taxes were part of the reason for this. In addition to the fact that promised life-time pensions for ex-Janissaries turned out to be a death sentence for those who applied (Shaw 1977: 28).

After 1833, severe defeats on the Ottoman sultan inflicted by Egyptians and the European powers, paved the way for revolts in Anatolia, Bosnia, Macedonia and Iraq; some were only partially put down. Many lower level *ulema*, who had remained neutral, now turned against Mahmud II, 'attributing the defeat to the reforms and complaining about what they considered to be the sultan's infidel ways as well as the presence of foreigners in the capital.' Mahmud II's use of the Mansure army to suppress unrest only added to discontent (Shaw 1977: 35). There were protests against Ottoman centralization in Baghdad, inaugurating a tradition that continued for decades (Batatu 1978: 470).

French consular correspondence from the late 1820s offers a glimpse of the opposition to new exactions in the cities and towns of the Mashriq: Beirut, Tripoli, Acre, Antoura, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Damascus and Baghdad. In early 1828, Janissaries in Aleppo tried to forge alliances with townspeople in order to defy the Porte (Correspondence Politique Turquie (CPT) Vol. 258, fols 7–8, 1828). In February, Maronites on Mount Lebanon sought out French protection, presenting letters of protection from Louis XIV and Louis XV, and informing the French that they were crushed by the impositions of the Ottoman Pasha of Acre (CPT, Vol. 258, fols 13–14, 1828). On 25 June 1828, Henri Guys, the major French consul in the region, wrote of 'troubles' in Hama and Homs following a new tax imposed by the Turks (CPT, Vol. 258, fols 23–6, 1828). On 27 June 1828, he detailed the new levies, and announced that 'the towns of Hama and Homs have revolted. They completely refuse to pay their component [of the tax], nor new levies'. Tripolitarians, on the other hand, without taking up arms, have refused to pay a farthing ('un parat') of the new demands (CPT, Vol. 258, fol. 27, 1828). In February 1829, a number of Janissary chiefs 'revolting against authority' were executed (CPT, Vol. 258, fol. 87, 1829). In May 1829, the inhabitants of Baghdad rose against the Ottoman Pasha and put him to death (CPT, Vol. 258, fols. 136–7, 1829). In the same year, more exactions were reported in Acre, and a riot (*émeute*) in Hama (CPT, Vol. 258, fols. 153–6, 1829).

These uprisings may have been stimulated by the new tax burden, but they also built on a prior tradition of resistance to imposts judged excessive. There was an uprising of the commoners (*'ammiyya*) in Mount Lebanon in 1790, for example, against extraordinary tax levies (Makdisi 2000: 45). In 1821, there was another such *'ammiyya* against new poll and land taxes imposed by the amir and considered excessive by the Christian peasantry (Havemann 1991; Hilw 1979). When the amir refused to repeal his demands, 'resistance evolved into a military conflict' (Havemann 1991: 89). A Maronite bishop 'is reported to have initiated the first protest meeting and organized the subsequent campaigns' (Havemann 1991: 89). Some muqata'aji-s, noble tax-farmers who controlled the sub-districts of Mount Lebanon, were also involved. Most of the protestors, nonetheless, were peasants and lower Maronite clergy. Many saw their action as being in the 'interest of the country' (*maslahat al-bilad*), referring to Mount Lebanon, a *de facto* tributary principality within the Ottoman empire under an amir, drawn from a noble family, loyal to the sultan. This was a transgressive move, aggregating to commoners the right to judge the interest of the country, something that the Ottoman authorities were completely unable to countenance. In a further departure from hierarchical or genealogical principles, the villages that joined the uprising elected deputies (*wukala'*) from among the commoners to advocate for them. The revolt demanded lower taxation, and that the tax levies come only once a year and after the harvest.

For the authorities this was said to be incomprehensible: as an Ottoman governor addressed the people in 1821, the notables were corrupting the land, using 'intrigue, cunning and deception' to disturb the peace. The commoners, on the other hand, put themselves in a perplexing way at odds with the august authority, order and security of the amir, because they were ignorant, base, stubborn, disobedient, bold and deviant; they had entered a domain for which they were utterly unfit and unprepared; they were easily crushed, not 'an army ready for battle', and should give up on folly. As an Ottoman official declared, subjects 'held in compassion and protection . . . should return to your villages and preoccupy yourselves with your own affairs and render what is required of you' (quoted in Makdisi 2000: 47–8). In this view, social rank was a natural fact and an inviolate reflection of 'the will of God'. The French revolution, in this view, bolstered by the French counterrevolutionary exiles, priests and émigré princes alike

who took up residence in Mount Lebanon, was an abomination, a breakdown of social order that threw open the 'doors of hell' (Makdisi 2000: 21, 41).

The tax protests in the Mashriq in the late 1820s and early 1830s paved the way to some extent for Mehmet Ali's invasion and occupation of Syria (1832–41) under Ibrahim Pasha, especially as the latter, who defeated the Ottoman forces, made promises of self-rule to the local inhabitants in order to gain support. Such promises resonated above all because they implied some respite from the new and over-weening burdens from Istanbul – but also because the uprisings in the Balkans in particular had suggested new formulae for forms of local rule and autonomy. On the other hand, Ibrahim Pasha, betrayed these expectations: the 'children of Arabs' were despised and treated as Egyptian *fellahin* (Makdisi 2000: 53); heavy taxation was imposed on land and individuals, weapons were confiscated, conscription threatened, and forced labour introduced.

Against this background, there were uprisings against Egyptian rule in Palestine, Syria and Mount Lebanon from 1834 until the military regime was dismantled. On Mount Lebanon, the major event was another commoner rising, mainly involving peasants and lower clergy, which took place in 1840. This time the leadership was drawn from humbler strata, and 'a certain degree of patriotic feeling' (Havemann 1991: 89) was at work. Some Christians were inspired by the 1839 decree of Gülhane, which officially inaugurated the Tanzimat, and stipulated the juridical equality of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. Merchants and artisans were involved for the first time, and helped provision the movement through the coastal towns. A number of elites were involved for their own reasons: some tax-farmers, French noblemen, Catholic missionaries and British diplomats (Havemann 1991: 89–90). Some muqata'aji-s were present as a means to restore the Ottoman regime and maintain privileges usurped by the amir and the Egyptians (Makdisi 2000: 58). Druze, who had also suffered harsh Egyptian rule, were also involved. In 1840, unlike in 1821, moral backing was given to the uprising by the Maronite Patriarchate itself: after hesitation, and 'fear of the apparently leaderless nature of the uprising' the Patriarch 'finally urged the priests and monks in Mount Lebanon to aid in '*al-qiyaḡ al-jumburi*', the rising of the masses. He insisted that the popular welfare (*al-saliḡ al-jumburi*), understood in terms of the flourishing of the populace under conditions of just

taxation, could be served only if Egypt's oppressive reign ended (Makdisi 2000: 58). The French government itself, urged by the local consul, considered whether to support the rising as 'protector' of the Christians, but decided against it on the basis of preserving their relations with the Ottoman empire and the British. At a church in Antilyas on 8 June 1840 Christian, Druze, Sunni and Shi'a villagers declared themselves of 'one mind and one voice' (Makdisi 2000: 58).

In 1840, insurgents invoked the interest of the 'fatherland' (*maslahat al-watan*) (Hilw 1979: 35, 91), not just the interest of the *country*, as in 1821. This idea invoked a stronger form of territoriality. It used a translation of the French revolutionary term, *patrie*, drawing on the example of the Greek war of national independence, where Christian peasants and commoners had risen up against local nobility, the Christian church, the Islamic state, and Ottoman rule alike (Hilw 1979: 92).

The goal of the commoners and their backers was to lower taxes, revoke orders to disarm the Christian population, win exemption from conscription, and the abolition of compulsory labour. These goals were reactions to Egyptian measures. On the other hand, there were also political demands: that two members from each religious community should be appointed to an advisory council to help the amir in his affairs (Havemann 1991). Such demands represented a 'first step toward a confessional order' (Havemann 1991: 91). In this altered political context, the Maronite church started to appeal to solidarities of sect more frequently, setting a new context in the mountain.

The British and the Ottomans took advantage of the uprising to issue the ultimatum to Mehmet Ali to withdraw his forces from Syria (Makdisi 2000: 51). Conflicts of a more sectarian character broke out in the aftermath in Mount Lebanon in 1841 'between Druze notables, who were returning from an exile imposed by the Egyptians, and Maronite villagers of Dayr Al-Qamar' (Makdisi 2000: 51, 63ff.), the first major sectarian clashes between Maronite and Druze in Mount Lebanon.

These protests only altered in part the course of the new fiscal policies, and were only able at best to blunt the force of the new exactions; they also had the disadvantage of bringing down repression on the heads of their protagonists. They also, inadvertently, facilitated the intervention of France, as protector of the Maronites, not to mention, in the earlier case, the invasion of Ibrahim Pasha, who posed as defender of the local inhabitants. They also enabled local notables to

step in as peace-makers, power-holders who were then in a position to alter the terms of tax-raising to the advantage of themselves and their clients, rather than to the advantage of the mass of the population. On the other hand, on Mount Lebanon certainly, out of these conflicts came intimations of a new concept of territorial autonomy.

Egypt: resisting French occupation, 1798–1801

In July 1798, to cite the chronicler and religious scholar Al-Jabarti, ‘the people of the port [of Alexandria] suddenly realized that the French and their ships had reached Al-‘Ajami and were advancing on the town . . . by land like a swarm of locusts’ (Jabarti 1993: 20). Napoleon boasted that he had just ‘vanquished one of the foremost Powers in Europe’. He was shocked to discover that the small town of Alexandria, only 8,000 strong, put up a stiff resistance. He thought them blind, ignorant or ‘extremely presumptuous’ to resist. The struggle was general. Bedouin horsemen fired on the French as soon as they appeared on the coast. Men, women and children called on their friends and neighbours to surge to the rather minor fortifications that the town possessed (Cole 2007: 22–3). When the small detachment of cavalymen put out by the Mamluke state was defeated, the townspeople ‘peppered the French with gunfire’. And where there were no guns or ammunition, the inhabitants ‘pelted them with stones’ (Cole 2007: 24–5). When throwing stones became foolhardy because of military repression, the Alexandrians showed their opposition by refusing to witness Napoleon’s grandiose review of his victorious troops: they either withdrew from the town, fled in fear for their lives, or stayed in their homes (Cole 2007: 25). When the chink of an opportunity appeared, with much of the French army marching south, a short-lived uprising took place at Alexandria, with inhabitants firing from the windows during 10–15 July, 1798 (Cole 2007: 59).

In Cairo, as the Mamlukes set about trying to build up the city’s defences, ‘gloom spread among the populace and was felt in the market-places and people withdrew to their homes from sunset onward’. Others gathered in groups amid the general ‘uproar’ and ‘chewed their fingers in distress and sorrow’. For others, ‘fear and terror waxed greater than ever’ (Jabarti 1993: 24, 37, 38). Many expected little but destruction at the hands of the Christian French. Egyptians were not naïve about the intentions of Europeans, they did

not greet them as gods, liberators, or civilizers, and most rejected the French project *in toto*. An imperial decree issued by the Ottoman grand vizier circulating in Egypt in 1799 warned that the French would ‘seize the goods of the believers; their women and children will be reduced to slavery; and your blood will be spilled (may God preserve us)!’ (Cole 2007: 158). Such by no means unreasonable fears were probably widespread among ordinary Egyptians. It was inconceivable for most that Muslim lands could be ruled by a Christian power, or that Ottoman and Egyptian subjects, loyal to the sultan for centuries, could be ruled by Napoleonic France. There was little precedent for this across North Africa, the Mashriq, the Arabian peninsula, Iran and the Ottoman domains since the Crusades. In the Maghrib the struggle against Spanish incursions there had been mostly successful since 1492. What would become of authority, justice, law, faith, custom and rights? What would become of the great institutions and traditions of the Egyptian, Ottoman and Islamic world? French culture and institutions were alien, Napoleon and his army, who were said to have rebelled against and killed their own sultan, were seen as arrogant and deceitful, their talk of liberty and civilization was mostly incomprehensible, and their claims to being supporters of Islam nothing short of a ‘derangement of the mind’ (Jabarti 1993: 30). Commercial relations with the French, or other circuits of material and affective exchange on which new forms of power could be founded were lacking.

Al-Jabarti devoted several pages to a coruscating denunciation of the French attempt to legitimate their rule in Egypt. In July 1798, the French distributed a short and supposedly expert tract, written in Arabic by France’s finest Arabist, aiming to justify their conquest. The French declared themselves to be acting ‘In the name of God, and on behalf of the French Republic, based on liberty and equality’ and in opposition to the disobedient, ‘corrupt, contemptuous and high-handed Mamlukes’, who were given over to ‘extortion and violence’ and lacked ‘reason, virtue and knowledge’. They spoke of Egypt as the ‘fairest land that is to be found upon the face of the globe’. They announced that they had come, not to oppose Islam but in order to ‘restore your rights’, in the service of God and in reverence for the Qur’an and the Prophet. The proclamation claimed that ‘the French are also faithful Muslims’ and hence they had invaded Rome and destroyed the Papal See. They also maintained that they were friends of the sultan, ‘may God ever perpetuate his empire!’ They continued:

‘Blessing on blessing to the Egyptians who will act in concert with us, without any delay, for their condition shall be rightly adjusted, and their rank raised . . . Woe upon woe to those who will unite with the Mamlukes and assist them in the war with us.’ The statement closed as follows: ‘Every village that shall rise against the French army, shall be burnt down’ (cited in Cole 2007: 25–7).

Al-Jabarti was profoundly unimpressed by what Napoleon thought was a daring attempt to divide the local population and win hearts and minds by posing as the defender of sultan and Islam against the tyranny and disobedience of the Mamlukes. For Al-Jabarti, no friend of the Mamlukes, this was simply worthless propaganda combined with a threat of brute force. ‘Here is an explanation’, he begins coldly, ‘of the incoherent words and vulgar constructions which he put into this miserable letter.’ Over several pages, Al-Jabarti details the thicket of errors in grammar, syntax and word choice that littered the French proclamation. For an heir to a tradition in which the pen was monopolized by those of deep learning, for a scholar schooled in Arabic, and for a cleric living and breathing the intimate relationship between Arabic, Qur’anic revelation, religious judgment, and Islamic law, the butchery of the Arabic itself was a reason alone to invalidate any meaningful claim to authority.

This was only the foothills of Al-Jabarti’s denunciation, which becomes increasingly full-blooded as it progresses. He argues that the French claim to believe in three religions, but in fact they are ‘liars’ as they do not, nor indeed in any, ‘may God afflict them with every calamity’. ‘They are materialists’, he points out, ‘who deny all God’s attributes’. Indeed, by destroying the Papal See the French have gone against the Christians, and thus opposed both Christians and Muslims. Napoleon claims that ‘I more than the Mamlukes serve God’, but ‘there is no doubt’, Al-Jabarti goes on, ‘that this is a derangement of his mind and an excess of foolishness.’ Indeed, ‘*kufr* (unbelief) has dulled his heart’. Napoleon is also lying when he says that he respects the Prophet or the Qur’an – as he clearly does not believe in or respect the *umma* (Islamic community), and nor does he glorify the Qur’an by believing in it, ‘may God cast him into perdition’. ‘The French’, he continues, ‘are appointing themselves controllers of God’s secrets, but there is no disgrace worse than disbelief.’ The French, moreover, had killed their own sultan and rebelled against him. Their women have no modesty, and their men have intercourse with any woman who pleases

them; they do not shave heads nor their pubic hair, but they do shave their moustaches and beard; they mix their foods; and they should rightly be treated with ‘contempt’. Al-Jabarti concludes in a fairly comprehensive fashion, ‘May God hurry misfortune and punishment upon them, may He strike their tongues with dumbness, may He scatter their hosts, and disperse them, confound their intelligence, and cause their breath to cease’ (Cole 2007: 27–33).

It was part of a widely known stock of chronicles, legends and common sense that the scholar-leader and dynasty-founder Salah Al-Din Ibn Ayyub (d. 1193) had driven out the Crusaders – and although no such leader existed in Egypt in 1798, and although the Ottoman sultan was initially silent – many responded to the general call to arms issued by the Mamlukes. ‘The Shaykhs, the dignitaries, and the common people set out with clubs and arms’ (Jabarti 1993: 33). With or without authorization, Napoleon’s army was resisted every step of the way south through Lower Egypt to Cairo. Peasants, villagers, fishermen, Bedouin and the inhabitants of market towns such as Damanhour fought back with whatever weapons were to hand. They were not daunted by news of Napoleon’s military prowess. ‘The officer memoirists often expected peasants to be subservient, but were repeatedly disappointed.’ One peasant woman, combining child care and guerrilla struggle, managed with what was described as a pair of scissors, her baby still in her arms, to put out the eyes of a French aide-de-camp who was out in front of the advancing troops. Just as in Alexandria, the town of Damanhour rose up with arms against the French garrison stationed there on 17 July, managing to beat back some of the French forces and killing twenty French soldiers. Kléber, one of the most important French generals, felt under siege there. A similar rising against the French garrison in the provincial town of Bilbeis involved 1,500–1,800 peasants and Bedouin (Cole 2007: 116–17). Market day in Mansura in August 1798 allowed Bedouin and peasants to filter into the town, join with the townspeople, and effect an armed insurrection involving 4,000 people protesting the occupation and the heavy taxes. The French took casualties and the garrison was ‘helpless’. The uprising was only broken by major French reinforcements (Cole 2007: 120–1).

In the province of Al-Minufiya, the French faced ‘hordes [read large numbers] of insurgent Bedouin’, and burnt many villages ‘in order to imprint terror on that unruly population’ wrote Niello Sargy, fighting

with the French (Cole 2007: 122). Some refused to be terrorized. Instead, another insurrection, this time near Mansura in the village of Sonbat, broke out during August and September 1798. Again Bedouin and peasants formed an alliance, the former supplying arms (Cole 2007: 143). As a French soldier admitted, ‘instead of being aided by the inhabitants, whom we had ruined . . . we found all against us’. As another soldier, by the name of Bourrienne wrote, ‘No Frenchman was secure of his life who happened to stray half a mile from any inhabited place’ (Cole 2007: 110–1).

The fishermen and grandees of Lake Manzala managed to beat back the marauding French for several months. In September 1798, between 1,200–1,500 armed men and women joined battle. After their defeat, the whole area subsequently suffered terrible repression: in several villages all the inhabitants were killed, while the would-be emperor Bonaparte wrote in martial tradition of the ‘honour’ that this bestowed upon his troops (Cole 2007: 161–5).

Others tried to resist without picking up weapons and using forms of civil disobedience. On 19 July, for example, all the inhabitants of the small town of Shum assembled and refused to provide supplies to the French (Cole 2007: 63). The French answered with a massacre. As Sergeant Francois’s diary has it: ‘while firing into those crowds . . . [w]e killed about 900 men, not counting the women and children, who remained in their habitations, to which we set fire with our musketry and artillery.’ The soldiers then took everything, livestock and food, and before leaving ‘we finished burning the rest of the houses, or rather the huts, so as to provide a terrible object lesson to these half-savage and barbarous people’ (Cole 2007: 63). The same thing happened in Abu Za‘bal. The villagers, notwithstanding the gruesome fate of their compatriots in Shum, nobly refused to provide provisions to the French as demanded. But they suffered the same fate. In the words of the chronicler Al-Jabarti, the French ‘attacked them, beat them, broke them, pillaged the town, and then burned it’ (Cole 2007: 88).

Cairo was taken because the Mamluke cavalry were unable to defend it in open confrontation against the French. They were defeated at the Battle of the Pyramids, according to Al-Jabarti amid cowardice, arrogance, delusion and disgrace (Jabarti 1993: 36, 38). Many of the former fled after their defeat to Syria or up the Nile, where some continued to fight, joined by volunteers from Arabia and various Ottoman officials, such as Hasan Bey Al-Gadawi, who had been a

Mamluke of Al-Jezzar Pasha (Jahhaf 1975: 102). Al-Jabarti may have bequeathed a too-negative picture of the usually universally reviled Mamlukes. Murad Bey, the chief Mamluke leader, refused Napoleon's offer to rule as a tributary French vassal in Upper Egypt, using an insulting tone and even sarcastically offering Napoleon 'money to go back to France and save the blood of his soldiers' (Abul-Magd 2013: 56). It was this failed collaboration that gave Napoleon no choice but to pursue the French military conquest of the south, greatly increasing the costs of the occupation. The fighting continued in Upper Egypt for some time, with the assistance of various important tribes such as the Hilla and the Juhayna (Jahhaf 1975: 103), as well as of peasants, 800 of whom were enrolled, for example, in one action in Qina province (Abul-Magd 2013: 58). Where local forces were defeated, the French followed up with massacres of the commoners, and destroyed villages that refused to provision their army (Abul-Magd 2013: 58, 60).

In Lower Egypt, resistance with a more civilian leadership developed. In October 1798, after a string of French atrocities and injustices regarding pillage, killings, exactions, and the destruction of tombs, mosques, minarets and shrines, the 'common people' of Cairo rose up with arms against French rule. They were encouraged by the news from Istanbul. At last the sultan had spoken. The Ottoman authorities finally declared a *jihad* to defend Egypt and Islam against the French in September 1798. The Ottomans asserted that the French had betrayed the Ottomans who had stood with them, lied that the Ottomans had acquiesced, and contrary to law, they had set out to conquer and subjugate Egypt, 'the gate to the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina', and hence 'of the greatest importance for all Muslims'. It had thus become a 'personal religious obligation' incumbent on every Muslim to march against the French, and thus 'purify' Cairo and its environs from their 'corrupting presence' and 'liberate the servants of God' (Cole 2007: 155–6). Thus the sultan declared a *jihad*, authorizing guerrilla war in Egypt on the one hand, and eventually, on the other, authorized the Ottoman governor of Palestine, the formidable Bosnian, Ahmad Al-Jazzar Pasha, who was attempting to build a dynasty out of his fortress in the coastal town of Acre, to liberate Egypt from the French. Rumours spread in Egypt that Al-Jezzar's armies had reached Bilbeis in the Delta and were coming to deliver the population. This was a potent cocktail, the sultan had declared war, mobilized

Al-Jezzar, and simultaneously authorized through the highest religious authorities in the empire, that all Muslim individuals now had a duty to take up arms themselves against the French.

The idea of *jihad* was well known, although interpreted in different ways, to every Muslim. In its most simple form, *jihad* meant exertion of whatever kind (armed/unarmed, collective or individual), in defence of the faith. In this context, it meant something like ‘just war’: Islamic jurists in the early centuries of Islam had worked out a legal doctrine, mandating that, when the Dar al-Islam (House of Islam) was threatened with becoming a Dar al-Harb (Abode of War), then it was incumbent on Muslims as a matter of law to take up arms in the cause of God in order to defend the faith. Charismatic leaders, reformers and would-be dynasts fought various kinds of *jihad* against forms of unbelief and injustice from Mauritania to the Sudan, all along the southern fringes of the Sahara, from the late seventeenth century down to the early twentieth century. Their rank and file included itinerant beggars, slaves, ex-slaves, pastoralists, oppressed peasants, outcasts, young men’s gangs, renegades, as well as students, teachers, Sufis and preachers (Lapidus 1988: 510–34). Further afield, an Indian theologian called Shah Abd Al-‘Aziz (1746–1824), who was the son of the famous theologian and reformer Shah Wali Allah, was to issue such a legal ruling (*fatwa*) in India in 1803. He reasoned that, in the lands between Delhi and Calcutta, the leader of the Muslims, the Imam al-Muslimin, had no authority, whereas the authority of Christian rulers, in matters of administration, arbitration, punishment, taxation and safe passage, was enforced (Peters 1979: 45). The implication was therefore that India, under the ever more invasive control of the East India Company, had become Dar Al-Harb.

When the news of the invasion of Egypt spread in the Islamic world, volunteers came from Arabia via Jidda to join the forces of the Mamlukes to fight the usurping Christians. In July 1798, for example, a number of women entered the Grand Mosque in Mecca and ‘threw down their rings, necklaces and fine clothes before the gathering’ (Jahhaf 1975: 87). With this dramatic gesture, these women were challenging men of honour to take up arms. At the same time, by handing over their valuables, they were providing an important source of funds for the fight. The women perceived that the House of Islam was under threat. The Yemeni chronicler Jahhaf (1775–1827) spoke of the French ‘entry’ into ‘the land of Egypt’ and how they ‘made

themselves masters of it' (*astawlu*), and spread the hands of unbelief (*al-kufr*) thereon, bringing forth corruption, dominating over and making the Muslims present there suffer', operating through 'trickery' and 'greedy ambition' (Jahhaf 1975: 87). News of this abominable Christian usurpation, unprecedented since the Crusades, was travelling far and wide. The sultan in Istanbul remained silent. The Amir Ghalib of Mecca sat on his hands, merely writing a polite letter to Napoleon, even after the Porte declared *jihad* in August 1798. The Amir Ghalib was busy in any case trying to hold his own against the Wahhabis and was disgusted with the lack of Ottoman assistance in this regard. Instead it was a Maghribi sharif, a certain Shaykh Muhammad Al-Kilani, who stepped up. Preaching in the mosque that day, he cited the sayings of the revered Prophet of Islam, urged the men and women present that it was a religious duty to take up arms against the enemies of God and faith. Al-Kilani's 'summons wrought in people's hearts what it wrought, and he became known among the people ... so they appeared before him ... with money in their hands ... and volunteers came to him from remote regions' (Jahhaf 1975: 97).

Al-Kilani won the backing of a number of big merchants of the Hijaz, religious and tribal leaders from up and down the Red Sea coast, and some officials, including the Amir of Mecca, an important dignitary, loyal to the Ottoman sultan. Before long, perhaps 4,000 volunteer fighters (the word 'volunteer' was used by a contemporary chronicler) set out on ships from Arabia to Qusayr to join the many Egyptians, military and civilian, battling the French along the Nile. Al-Kilani headed a mixed force of North Africans, Meccawis and the *sharifs* of Yanbo. These forces later joined up with the Mamlukes, and were continuously reinforced through Yanbo and Qusayr (Abir 1971: 192). Also involved in the resistance in Egypt were Bedouin from Libya. Other volunteers came from as far away as Yemen (Jahhaf 1975: 101). French estimates eventually put numbers of volunteers at 6,000–7,000 (Abul-Magd 2013: 57).

In Cairo, a well-known cleric came forward, 'mounted on a steed' in extraordinary, military fashion, leading crowds from the Al-Husayn quarter. The crowd became 'huge' and full of the poor and those of low status, 'ruffians' and 'inhabitants of lodgings' in the ever-critical language of Al-Jabarti (Jabarti 1993: 83–4). They gathered in front of the Al-Husayn mosque, the Al-Azhar seminary and the chief judge's house to demand what faith, law and justice required. A perfumer

among them, ‘dressed up in the guise of a cleric, with a vest and waist cloth, came forward calling out to the people, incited them and exclaiming “Muslims, God is most great. The clerics have commanded you to kill the infidels. Make ready, stalwarts, and strike them everywhere”’ (Cole 2007: 199). Al-Jabarti grumbled about an important popular leader, Al-Maghribi, who

interfered in things which do not concern him [and] . . . appeared in town like the *pasa* and the *kethkuda* and the mamlukes . . . What is he that he appoints himself without having been appointed by anybody? It is civil strife which turns any ignoble bird into a vulture, especially when the rabble riots and the mob and riff-raff rises. This is what suits their aims (Baer 1977: 237–8).

Here, then, was a vivid if sour description of the transgressive seizure from below of political and doctrinal agency. Al-Jabarti also despaired, considering that rebellion was futile in the face of French overwhelming military superiority. He wrote that a rebel leader ‘forgot that he was a prisoner in the hands of the French, who occupied the fortress and its walls, the high hills and the low; fortifying them all with forbidding instruments of war’ (Jabarti 1993: 84). Al-Jabarti noted that women supported the rebels by uttering ‘shrill and quavering cries of joy (*zaghratna*) from the windows’ and passing rumours and stories around (Jabarti 1993: 89).

The French replied to the uprising with massacre and destruction, by means of the heavy artillery that they had moved into positions above the city. Under shelling, Cairo’s main thoroughfares became littered with the corpses of the populace, and sodden with their blood. And as the French started to bombard Al-Azhar itself, one of the oldest and most venerated mosque-universities in the Islamic world, some insurgents drew back in horror lest these hallowed-halls be destroyed. Firepower repressed the uprising. A grim retribution was then exacted by the French: spectacular violence was supposed to patch up political weakness. Prisoners, whether they had been fighters or not, were executed in their thousands. Others were killed in their homes where they sheltered. Pillages, exactions and the destruction of sacred sites increased, partly to pay for the costs of conquest, partly to widen routes for military purposes, and partly out of arrogance and revenge. As Al-Jabarti wrote, these were the ‘enemies of the religion . . . malicious victors who gloat in the misfortune of the vanquished, rabid hyenas, mongrels obdurate in their nature’ (Jabarti 1993: 93).

That the French ‘killed a large number of persons’ underscored, in the sober analysis of the prominent cleric Abdallah Al-Sharqawi, how they ‘could not be trusted’. Likewise, although the French claimed to be only against the Mamlukes, ‘when they came in, they did not confine themselves to pillaging the wealth of the Mamlukes. Rather, they looted the subjects’ (cited in Cole 2007: 160). To Sunni *ulema* such as Al-Jabarti, the French presence represented a force of corruption, sedition and criminality regarding order, hierarchy and law. With the French ravaging the land, wrote Al-Jabarti, there was a general outbreak of injustice and evil, ‘gangs of thugs looting, as well as other hooligans, thieves, pickpockets, robbers, highwaymen, all having a field day’ (Jabarti 1993: 35).

The uprising was not just about resistance to the enormous provocation of French invasion, but it was also stimulated by the dereliction, weakness and dysfunction of the authorities of the Mamluke state. Al-Jabarti offers a swingeing criticism of Mamluke arrogance, ill-preparedness and inability to protect Egypt from European invasion. When news of the French invasion at Alexandria hit, the clerics did not pull their punches. The two principal Mamluke lords, Ibrahim and Murad Bey, met with the princes (amirs), the chief judge (the *qadi*) and the religious shaykhs in Cairo. ‘All this’, said one, ‘is a result of [your] negligence in managing the ports and letting things slide, to such a degree that the enemy could occupy the port of Islam.’ Murad Bey then exclaimed: ‘What can we do, for whenever we want to rebuild and fortify you claim: “their intention is rebellion against the Sultan”, and this is what has prevented us from acting.’ But Al-Jabarti was unimpressed. ‘Such were their excuses’, reads his chronicle, ‘as frail as a spider’s web.’ Al-Jabarti was here citing the Qur’an and the Sura of the Spider (S. 29, v. 41). This reference was particularly appropriate. The full verse reads:

Qaaroon, Pharaoh, and Hamaan: Moses went to them with clear signs. But they continued to commit tyranny on earth. Consequently, they could not evade (the retribution). All those disbelievers were doomed as a consequence of their sins. Some of them we annihilated by violent winds, some were annihilated by the quake, some we caused the earth to swallow, and some we drowned. God is not the One who wronged them; it is they who wronged their own souls. The allegory of those who accept other masters beside God is that of the spider and her home; the flimsiest of all homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew (29: 39–41).

In other words, in making reference to the spider's web, Al-Jabarti was likening the Mamlukes to the tyrants of old who turned away from God, weakened their own houses, and brought down upon themselves a great calamity as a consequence. Al-Jabarti's depiction of the arrival of the French as a 'swarm of locusts' likened their invasion to a tremendous calamity, overseen by God, but brought on by the folly and sin of man, in particular of those of unjust rulers. Here, then, was another version of a pre-nationalist and non-European rejection of the tyranny of the unjust ruler.

His critique was pressed home in more 'secular' mode. He writes of their 'excuses' and failures. 'For since the time of [the Mamluke] 'Ali Bey [who ruled Egypt 1760–72]', he writes, 'not only did they not pay sufficient attention to the port but even removed what weapons and cannons were already there'. Moreover, they did not pay salaries, they deployed useless and 'broken-down cannons'. Worse,

once . . . they needed gunpowder to fire the cannon on the Feast [celebrating the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting] but they could not even find enough to load it . . . so they had to buy powder from a druggist. All this after Alexandria and its towers had once been extremely well built and fortified with an excellent wall . . . maintained by former generations . . . Every tower had its own ammunition depot, supplies, and garrison. All these were neglected until nothing remained.

Al-Jabarti was therefore underlining the temporal inadequacies of the Mamluke beys – comparing their activities unfavourably to those of the recent past and the example of the state-builder, Ali Bey Al-Kabir. They were even incapable, in spite of their membership in the military class, of providing the proper ceremonial cannon shot for the popular celebrations of the end of Ramadan, and were reduced to procurement from a humble member of the civilian 'flock'. Indeed, the shaykhs present at the meeting were so scandalized by the Mamlukes that they agreed to write a report about these failings and send it to the sultan (Jabarti 1993: 22–3). Given the momentous events that were engulfing the country, and the uproar rising in the towns, villages and deserts, a report to the sultan was a bookish response indeed. The point to underline here, however, is that the forms of disgust and outrage that stirred contentious action arose not from some putative opportunity in the state, nor because the state had provoked action, but because the state was derelict. The initial target of such protest, at this level, was

not the infidel, but the swingeing criticism of the authorities themselves, and the imperative to act that followed from such dereliction.

The French occupation of Egypt had been a fiasco. Instead of French glory in the Orient, it meant ignominy for France and destruction for Egypt. Napoleon could have gone to Ireland in the 1790s to serve the cause of Irish national self-determination. Instead he chose the chimerical glory of imperialism itself (Morton 1938: 304). His occupation was done for not only by inter-imperial rivalry, which caused the sinking of the French fleet, or the strength of the Ottoman empire, whose fortress at Acre withstood his siege, proving in the process that a de-centralized empire was not necessarily a completely weak one. An important and neglected factor, however, in Napoleon's failure, was the popular politics of the land: the force and tenacity of the unruly, widespread and many-headed popular mobilizations that resisted the French: that lost them troops, lowered their morale, disrupted their supply lines, made them realize that their attempts to win hearts and minds were failing, and made collaboration by notables extremely fraught by placing a sea of blood between occupier and occupied. The Mamlukes may have lost virtually all their legitimacy in Egypt, but by what hubris or historic precedent did a French would-be emperor believe that he and his alien, invading army would have more authority than they? According to the chronicler Al-Jabarti, even the mere sight of Napoleon, near the great mosque of Al-Azhar, 'almost provoked a riot' (Cole 2007: 158). When people did obey 'to some extent', as Al-Sharqawi averred, it was not by consent, but because of their 'inability to resist them [the French] because the Mamlukes had fled with the instruments of warfare' (Cole 2007: 160). In other words, overwhelming force, and not legitimacy, coercion and not consent, was the rule. Cole notes that Napoleon's 'lack of legitimacy' was one of his 'chief difficulties' in attempting to rule Egypt (Cole 2007: 112). In 1799, Napoleon stole out of the country, leaving a deputy to negotiate a withdrawal. The French were gone by 1801, the Mamlukes started to filter back into Lower Egypt, from their sanctuaries up the Nile, and a garrison and governor loyal to the sultan was installed, with British assistance. The first attempt by a European power to rule a major territory in the MENA had been a failure. The region had had its bloody introduction to colonialism, although this time the Christian attempt to achieve direct territorial control had been repulsed, in part by a widespread and highly varied resistance.

One negative legacy of the occupation was the association, at least in some quarters, between women and Coptic Christians with the corruption, injustice and unbelief of the Napoleonic occupation. Al-Jabarti made reference to both political and economic collaboration, sexual corruption, and essentialist caricatures about Copts and women. When the French demanded a festival at the top of the Nile flood in spite of 'poll taxes, unrelenting demands, looting of homes, harassing women, and girls, arresting and imprisoning them, and making financial settlements which exceeded all bounds', Al-Jabarti wrote that 'not a single person went out that night for pleasure excursions in boats as was customary except for Shami Christians, Copts, Europeans with their wives, and a few idlers who went as onlookers in the morning, broken-hearted and despondent' (Jabarti 1993: 49). Thus were Syrian Christians and Copts associated with Napoleonic corruption in Egypt, a corruption which was grasped in partly sexual and gendered terms, especially where Muslim women were depicted as consorting in a depraved fashion with French soldiers, and removing their veils. Al-Jabarti also wrote that, to raise taxes, Napoleon appointed Coptic tax collectors 'who went into the country like rulers, wreaking havoc among the Muslims with arrests, beatings, insults, and ceaseless harassment in their demands for money. Furthermore, they terrorized them with threats of bringing in the French soldiers if they did not pay up the determined amount quickly; all this occurred by means of Coptic planning and trickery' (Jabarti 1993: 54). These associations, linking the rights of minorities and women to colonialism and corruption were to echo through the period in different ways all the way to the present day.

Egypt: weapons of the weak and liberty against the law, 1805–1879

Mehmet Ali's accession to power in 1805 took place partly thanks to the transgressive mobilization of Cairean commoners. In May 1805, amid the struggle for power in Egypt in the wake of the French departure, commoners (*al-'amma*), neither controlled or entirely led by the *ulema* or by Umar Makram (Baer 1977: 238–9, 242) assembled and demanded to depose the Ottoman-appointed Pasha and appoint the Albanian military man Mehmet Ali in his stead. The uprisings of the previous decades against Mamlukes and French alike appear to have politicized the population. 'The same enthusiasm reigns here

as in France during the first moments of the revolution’, wrote the French consul in 1804: ‘Everyone buys arms, the children also follow the example of their elders’ (cited in Tucker 1985: 141). The Turkish Pasha declared that he would not quit his office ‘by order of the *fellahin*’ (Baer 1977: 217): but he was forced out. Hajjaj Al-Khudari, the head of the greengrocers’ guild, ‘a popular leader with great authority and influence in Rumayla quarter and elsewhere’, prevented supplies getting to the citadel where the Pasha was installed. When Mehmet Ali was then invested as governor by the Ottoman sultan on 9 July, Hajjaj led a huge demonstration holding in his hand a sword drawn from its sheath as a symbol of his power (Baer 1977: 241). Ibn Sham’a, the shaykh of the butchers of Husayniyya, also figured prominently in the procession (Raymond 1968: 115–16). Artisans, petty traders and service workers may have seen in Mehmet Ali some hope for order and justice, not only after the French occupation, but after years of de-centralized and disorderly politics of exactions, impositions and exploitative intermediaries. This logic was not completely absent in the countryside. Following the abolition of tax-farms by Mehmet Ali in 1814, Al-Jabarti reported that the ‘rabble’ among the peasants ‘insolently’ declared to tax farmers who sought to extract their customary forced labour services, ‘What is left to you in the country? Your days have finished, and we have become the Pasha’s peasants’ (cited in Cuno 1994: 5).

The consolidation of power was a different matter. Mehmet Ali was concerned to put the transgressive genie of an armed populace back into the bottle. In 1807, for example, amid the threat of a British invasion of Cairo (British troops had landed at Alexandria in March), Umar Makram, not an *‘alim* but a sharif from Asyut who never taught at Al-Azhar or composed *fatawa* or religious commentaries (Baer 1977: 236–7) ‘galvanized the population and ... ordered all able-bodied men under arms, even the students of Al-Azhar’. But the new Pasha was unhappy about this: ‘like the *ulama* he too feared popular movements that he could not control and remarked sourly that war was not the business of the populace but that of soldiers’ (Marsot 1984: 65). The function of the commoners was to supply arms and funds, he told Makram, and asked him to raise a thousand purses to pay the troops who were preparing to lay siege to the city of Alexandria where the British forces were entrenched.

The semi-autonomous dynastic state built by Mehmet Ali (reigned 1805–49) may have removed an exploitative layer of intermediaries,

but it also severed the links between the urban crowd, commoners, peasants and tribal shaykhs on the one hand and their potential allies and protectors in the state on the other by eliminating the Mamelukes and the Janissaries, centralizing the levers of administrative and fiscal power, and presiding over an 'unprecedented expansion' of state control in the countryside (Cuno 1994: 199). In town and country alike, the new order brought with it an unprecedented intensification of exactions and burdens to finance dynasty-building and imperial warfare in Arabia, Greece, the Mashriq and Sudan. St John, a British journalist and traveller, wrote of groups of those conscripted in the 1830s by the 'Great Reformer': 'forty or fifty men chained together, with iron bands around their wrists and iron collars around their necks ... carried away to fight battles in a cause which does not concern them' (St John 1845: 96). He wrote: 'To the Turks, to the Europeans, are accorded liberty, privilege, licence; to the Arabs and the Blacks, absolute deprivation of all rights. Power is the lot of the first class, subjection of the other' (St John 1845: 15). There was some respite in the 1850s (Toledano 2003), but burdens were ratcheted up again under Ismail (1863–79) to pay for the latter's grandiose schemes of modernization, his extravagances, his re-conquest of Sudan, and to pay off the indemnities and demands of European consuls and bankers, behind whose economic power stood the coercive power of the British navy. Ismail, for example, increased the annual land tax from 6 to 10 to 20 piastres per feddan (Hunter 1999: 39). In the 1860s in particular, the 'burden of the *corvée* [forced labour]' also weighed heavily because forced labour was used extensively in the digging of the Suez Canal and in other public works, and the fiscal crisis of the 1870s 'made taxation both heavy and capricious' (Brown 1990a: 192–3). The spread of money-lending and indebtedness, crop failure, famine and starvation only made matters worse. Ismail's acutely heavy-handed taxation policies were continued under the European debt controllers during 1876–9 (Hunter 1999: 212–13).

In this new context, commoners built up new forms of contentious mobilization. Weapons of the weak and informalism were widespread. In the countryside, peasants fought tenaciously, by collective desertion, evasion, dissimulation, crop burning, and spontaneous, small-scale physical attacks (Fahmy 1997: 101ff.) against a crushing new tax burden, increased doses of forced labour, and conscription of the free-born Muslim peasant *re'aya*. The latter was a startling innovation

as the *askeri* (military) class had previously been built up through the Mamluke system as Ottoman statecraft considered it improper to arm the *re'aya*, who existed for cultivation and as a tax-base, and as a fighting force might be disloyal or too socially embedded. '[M]any shaykhs refused to collaborate with the authorities against their fellow villagers [regarding conscription gangs in the 1820s] and often resisted the pressure from above to comply with the system by employing various ways that ranged from a calculated lack of interest in government policies to deliberate attempts to frustrate such policies' (Fahmy 1997: 104–5). A law was passed in February 1844 prescribing death by hanging as punishment for shaykhs who collaborated in any way with villagers who deserted to evade taxes (Fahmy 1997: 101) – a sure sign of the forms of informalism through which incompletely co-opted headmen tried to soften the burdens imposed from above. Marsot mentions setting fire to crops, and connivance with the village headmen to avoid taxes (Marsot 1984: 8). Peasants could act directly to destroy irrigation apparatus that diverted their waters to royal estates (Abul-Magd 2013: 90). Others deserted or fled in order to avoid taxes or forced labour (Gordon 1969: 152–3). In 1836, a group of Upper Egyptian peasants, apparently allied to some headmen, refused to pay their taxes and attacked the official levying forced labour for canal-related public works. Officials seem to have been quite regularly attacked and killed (Abul-Magd 2013: 90).

In March 1867, Lady Duff Gordon remarked that the prisons in Upper Egypt were overflowing with village shaykhs who had exacted too little in taxes. The Mudir of Qena had many beaten for the same reason, and two had not survived the ordeal. Gordon also mentions the strains that conscription put on women, through the loss of their menfolk from the household economy, and of the solitary protests about the corruption and bribery involved that women mounted:

I hear that a plucky woman here has been to Keneh, and threatened the Mudir that she will go to Cairo and complain to Effendina himself of the unfair drafting for soldiers – her only son taken, while others have bribed off. She'll walk in this heat all the way, unless she succeeds in frightening the Mudir, which, as she is of the more spirited sex in this country, she may possibly do (Gordon 1969: 153).

Small wonder, in this context, that there was a 'deep distrust of everything to do with the Government' (Gordon 1969: 157). Those

with ailments would refuse to declare themselves to government doctors, and pilloried thieves were readily given employment after their release:

I inquired whether the thief who was dragged in chains through the streets would be able to find work, and was told, 'Oh, certainly; is he not a poor man? For the sake of God everyone will be ready to help him.'... Our captain was quite shocked to hear that in my country we did not like to employ a returned convict (Gordon 1969: 111).

These popular perceptions of the government may have been exacerbated by the burdens of state-building, but they built on a long and rich history in Egypt (cf. Tucker 1985: 159) and in the region as a whole.

Peasants found a variety of informal ways to resist the expropriation of their lands under the Land Law of 1858, non-payment for labour services, the use of forced labour, extortionate money-lending, or the illegal seizure or use of resources such as trees, water wheels and water. Some released their cattle and sheep into the fields of their tormentors, both to find fodder and to damage crops. In another case, the temporary jobs offered by an offending land-owner and official were boycotted by villagers in the district of Qus (Abul-Magd 2013: 102–4). Others refused to vacate lands that had been sold beneath them; others refused to pay rent; others blocked irrigation canals leading to new, often European-owned estates (Abul-Magd 2013: 110). Others physically prevented the arrival of seasonal labourers. In a case from the late 1850s, dispossessed peasants seized back the lands they had lost and refused to pay rent, to sign a lease, or enter into new share-cropping agreements (Abul-Magd 2013: 111). Workers digging the abortive coal mines in Qina province in the late 1850s deserted as a result of the irregular payment of wages, sometimes coordinating with camel-drivers to return across the desert (Abul-Magd 2013: 107).

A more radical response to the burdens imposed by the state or new forms of economic exploitation involved what Christopher Hill, referring to seventeenth-century England, called 'liberty against the law' (Hill 1996). Some peasants joined groups of bandits (*falatiyya*), who made use of shifting alliances with Bedouin, often carried firearms, and lived outside conventional society and the system of registration and taxation maintained at the local level by the village shaykhs, often in hilly or desert regions (Abul-Magd 2013: 89, 92). They made a living by irregular forms of extraction. 'These gangs frequently targeted

government officials and buildings, Coptic treasury clerks, and wealthy Muslims and Copts' (Abul-Magd 2013: 90). A well-known bandit in the 1840s was Haridi Al-Rujayl, whose band ran several score strong, and who recruited in an audacious fashion: 'whenever he passed by *corvée* laborers doing public work, he would call out and take a few of them before the very eyes of the village shaykhs' (Abul-Magd 2013: 93). Haridi also claimed in unlikely but charismatic fashion to have met the Pasha himself and been pardoned of all crimes and given licence to proceed (Abul-Magd 2013: 93). In the 1850s, the steamboats of European companies were important targets for bandits, as were bureaucrats and large estates. A certain Uthman joined an important group of bandits who carried out their irregular exactions and were in and out of prison in the 1850s. Uthman was a former sailboat captain who had apparently lost his transport business due to the dominance of steamers (Abul-Magd 2013: 100). In 1858, 'an uprising led by *falatiyya* [threatening or directly attacking Europeans] broke out in Isna [in Upper Egypt] and forced Sa'id Pasha to reform the ... administrative system in the province' (Abul-Magd 2013: 100). In the 1870s, a 'band of fifty to sixty peasants operating in the region between the two towns [Sohag and Girga] went into revolt because of over-taxation, and sought to attract to their insurgency others discontented with the government's imposts' (Cole 1999: 88).

Urban crafts and service workers also made use of everyday modes of resistance, subverting regulations, bribing officials, persuading local shaykhs to mislead the government, and above all hiding themselves from punitive taxation in one way or another. One of the most effective forms of tax-evasion available to guild members involved illicit alliances with guild shaykhs. This form of evasion appears to have been widespread, involving thousands in Egypt's towns up and down the country. Weapons of the weak were unable to change directly the overall direction of state policy under Isma'il. Sometimes they led to even more invasive forms of regulation. Nonetheless, the treasury found itself weak in the face of such widespread practices – unable to extract the revenues it sought, except through spending more on the extraction than it obtained by the collection, and unable to establish 'reliable' intermediaries among the population. In other words, these 'weapons of the weak' enjoyed some measure of success, disabling state extractive capacity, and playing a minor role as a coral reef of sorts on which the ship of state grounded in the debt crisis of

1876–1879, and contributing to the new direction of colonial tax policy in the 1880s and 1890s (Chalcraft 2004: 67–103, 146ff.).

Egypt: millenarian uprisings, 1822–1865

The millenarian tradition of protest was nothing new in Egypt, but it appeared in particular ways and under new circumstances in the nineteenth century. Cole maintained that, in the eighteenth century, millenarianism abounded (Cole 2007: 96–7). In 1799, for example, during the French occupation ‘a man from the Maghrib [claiming to be the Mahdi] had provoked rebellion in a number of villages around Dashur, in the Delta’ (Berque 1972: 137). There was a series of millenarian uprisings in Qina province in 1820–4, 1832 and 1864–5. ‘Urabi in 1881–2 was to be hailed in the countryside as a deliverer on Mahdist lines. Lord Cromer feared Mahdist risings (inspired by Sudan) in Egypt in the early 1880s (Tignor 1966: 61). The last Mahdi reported in Egypt seems to have been in 1911. Muhammad ‘Ali’s seizure of the grain crop in 1812 precipitated the first major revolt of this reign when the peasants in Upper Egypt rebelled and were violently suppressed (Tucker 1985: 139).

Between 1820 and 1824 there was a series of uprisings in the villages of Qina province, in Upper Egypt. One was associated with the village of as-Salimiyyah between Qina and Farshut in 1820–1; another with virtually the whole of Qina province in 1824. In all cases, reasons for mobilization were associated with new taxes, conscription and forced labour among the peasantry, coupled with unprecedented state monopolies over trade and agricultural produce that hit the region’s merchants (Baer 1969; Marsot 1984). At least one of the key leaders seems to have been a former merchant. The harsh economic conditions faced by artisans and cloth-workers in town and country may also have been a factor (Lawson 1981). Sufism and millenarianism informed the organization and framing of these uprisings, which began with public meetings, and continued with the refusal to pay taxes, followed up by armed confrontation with the state authorities. In 1820–1, Shaykh Ahmad’s rebels were able to hold out for two months. They took control of the government warehouse, and engaged in some degree of fiscal redistribution. They established a ‘new administration for a separatist state’ (Abul-Magd 2013: 79). The urban *ulema* declared Ahmad heretical. The Pasha’s army then

defeated the rebels, destroying villages and houses. Some soldiers who hailed from the region defected when ordered to kill their own kith and kin. Apparently, Shaykh Ahmad escaped to Hijaz (Berque 1972: 137).

The uprising against taxation in Qina province in 1832 was said to involve up to 15,000 protagonists. The most important source is that of St John, a British traveller who witnessed some of the action (St John 1845: 378–86). Historians have so far maintained that St John's account referred to an uprising of 1822 (Abul-Magd 2013: 70; Baer 1969: 97). This cannot have been the case as St John was not in Egypt in 1822. He only travelled to Egypt for the first time in 1832 (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography). Qina province, therefore, was by no means entirely subdued by the repression of the early 1820s. St John wrote that he was 'not surprised at this outbreak, knowing well the depth of grievance over taxation, and in what detestation the Pasha's rule was held throughout the country', but reckoned it stood no chance of success (St John 1845: 380–1).

The 'uprising was led by a shaykh', a certain 'Derwish', likely a reference to a Sufi shaykh. He was named 'Ahmed Lilwezeer', and 'styled himself a prophet', likely a claim to being Al-Mahdi (the Expected Deliverer). He was flanked by 'enthusiastic' companions who recounted his miracles, presumably indicating Ahmed's possession of *baraka*, blessing from God. The leader began the uprising by marshalling a considerable force of 300–400 'Arabs' (i.e. non-Turks) at the village of Al-Ba'irat. Perhaps the insurrection was emboldened by the fact that much of the Pasha's army were fighting in the Mashriq. Ahmed was said to have allies in addition among the 'Atouni' Bedouin, who joined him after initial victories. Over the course of the following days he was able to muster more than 10,000 followers, some bearing small firearms, some on horseback, and apparently most of the villages in the area were part of the insurrection. No mere attempt at secessionism, Ahmed claimed to have orders from God and the 'grand Signor' (presumably the Ottoman sultan) to dethrone Mehmed Ali Pasha himself.

The revolutionaries evicted and put to flight local representatives of the Turkish authorities, including the governor of Luxor, while assurances were issued by the 'Prophet' to St John himself that Englishmen were to be protected, along with the Copts, contrary to the wishes of some of his more 'sanguinary' insurgents, proposed at a 'large public meeting'. The authorities responded by destroying the village of

Al-Ba‘irat, which Ahmed’s men had previously vacated, and offering tax remission to those who stayed loyal. The rebels apparently were emboldened by the unaccountable retreat of the government forces from Al-Ba‘irat, and inflicted a major defeat on the Ottoman garrison at ‘Gammounli’ (Qammula), which retreated. St John then recounts that Ahmed lost heart by failing to drive on to take Asyut, while the Ottomans sent a force including more than 2,600 cavalry, which put down the rebellion over the following days through military victories, the destruction of villages, the killing of captives, and the massacre of men, women and children of the villages.

In 1864–5, Ahmad Al-Tayyib of Salimiyya, who seems also to have been a Sufi shaykh and related to previous leaders, pronounced himself the Mahdi (Expected Deliverer), and gathered followers among Muslim villagers as well as *falatiyya* in Qina province. The uprising was more heavily marked by issues of class and sect than in the 1820s and 1830s, when state exactions were front and centre. The revolt was triggered when a pious Muslim woman refused to become the concubine of a wealthy Copt, and sought an intervention from Shaykh Ahmad, which failed, while the government backed the Copt. No sectarian, Ahmad Al-Tayyib was a millenarian with a charismatic heterodoxy who was said to want to ‘kill all the [Muslim] Ulama’; he preached a radical economic egalitarianism: one mortified scholar of Islamic law said that he wanted to divide all property equally (Abul-Magd 2013: 113; Schölch 1981: 37). Duff Gordon styled him a ‘communist’. Little is known about the uprising, although it was said to involve much of the province. One rebel target involved the plunder of a boat owned by Greek merchants. Al-Tayyib attempted to assume judicial powers over the regions he controlled. The uprising was crushed with massive repression. Fadl Pasha alone was said to have killed 1,600 men, women and children (Abul-Magd 2013: 114). All Al-Tayyib’s relations were jailed. According to Nubar’s memoirs, ‘One old man who ventured to mention the name of the rebel was put to death by Isma‘il’ (Berque 1972: 137–8).

The Balkans: protest, uprising and secession

Protests and uprisings in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman empire were a continuous feature of the nineteenth century. They took place in a different geopolitical context than those in Egypt, the Mashriq and

Anatolia, because the Great Powers of Europe were somewhat more able and willing to intervene there, a fact which encouraged separatism and nationalism. The geographic proximity of the Great Powers, in turn, meant there were spaces in which exile politics could flourish. During the first half of the nineteenth century at least, it appears that class power was more entrenched in the Balkans, built up around merchants, local aristocracies, financiers, feudal land-owners and the Church, and protest was therefore more heavily inflected by the struggle against these local power-holders, at least during the first half of the nineteenth century, than it was in the Mashriq and in Egypt, with the important exception of Mount Lebanon, where patterns of protest were similar. The Christian identity of the protagonists was important, not, at least initially, because it pitted Christians *en bloc* against Muslims (we should not forget that the Church hierarchy was a key opponent of Balkan protests, as were Christian merchants), but because it enabled them to seek protection from European consuls, a course of action that was not widely available to Muslim protestors, and which encouraged European intervention, and therefore greatly empowered the protestors, at least in the short term. But these protests were perhaps more comparable to their counterparts in the Ottoman empire than nationalist historians have generally implied. The most popular of these protests sought the justice of the sultan, and protested their loyalty repeatedly. They rose up against impositions and exactions, and against the corrupt and arbitrary way in which those burdens were distributed locally. They were fuelled by local exploitation, by appeals to the equality announced by the Tanzimat, by millenarian tradition, this time in Christian colours, and by forms of liberty against the law. Early mass mobilization, as opposed to the tracts of some intellectuals, was not in the name of national independence; this came later, after other kinds of protest had failed to redress the grievances that protestors had. In some instances, the Ottoman empire was able to defuse protest, and forestall the possibility of secession, by making appropriate concessions. In short, secession was not inevitable, evidence for which view is to be found at the top of the Ottoman state itself, which only finally gave up on keeping what was left of the Balkans with the Albanian uprising of 1910–12. Secession took place, ultimately, because the central Ottoman state was unwilling to confront and dismantle the forms of decentralized class and political power against which peasants and their allies were above all protesting.

Tudor Vladimirescu (c. 1780–1821), lionized by later Romanian nationalists, was the leader of the Wallachian uprising of 1821 and of the Pandur militia. Wallachia was an important region in what is now Romania, originally a principality before the Ottoman conquest. The subsequent rise of Romanian nationalism should not obscure the fact that Vladimirescu's popular movement opposed the entrenched power of merchants, land-owners and Church exercising feudal privileges. He was from a family of landed peasants, was educated, had served with the Russian army, and worked as the overseer on the estate of a *boyar* aristocrat and headed a local official militia. He declared his loyalty to the sultan and his opposition to the Phanariote (merchant) system, that combination of merchant, financial and Church power – based in Istanbul, that exercised considerable influence in the Ottoman Balkan administration, working through the local *boyar* aristocracy. The grip of feudalism in the Balkans had only been deepened in the eighteenth century by the weakness and de-centralization of the Ottoman state. Vladimirescu's movement mobilized mainly the largely Christian peasantry, who tried to exceed the bounds set by Vladimirescu by destroying property – an act that he ruthlessly punished. Vladimirescu believed he had the support of the Russians. He was not interested in the activities of Alexandros Ipsilantis (1792–1828), who was a member of a prominent Phanariote (merchant) Greek family, a prince of the Danubian Principalities, a senior officer of the Imperial Russian cavalry during the Napoleonic Wars, and a leader of the *Filiki Eteria*, a secret organization that coordinated the beginning of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman empire (Shaw 1977: 17).

Vladimirescu's movement demanded the elimination of purchased offices in the administration, the introduction of meritocratic promotion, the suppression of certain taxes and taxing criteria, the reduction of the main tax, the founding of a Wallachian army, and an end to internal custom duties. Tudor also sought the banishment of some Phanariote families and an interdiction on future Princes holding retinues that would compete with local *boyars* for offices. In short, this was a programme of opposition to feudal forms of venality, taxation in Wallachia, and the entrenched power of the Phanariotes in Istanbul and their collaborators among the local *boyar* aristocracy. As Vladimirescu wrote to the Porte, the Wallachians have rebelled because of 'the terrible sufferings they are caused by the union between the native

boyars and those who have for long been sent as rulers and legislators of this people'. As he told the *boyar* aristocrat Nicolae Văcărescu:

It seems to me that you sir consider the folk, whose blood has been feeding and giving lustre to all the *boyar* kin, to be in fact nothing, and that you only view the pillagers to be the motherland . . . But how come you sir do not consider the motherland to be in fact the people, and not the pillagers' clique?

Vladimirescu's army was defeated by the Ottomans in 1821, and he himself was tried, mutilated and killed.

Clogg's study of the popular culture of the Greek uprising (1821–8) emphasizes its class dimensions – targeting wealthy Phanariotes, merchants and priests alike. Phanariotes were regarded by contemporaries as 'instruments of Turkish oppression, indifferent to the plight of the Greeks'. The popular image of merchants was unflattering. The anonymous author of the *Elliniki Nomarkhia* (1806) spoke of an 'ignorant priesthood'. Merchants who had gone abroad were the 'true enemies and worse than Greece's Ottoman tyrants'. References were made to those Greek students studying abroad as reading 'fanciful poems'. The notables and clergy were no better. For example, in the memoirs of Photakos Khrysanthopoulos, widely judged a 'hero of the War of Independence', the Church was seen as being in craven submission to the Ottoman authorities. Indeed, during the Greek revolt in 1821, the Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios V and the Holy Synod denounced insurgents, and anathematized Alexandros Ypsilantis and his followers as 'traitors, haters of religion and atheists'. Popular anti-clericalism was a significant factor, while the Greek intelligentsia remained small and lacked influence among commoners (Clogg 1973: 10, 16–17, 19–20).

Many of those who filled the ranks of the fighters during the Greek war of independence were outlaws, irregular troops, some who acted as social bandits. These were mainly drawn from among *armatoloi* and *klephts*. The former were 'bodies of irregular troops, for the most part Christians, employed by the Porte in European Turkey for the maintenance of local order, the suppression of brigandage [i.e. the *klephts*]', and for guarding important mountain passes. Their origins were in Rumeli in the seventeenth century. They owed allegiance to Porte, but occasionally did 'rise up against their masters', such as in 1770, during the Russian expedition to Peloponnese (Clogg 1973: 8). The *klephts* were 'essentially bandits, who had taken to the mountains for a

number of reasons, usually to avoid the payment of taxes or to escape pursuit by the authorities. As their attacks tended principally to be directed against Ottoman officials and tax collectors, and members of the Greek élite, namely, wealthy merchants, primates, clerics and monasteries, they acquired among the Greek population at large something of a Robin Hood image.’ They operated in bands of usually around 50 persons, but they could be 200 or 300 strong. These groups were not unique to the Greek lands. In Bulgaria and Serbia they were known as *haiduts*; in Romania *haiduci*. In 1800, up to 10 per cent of the Balkan Christian population, at least in some of the frontier areas ‘was organized militarily for the purpose of transforming or abolishing rather than defending the Empire’ (Stoianovich cited in Clogg 1973: 8–9, cf. 33). There were echoes here of the ‘*celali*’ tradition, which while understudied and too often dismissed, had clearly been important in different parts of the Ottoman empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with its origins in mass defections from the Ottoman army in the 1590s (Griswold 1983; White 2011).

Nish was an important provincial town, now in Serbia, but populated by Bulgars in the nineteenth century. The revolt there in 1841 was not an isolated incident. There were small prior risings in Berkovitsa (1835 and 1836) and Pirot (1836) (Pinson 1975: 104–5). There were three separate risings that were nipped in the bud in 1849. One involved ‘a certain Nikola Sr’ndak, who had been active in the Nish revolt of 1841, organized a band in Serbia for the purpose of beginning a rising in Bulgaria, but was arrested by the Serbian authorities before being able to cross the border into Bulgaria’ (Pinson 1975: 118). Another was led by a man named Puyo, who had been active in the Nish revolt. In the spring of 1849, he organized a small group to mobilize for a revolt against the agas, which led to a small revolt in Boynitsa (Pinson 1975: 118). In the same year, a group in Belogradchik started planning a larger revolt against the Turks. Serbia offered covertly to supply guns and powder. The final plan, elaborated in a monastery near the village of Rakovitsa, suggested that things begin in several towns while major roads would be cut. But the Bulgarians were heavily outgunned and defeated by the Ottoman forces in ten days (Pinson 1975: 119). The Romanski, conservative Muslim provincials opposed to reforms, were an important factor in the revolt (Pinson 1975: 105). The 1850 revolt in Vidin, a port town on the southern bank of the Danube in what is now northwest Bulgaria, was a

broadly comparable episode. According to one report, these revolts left 15 Turks and 720 Bulgarians dead (Pinson: 1975: 125).

These revolts were ‘by no stretch primarily ... for national independence ... the petitions of the rebels, while stating their grievances against local officials, repeatedly protested their loyalty to the Sultan’ (Pinson 1975: 132). The revolt in Vidin province was over administration, taxation and land-holding. During a parley between the rebels and a delegation sent by the Vali (Governor) of Vidin the rebels declared ‘our troubles are due to the tax farmers, village landlords, constables and suchlike’ (Pinson 1975: 113). Here was another glimpse of not just a trope of naïve monarchism, but of the realities of the grip of local exploiters amid a weak and de-centralized state. Peasants stated that the courts were controlled by corrupt local officials. Christian peasants ‘were still vexed by such legal difficulties as their testimony not being accepted against Muslims’ (Pinson 1975: 114). They suffered from the ‘weight of the tax burden and the diverse and confused nature of the obligations’ (Pinson 1975: 115).

The exact status of peasants’ forced labour obligations was indeed confused as the edict of Gülhane (1839) had officially abolished them, but ‘failed to create any mechanism for enforcement of the abolition or any revenue replacement, all of which helped perpetuate the exaction of the *angarya* [forced labour]’ (Pinson 1975: 115). ‘The rapidity with which large numbers joined a movement which from the outset clearly had so little chance of military success was however a significant indication of the extent of discontent among the peasantry’ (Pinson 1975: 118). ‘In matters of taxation, the peasants not only wanted their taxes reduced, but also wanted the exact amounts stipulated and the collection by *subaşis* ended and replaced by direct payment to the vali’. All such demands pointed to the importance of the class element in the uprising – which was about exploitation by feudal officials and corrupt tax-collectors (Pinson 1975: 129) as well as about tax burdens imposed from on high.

Pinson has shown in detail how much the revolts in Nish (1841) and Vidin (1850) in Ottoman Bulgaria owed to a bottom-up attempt to bring the egalitarian promises of the Tanzimat, new notions of citizenship, and the sultan’s justice to bear on the exploitation of Christian peasants by land-owners and tax-farmers and local elites in the province. In April 1841, for example, 1000 Christians from near Nish petitioned the Prince of Serbia that

people are not revolting against the legitimate government of the Sultan. Rather they want that the benevolent terms of the *Hatti Sherif* of Gülhane be faithfully and exactly carried out (Pinson 1975: 109).

The various announcements from the centre in regard to the equality of status of all the subjects of the empire, regardless of religion, also led to challenges to the fact that Christian testimonies in court were still not being accepted against those of Muslims, giving rise to accusations in regard to local corrupt officialdom (Pinson 1975: 114). The abolition of *sipahilik* in the 1830s and 1840s ‘created in the minds of some of the peasantry the idea that they were now the real owners of the land’ (Pinson 1975: 117). This was another reason for mobilization. It also created new land conflicts where agas and small peasants vied for control of land in the wake of the departing *sipahis*. The Bulgarians claimed that the local Turks oppressed in particular those Bulgarians who pressed for application of the Tanzimat (Pinson 1975: 130). Some of the new land codes, moreover, played into the hands of local elites, who were able to inherit land *de facto* rather than have it revert to the state, and thus amass land at the expense of the poor (Pinson 1975: 117–18).

In northwest Bulgaria (in Vidin province) there were villages where local agas had taken control and ownership with the departure of the *sipahis* owing to Ottoman reforms. The forms of rent and share-cropping that they imposed ‘were not new; nor was discontent with them. The latter was rather heightened because the vague promises of the Tanzimat had appeared to hold out some relief’ (Pinson 1975: 118). The failure of the Tanzimat to deliver on its own promises pushed the protests in a more secessionist and ultimately nationalist direction.

Ottoman policy was unable or unwilling to implement fully the promises of the Tanzimat, to tackle its corrupted administration, and to deal with these questions of class power. Ottomans were aware of the source of the injustice. One official circular issued to officials in Vidin stated that: ‘From now on no objectionable conduct and evil deeds by officials and other persons are permitted.’ On the other hand, Ali Reza Pasha, who was sent from the capital to put down the revolt, ordered that ‘let care be taken not to ignore the legitimate rights of the agas and others who as landlords of any field or partners in any sown plot are obliged to go around to the villages to collect the share which was due to them’. As Pinson argues, ‘the latter order largely nullified

the former promise' (Pinson 1975: 125). Such official failures can only have exacerbated the discontent among the Christian peasantry, and ultimately opened the door to secession.

Algeria: Sufis, saints and holy men, 1830–1900s

The major drama of resistance to colonialism in the nineteenth century took place in Algeria. From 1830 down to the early 1900s, there was a drawn-out resistance involving some of the most mass-based uprisings in the nineteenth-century history of the region. Sufi orders and tribes of the countryside were pitted against the French imperial state that underpinned a policy of 'colonization without restraint', a near-genocidal military and economic assault on much of the population and the heavy-handed coercive and regulative control that colonizing policies entailed. The French were quite unlike the Algerian Deys, who lurched from one expedient to the next in order to shore up the ship of state, and whose own Janissaries could unseat them. Coercive power at the top was unified and heavily resourced from without. A key distinction between French and Ottoman imperialism in Algeria is that the former eventually sought to conquer and settle the whole country, and imposed a very much more direct form of rule than the Turks who came before them.

Those who were subordinated, dispossessed and fragmented by land seizure and economic domination itself did not have the capacity to resist on their own. Unaided, their struggles remained more fragmented, local, unobtrusive and hidden. These forms were more about everyday resistance, silent defeats and humiliations, 'fire on the mountain' and weapons of the weak than they were about armed insurrection (Prochaska 1986). Nor were uprisings led or even significantly supported by *ulema*, notables and townspeople. The existing state system, the Ottoman Deylik, the Ottoman Sultan and the Sultan of Morocco, were not irrelevant in this struggle as we shall see (Danzinger 1980; Temimi 1978), at least in the 1830s. Nonetheless, the Ottoman sultan was distant, and the Moroccan sultan confronted the French briefly in the early 1830s and again in 1844 only because it appeared that his position at home would have become untenable without it (Danzinger 1980: 65–66).

By far the most important protagonists, over the decades of the century, were the Sufi orders, the holy lineages, and tribes of the

mountains, deserts and oases, and assorted holy men and miracle workers (Clancy-Smith 1994; Von Sivers 1982, 1983). The enormous resistance against French imperialism in Algeria was about these *dramatis personae*, their leadership, organization, resources, tactics and ideas. ‘Resistance . . . came from the religious brotherhoods, the *turuq*. They offered the organizational framework necessary for waging a struggle against a superior enemy’ (Peters 1979: 54). The capacity of Algerian society to resist stemmed less from its overall cohesion and more from its many-headed and de-centralized nature. No single authority could control the Algerian population. They could not be handed over to the French by an authoritative intermediary. This situation resulted partly from the fact that the French destroyed such intermediaries rather than built them up. But it existed also because the Algerians themselves had many leaders and many organizations; and they inherited a strong tradition of resistance to central authority from the past.

The French, under Charles X, the last of the Bourbon monarchs of the 1815 restoration, were considering the invasion of Algeria with a view to achieving a foreign-policy success to bolster a flagging monarchical prestige and authority in the face of ‘subversive’ and republican masses at home (Brower 2009: 9). There were also expectations of commercial gain, particularly among the merchants of Marseille. Whereas the French had faced British and Ottoman opposition in Egypt in 1798, they calculated, correctly, that such imperial objections would be less forthcoming in regard to Algeria, which was hardly viewed by the British as a great geostrategic prize. Algeria was also far less central to Ottoman concerns, who were embroiled in domestic centralization and protest, as we have seen. The French seemed, however, to have forgotten, or ignored, the fact that popular resistance (which the French dismissed as fanaticism and recalcitrance) had played a role in the defeat of the French in Egypt. Knowing the Ottoman forces to be weak, they seemed to assume that the ‘wild tribes’ of the interior would be easily subdued, divided, or paid off.

The French invaded in 1830 over a pretext, and quickly routed the small forces Dey of Algiers and the provincial governors in west and central Algeria. The Dey, said Hajj Ahmad Bey, the governor of Constantine, the major city in the eastern part of Algeria, in a letter to the Ottoman sultan in 1833, simply wanted to give up, ‘saving his person, his family, [and] his goods . . . he neglected the destiny of the

Muslims' (cited in Temimi 1978: 220). But authority was so dispersed in Algeria, traditions of local autonomy so robust, and the rule of the Deys so spurned as but a fiscal burden, that various 'rayah' tribes immediately threw off Deylik authority and ceased to pay taxes to the privileged, government-linked tribes who were used by the Deys to collect taxes from them.

Not all the authorities submitted or fled. Like Murad Bey of Egypt and Al-Jezzar Pasha of Acre, the redoubtable Bey of Constantine, Hajj Ahmad, decided to stand his ground. Hajj Ahmed was busy trying to reorganize his military and administration in the face of what he called the 'stupefying fact' of the defeat of the Dey. He was inspired by the reorganizations then afoot in both Egypt under Mehmet Ali (1805–49) and the heartlands of the Ottoman empire under Mahmud II (1808–39). In October and November 1832, Hajj Ahmad declared that he would accept a peace treaty with the French as between equals, or even a truce involving a cessation of hostilities. He would not accept, however, to submit to French authority, cede them the coastal town of Bône/Annaba, send them tribute (to pay for the costs of the French occupation), reduce the number of his soldiers, and raise taxes that used to be raised by the Ottomans on behalf of the French. If the French insisted, he declared, 'we are ready to fight' and would consider it a 'bounty that is sent to us by God'. When the French, amid threats, offered to furnish him with what the Ottomans had previously furnished in troops and money, Hajj Ahmad understood that receipt of such 'protection' would confirm a vassal status, and thus rejected the possibility:

I depend on the Ottoman government, and I have under my authority more than a million Muslims who will not accept submission to the French Christians. To make them [the Muslim population] submit to your authority because of the submission of my sole person, and to become myself a slave . . . is out of the question insofar as God has created us free. An imbecile refuses to accept such conditions, what can the wise man do? The signature of a peace treaty has a meaning and an implication well defined; but to be submitted to the authority of a Christian has another implication and another sense.

In the name of God, freedom, wisdom, the wishes of the Muslim population, and the rightful authority of the Ottoman sultan, Hajj Ahmad refused to become a client of the French (Temimi 1978: 212–18).

Hajj Ahmad quickly moved to mobilize material and men, who flocked to his banner, in preparation for the coming French assault. He also tried to obtain help and intervention from the powers, petitioning, with more than 2,000 signatures of religious, tribal, Sufi leaders and urban notables from Constantine to the coast, the British parliament and, in a smaller petition from the Hajj and the ‘notables of Constantine’, the Ottoman sultan. To the sultan, he underlined the dereliction of the Dey of Algiers, along with the incapacity, maladministration, brigandage and power-seeking of an ex-Bey of Constantine. And he invoked the defence of order and law against the sedition and criminality that the French usurpation unleashed among the Muslim population. The ‘arrival of the French in Algeria’, he wrote, ‘incites the population to sedition’, has caused the ‘dispersion of the Muslim horsemen . . . [who] are struck by stupor and do not know where to direct themselves’. In the absence of authority, the Muslims are ‘like the bats who get agitated and who dart around from right to left at the rising of the sun’. Moreover, there was an outbreak of criminality and insecurity on the roads: the Muslims, wrote Hajj Ahmad to the sultan, ‘are surrounded and stripped naked by brigands’ (Temimi 1978: 220, 225).

In the face of what he saw as sedition, confusion, and brigandage, Hajj Ahmad depicted himself as the one who would restore order, cohesion, and security. He wrote, ‘Ahmad the firm, the attentive, regarding whom acts and words reflect a perfect certitude, has called the soldiers, [including the major Arab chiefs], all of whom responded in the blink of an eye . . . All the population obeyed, because it is he, Ahmad, who denounces injustices and extinguishes the sources of corruption’ (Temimi 1978: 220).

To the British parliament, Hajj Ahmad listed the atrocities of the French. He wrote that the petitioners ‘have been informed that the British Parliament has for its objective the respect of the rights of man, the interest of humanity and the consolidation of fraternity between men’. But the French had not respected the treaty they had concluded with the authorities; they deported subjects without good cause; they separated husband from wife and children, and seized people’s goods; they caused some to change their religion; they had taken possession of funds consecrated for the poor; they had taken over mosques to sell or rent to merchants; destroyed houses unjustly; killed and massacred without valid reason; imprisoned others; violated graves; impoverished

all the inhabitants of Alger; massacred even peaceful Bedouin nearby, including women and children; and they have taken Bône by treason and trickery. Indeed, the French ‘claim that they have come to modernize, install justice and suppress barbarism. We reply that today we are sure that the barbarism and the injustice that they practice are more odious and detestable than all the injustice and barbarism known . . . since Adam.’ Hajj Ahmad and his co-signatories concluded that ‘we are submitted to the authority of the Sultan’ and ‘we will refuse to be his [France’s] neighbour’. ‘We cannot have confidence’ in his undertakings, and thus ‘nothing can exist between us except hostility and its repercussions’ (Temimi 1978: 228–30).

Like the Melians on the other side of the Mediterranean, two millennia before, Hajj Ahmed’s forces were defeated by military force. His downfall came in 1837, when eastern Algeria was mostly occupied by the French. Hajj Ahmad had sought honour and independence, a path of confrontation and uncivilized ‘intransigence’ in the eyes of his imperialist foe. He was defeated. With his passing, and while the sultan in Istanbul remained aloof in spite of many appeals and reports, none of the officials of the Ottoman era remained to defend the country. Only the Sultan of Morocco, who had no official relations with the Ottoman empire, because both dynasties laid claim to the Caliphate (the rightful successor to the Prophet in leadership of the Muslim community), moved to send help to the tribes in the west of the country, during 1830–2. The Dey of Algiers could be criticized for a self-interested capitulation; Hajj Ahmad for over-playing his hand. In either case, the crisis of the Ottoman *ancien regime* in Algeria was complete.

Amid this crisis of authority, the door stood open to more popular mobilizations. New leaderships and protagonists, drawn largely not from the older military and administrative elites and their staffs, but from among the tribes, Sufi brotherhoods and venerated descendants of saints (*awlad sayyid* or *marabouts*), and the more rugged, wandering miracle-workers of the hinterland, stepped forth across the country to fight the French (Peters 1979: 53–4).

The most well known of these was Abd Al-Qadir (1807/8–83), the learned son of the head of an important Sufi brotherhood, based in the west of the country. Abd Al-Qadir, who had performed the pilgrimage, memorized the Qur’an, and had a reputation for learning and scholarship, won the allegiance of many of the important tribes and notables

of western Algeria, received support from the sultan of Morocco, and fought the French from 1832 to 1834, and intermittently until 1837. Hostilities resumed in 1839 when the French and Abd Al-Qadir came to blows over territorial limits, and continued until he surrendered to the French in 1847. He was imprisoned in France and then exiled to Damascus.

The Moroccan sultan sent forces to Oran to fight the French during 1830–2, but on their withdrawal, following French naval pressure against him on the Moroccan coast, he appointed Abd Al-Qadir's father, Muhyi Al-Din – the head of an important Sufi order with a tradition of fighting the central government, the Qadiriyya – as governor of Oran. Muhyi Al-Din then declared *jihad* against the French in spring 1832. Muhyi Al-Din, along with family members and the heads of several important tribes, formally offered their allegiance to Abd Al-Qadir, who had gained a reputation for courage and leadership in battle, as Commander of the Faithful (*amir al-mu'minin*) in 1832 under a tree in western Algeria. The pact of allegiance was in conscious imitation of one made by the followers of the Prophet at a time of adversity in early Islam.

A war led in this way for a reformist version of Sufi Islam against the infidel was able to unite a broad constituency, the backbone of which was the Arab and Berber tribes of western Algeria. Abd Al-Qadir's authority was further enhanced by dream visitations by departed saints affirming his mission. An anecdote also circulated of a mysterious old man who had hailed Abd Al-Qadir as Amir during the latter's visit to Baghdad in 1826. For some of his followers, Abd Al-Qadir was undoubtedly surrounded by a distinctively Sufi aura of divine favour (*baraka*, or blessing).

After two years, although the military record was mixed, Abd Al-Qadir had harassed the French by guerrilla warfare sufficiently for them to agree to a peace treaty in February 1834. While the French presented this domestically as a way of bringing Abd Al-Qadir under their authority, Abd Al-Qadir presented it to his constituency as a recognition by the French of his authority.

However, abandoning the *jihad* and striking a deal with the unbelieving French drew criticism. And Abd Al-Qadir now turned to the government-linked tribes in the way the discredited Ottomans had done in order to collect taxes. Hajj Ahmad denounced Abd Al-Qadir to the Ottoman sultan as an upstart, liar, and a 'hypocrite ... claiming

to come from a grand lineage' (Temimi 1978: 260–1). While other government-linked tribes were sidelined by Abd Al-Qadir, causing some to oppose him and even join with the French. Sufi orders who lost their tax privileges under Abd Al-Qadir, and disagreed with his strict reformist creed, were also disaffected (Peters 1979: 54–5). As opposition formed, Abd Al-Qadir actually accepted some military help from the French, who were considering indirect rule, and set about reorganizing his army, with a nucleus of regularly paid and well-trained soldiers instead of relying solely on tribal levies that were commonly raised in times of war (Peters 1979: 54). French influence was present here, but we also know that Abd Al-Qadir had been impressed, in his visit to Cairo in 1826, by the military reorganization being undertaken by Mehmet Ali there. Hajj Ahmed was also doing the same kind of military organization over in Constantine, as was the Ottoman sultan himself in the heartlands of the empire.

Abd Al-Qadir's state-in-waiting was shaped not only by the military technique of a standing army derived from Cairo, the Ottomans, or France. To win loyalty and build up a state organization that transcended this or that tribe or Sufi brotherhood, and to justify tax-raising, and to unify his followers, Abd Al-Qadir leaned heavily on contemporary currents of Islamic renewal and reform. During 1834–9, Abd Al-Qadir secured regular revenues to pay his soldiers by collecting taxes according to Qur'anic prescriptions. This was a departure, in an 'Islamic' direction, from the Ottoman norm, whereby taxation was understood within the general question of justice, and was often subject to sultanic decrees and local customary forms not formally defined by Islamic law. In Algeria, such non-Islamic taxes were often criticized as being unGodly. Abd Al-Qadir tapped into this tradition of criticism by promulgating Qur'anic taxes, including the *zakah* (charitable tax), the *'ushr*, and a special war tax, *mu'unah*. In order to collect taxes and administer justice according to Shari'a, he appointed paid officials (Peters 1979: 54–5).

Abd Al-Qadir, in developing a form of authority that could transcend the tribes and brotherhoods, drew on an uncompromising emphasis on the unity of God and an opposition to polytheism, un-Islamic innovation, deviations from the faith, and the 'superstition' associated with wandering saints, certain forms of Sufi ritual, and miracle-workers. These austere prescriptions bore the stamp of revivalist teachings. The key principle of unity, capable of winning, at least for a time, a measure

of consent, was derived, not from local tradition or particular custom, but from how these were combined with the revivalist doctrine of *tawhid*. Islamic renewal was the banner that Abd Al-Qadir held aloft in order to try to win over the loyalties of those who wavered.

In some respects what Abd Al-Qadir was doing here was a very old thing. The idea of renewing and purifying a faith that had become deviant in some way over time by tyranny, superstition, and blind imitation on the part of religious scholars was one of the oldest and most inspiring ideas in Islam. The age of the Prophet and of the rightly guided caliphs (his successors) had been an age of extraordinary worldly success as well as an age of Truth, in which the final, divine revelation had been revealed to mankind via the messenger-Prophet, Muhammad. In other words, the idea of returning to the spirit of the early days of Islam, the ideal community that the Prophet had established in Medina, the example and sayings of the Prophet, as well as the revelation itself, had an extraordinary inspirational power. The Islamic revolution, as-it-were, of the seventh century AD, had meant a time of perfection, one might say, on earth. It was not a paradise lost by carnal knowledge and the Fall, as in the Garden of Eden; nor a paradise yet to come. Instead it was a model of divine will, justice, truth and right that had once combined God and man, power and right, wealth and justice, the divine and the temporal. A pure age that had been corrupted, so the revivalists said, by deviation from the true path.

The Prophet had said ‘At the head of every century comes a renewer’. And those hailed as renewers appeared at various points in the long history of Islam: some founded dynasties. Ibn Tumart (1077–1130) was one such example. He was an itinerant devotee-beggar, and son of a mosque lamp-lighter from Morocco. After making the pilgrimage to Mecca and working in Baghdad, he declared himself a renewer and Mahdi and went on to found the strict, puritanical Almohad (*al-muwahhid*) dynasty, which dominated Andalusia and North Africa as far as Libya in the twelfth century. He and his followers were known as the Al-Muwahhidun, those who declare that God is one. They espoused an interpretation of the faith that heavily emphasized the unity of God, meaning that divinity could not be conferred on saints, preachers, prophets, the rich, or existing rulers alike. The Al-Muwahhidun looked for guidance, not to the arcane, orthodox, or derivative interpretations of this or that school of law, but to the original sources of the faith such as the revelation (the

Qur'an) and the authoritative reports of the sayings and doings of the Prophet (the *hadith* and Sunna). They railed against unlawful innovations into the faith, deviation, superstition and saint worship, which was denounced as polytheism. They declared that scholars could exercise *ijtihad*, the independent use of reason, analogy and various other forms, to derive lawful propositions as to correct practice from the original sources of the faith. Such *ijtihad* could provide startling criticisms of convention, orthodoxy, and the existing distribution of power. More recently, the puritannical Qadizadeli movement, which achieved some political power in the Ottoman empire in the seventeenth century, picked up on similar themes (Evstatiev 2013). In many ways, therefore, Abd Al-Qadir's revivalism represented an old gesture in the history of Islam.

In other respects, Abd Al-Qadir's revivalism drew on and transformed themes that were part of a far wider contemporary revivalism at work in many parts of the Islamic world. During the period 1750–1850, as empires ceased to expand, or de-centralized, (or collapsed, as in the case of the Mughals), as the sultan's justice retreated, as local oligarchs usurped customary and divine bounds, and as scholars seemed merely to repeat what their predecessors had decreed, or became lost in arcane disputes, there was a highly diverse and by no means monolithic 'world Islamic revival' (Hobsbawm 1988: 225). Among the key intellectuals of this revival were Shah Wali Allah (1703–62) in India; Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab (1703–87) in Arabia; 'Uthman Ibn Fudi (1754–1817) in West Africa; and Muhammad Ali Al-Sanusi (1787–1859) in North Africa (Dallal 1993). The influential Yemeni theologian Muhammad Al-Shawkani (1760–1834) was another important thinker (Haykel 2003). Another key figure who took up permanent residence as an influential teacher in Mecca was the Moroccan born Ahmad Ibn Idris (d. 1837), who through teachings, pupils, family, travels and correspondence had a direct and indirect revivalist influence 'from North Africa to Indonesia' (O'Fahey and Karrar 1987: 205). Pupils from his immediate circle also established the Khatmiyya and Rashidiyya brotherhoods (O'Fahey 1990). Another important teacher, based at the heart of important scholarly networks in Mecca in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was South Asian-born Hayat Al-Sindi (Voll 1975), who taught Abd Al-Wahhab. Revivalism was marked by the idea of renewal and reform, of a return to the Qur'an and the *hadith* as

the authoritative sources for faith and practice, and by the idea that syncretic, superstitious, or polytheistic accretions or unlawful innovations should be expunged from the faith (cf. Levzion and Voll 1987; O’Fahey and Radtke 1993; Voll 2008). Unlike the Islamic modernism that appeared after the mid-nineteenth century, or reformist liberalism, revivalism before the 1860s paid little attention to the West: as Dallal has it, the ‘Islamic imagination’ was yet to be encumbered with the West ‘whose challenge was yet to be perceived’ (Dallal 1993: 359). Islamic revivalism’s cultural dynamic was rooted in the Islamic world (O’Fahey and Karrar 1987: 210).

Revivalism was, at the same time, highly diverse. While Al-Wahhab denounced Sufism as polytheism and even unbelief, Al-Sanusi founded a new and highly influential Sufi order. Ibn Idris, while critical of saint worship, and certain aspects of Sufi practice, pitched for a reformed and Prophet-focused Sufism (O’Fahey and Karrar 1987: 208). While for Al-Wahhab the use of *ijtihad* – the independent use of reasoning on the basis of the sources of the law to ascertain the divine truth – had little importance, it was crucial for Wali Allah and Al-Sanusi alike (Dallal 1993: 350, 358). The latter even enjoined *ijtihad* for every Muslim. While Wali Allah was interested in syncretism and reconciliation, Al-Wahhab pushed ‘a grim and narrow theory of unbelief’ (Dallal 1993: 351), bent on classifying, aggressively denouncing, and taking up arms against ‘unbelief’ and ‘polytheism’, especially among Muslims themselves. While Ibn Fudi challenged local power, and Abd Al-Qadir French power, Al-Wahhab sought an alliance with the warlord Ibn Saud to spread his creed. While Al-Sanusi and Ibn Fudi were taken up with the question of challenging political and economic injustice, Al-Wahhab merely formulated credal distinctions; the only form of tolerance enjoined was that for the excesses of the ruler, to whom obedience was demanded (Dallal 1993: 349). Revivalism was a partner of state-building in Yemen (Haykel 2003), Arabia, and for Abd Al-Qadir, whereas Al-Sanusi’s mission ‘was to model initiate and structure an ideal society’ in places where existing political authority was weak (Dallal 1993: 356).

An Idrisian version of Islamic renewal, coloured by the Sufi milieu in which he was raised, provided a significant element in the shaping of Abd Al-Qadir’s state-building leadership in Algeria in the 1830s and 1840s. The Qadiriyya already had ‘reformist and revivalist leanings’ (Peters 1979: 54). Abd Al-Qadir himself ruled as much as possible in

agreement with Shari'a, while emphasizing monotheism (*tawhid*) and violently denouncing polytheism (*shirk*). He strongly condemned as *bida'* the worship of saints (Peters 1979: 55–6). While protests in the Balkans gravitated eventually towards nationalism, Abd Al-Qadir's resistance to empire, and the state-building project that went with it, was heavily intertwined with the tradition of Islamic renewal, with a Sufi colouring.

During the winter of 1845–6, there were so many uprisings in Algeria that the French army was stretched to breaking point. A tribal revolt, acting in defence of customary and tribal autonomy, in January 1845, by a religious chief, Bu Ma'zah, 'the man with the goat', kept the French army busy across the country and gave Abd Al-Qadir a chance to return from eastern Morocco with his men, to score a major victory over the French in September 1845 at Sidi Brahimi. His forces managed to kill 384 French soldiers, the heaviest defeat yet sustained by the French.

These striking successes had an electrifying effect on the Algerians. Whole tribes flocked to Abd Al-Qadir's banner, and innumerable new revolts against the French, led by a large number of 'Bu Maza's', sprang up all over the country. The entire French position in Algeria seemed in jeopardy (Danzinger 1980: 67).

When Abd Al-Qadir retreated, even in defeat, in July 1846, he received a 'hero's welcome' by the tribes in the Moroccan borderlands (Danzinger 1980: 68).

Morocco provided official help in the 1830s, offered important sanctuary for Abd Al-Qadir and his men for most of the period, and streams of arms, ammunition, funds and volunteers. His successes after November 1839 generated enthusiasm in Morocco which was 'soon translated into massive transfers of arms, ammunition, and other provisions, as well as the appearance of Moroccan volunteers in Abd Al-Qadir's camp'. The sultan, desperate to avoid a losing confrontation with the French, formally prohibited in mid-1842 traffic with the emir. Nonetheless, support for Abd Al-Qadir continued in Morocco in the tribes, in cities, and also among officials and in the court itself. Abd Al-Rahman's prohibition was largely ignored, and in March 1843, Moroccan soldiers, commanded by the Governor of Oujda, participated in an assault on French units in Algeria' (Danzinger 1980: 64).

Abd Al-Qadir's struggle was conducted across state borders in other ways. The Amir wrote to Egyptian religious scholars in 1846 of the 'legally abominable deeds of the Moroccan Sultan, deeds that one does not expect from any person, let alone from notables'. The sultan, charged Abd Al-Qadir, had acted to 'strengthen the Party of Unbelief and to weaken us'. Abd Al-Qadir received a reply from a Cairo-based jurist that, although not as full-blooded as Abd Al-Qadir might have liked, certainly condemned the sultan in fairly dramatic terms:

Yes, everything you have mentioned is forbidden for the said Sultan . . . These prohibitions are axiomatic articles of faith and nobody who has but a grain of faith left in his heart, can entertain any doubts about it. We would never have expected that our Lord Sultan Abd al Rahman (may Allah grant him success) would promulgate such orders with regard to a man like you. But we belong to Allah and to Him we shall return. What Allah has decreed, will necessarily be (quoted in Peters 1979: 59–61).

Certain tribes, with their own ideas about autonomy and just or customary practice, were resistant to the idea of paying new Qur'anic taxes to the state of Abd Al-Qadir. The latter tried to get the chief judge (*qadi al-qudah*) of Fez to rule that collaborators were apostates who might legally be killed. The learned judge refused to oblige, but did rule that helping Muslims who are unable to defend themselves against enemy attack is an obligation incumbent on all Muslims nearby, who would perform this duty in person or by giving financial support (Peters 1979: 59–60).

The ferocious violence of the French assault, who turned from the possibility of indirect rule to 'colonization without restraint' during this period, an imperialism with no problems of re-supply through the ports and seaways, caused Abd Al-Qadir to surrender with a promise of safe passage in 1847, once he realized that, in military terms, the game was up (Danzinger 1980: 67; Peters 1979: 54–5). Abd Al-Qadir eventually lived out his life in Damascus, where he was decorated by the French for saving the lives, true to his ecumenical philosophy, of many Christians during the political and sectarian violence of 1860.

Those who assume that Abd Al-Qadir was merely currying favour with the French, after his defeat in 1847, by compromising, and by saving the lives of Christians in Damascus, may not be familiar with an important dimension of Abd Al-Qadir's pre-nationalist and deeply

non-communitarian, and non-xenophobic, thinking. The tract he wrote in prison in France in 1849 gives us a glimpse of a sweeping, egalitarian, ecumenical and inter-racial vision of the relations between countries and peoples – from China to France – a vision rooted in shared genealogies and histories, religious traditions, the legacy of the Roman empire, and the broad possibilities among different peoples for the achievement of learning, virtue and justice (Abd Al-Qadir 1849). Here was a revivalism that owed more to reconciliation and syncretism than to rigid and Manichean binaries.

The French made all sorts of self-justificatory declarations in regard to equality and patriotism. As we know, Charles X had invaded in order to quell republican sentiment and ‘seditious words’ at home, not to encourage them; and such declarations reeked of hypocrisy in any case for those who suffered invasion, spoliation and slaughter in their name. Abd Al-Qadir signalled that equality and love of country were nothing new, and were of no great interest, because his intellectual traditions already encompassed them. He noted that it was well known that men are all equal, because their origin is sperm, which is not differentiated by reason, science or religion. All men, in any case, were descended from Adam and Eve: as the Prophet said: ‘You are the sons of Adam, and Adam of the earth.’ Only virtue comes to distinguish men. As for love of country, ‘each man habituates himself to his land, as he habituates himself to his mother and his father; he remains always nostalgic for his country’. Indeed, the Prophet said: ‘God make us love Medina as we had loved Mecca or more.’ And, Abd Al-Qadir continues, the poet said: ‘The country is beloved to men / They passed their youth there / When they remember it, They remember their promises’ (Abd Al-Qadir 1849: 12–13).

Of far greater interest to Abd Al-Qadir, judging by the number of words devoted to these themes in his treatise, was to establish the broad genealogies and histories that gave different religions (Jews, Christians and Muslims), and national or ethnic groups (Berbers, Arabs, French, Indians and Chinese), a shared basis for the non-conflictual pursuit of faith, justice and virtue. He noted that Caesar of Rome, the Arabs and our Prophet all share a common ancestor: Ismail bin Ibrahim el-Khalil (Abraham). Ham bin Nuh (Noah), the author went on, is also the common ancestor of the Copts, the Berbers, the Sudan, India and China. The Berber tribes, the Zenata and Louwatta, were exiled from Palestine towards the Maghrib (North Africa) after the death of

Goliath. Abd Al-Qadir points out that the Prophet did not support the defeat of Rome at the hands of the Persians, because the Romans were people of the book, and the Persians were atheists; in fact God informed the Romans that they would be victorious over Persia in a few years. He pointed out that the Qur'an eulogizes Christians and considers them as closest to Muslims. He noted that the virtuous Christian king of Ethiopia had warmly welcomed Muslims who had emigrated to his country to escape the atheists of the Quraysh. The latter insisted and sent presents to the king to get them to turn them over to him, but he refused to give them up, and protected them. Peoples, in Abd Al-Qadir's conception, were not static and monolithic, journeying through homogeneous and empty time, but overlapping communities defined by webs of ancestry and genealogy.

Much of Abd Al-Qadir's treatise turned on how the legacy of Rome should be understood. Karl Marx, who had a PhD in Roman law, in his most brilliant political tract, had famously polemicized against Louis Napoleon of France, the upstart nephew of Bonaparte, for borrowing the disguises and ancient lustre of Rome while pursuing narrower and self-aggrandizing goals. Abd Al-Qadir was, like Marx, a political exile, in Europe, and an opponent of Louis Napoleon, and also versed in the history of Rome, but languishing in a French prison. He knew that French pundits were discussing whether anything could be resurrected of ancient Roman glory in North Africa, and whether Roman virtue was still to be found among its people. Abd Al-Qadir's main point seems to have been to turn around the arrogant French enquiry *vis-à-vis* the peoples of North Africa, and wonder instead whether Louis Napoleon and France were worthy of the glories and virtues of Rome. If so, they would refuse injustice towards Algeria and keep their word to release Abd Al-Qadir as they had promised on his surrender.

Even with the loss of Abd Al-Qadir, and the smashing of his newly constructed organizational structures, many Algerians fought on, especially in the name of tribal autonomy, or following the charismatic leadership of one or other preacher, descendant of a saint, millenarian claimant to the status of the Mahdi (or Expected Deliverer) or wandering miracle-worker. The uprising led by Abu Ziyān at Zaatcha in 1849 (Clancy-Smith 1994: 70–1) was joined by commoners of all kinds under millenarian banners, dragging local religious notables into a conflict with the French.

Another kind of uprising was more charismatic, such as that of a holy man, Si Tayeb, in 1862. Holy men were marked not so much by their association with Sufi ritual, belief, or organization, or even by their saintly lineage, but by their status as thaumaturges and possessors of miraculous gifts. ‘The most important miracles’, writes Brower, ‘included locating springs, returning wayward livestock, protecting crops and pastures, and resuscitating dead palms’ (Brower 2009: 120). The demonstration of these capacities distinguished such figures from madmen and imposters. They situated such holy men firmly within the economic practices of oasis dwellers and pastoral nomads. In April 1862, Si Tayeb and a group of 50–60 men and boys bearing sticks staged an attack on colonist houses and a coffee-house in Djelfa. In the ensuing scuffle following the encounter, Si Tayeb’s men killed two men and a five-year-old girl (Brower 2009: 94). Si Tayeb’s men claimed to French interrogators, or at least French interrogators understood, that their actions had been motivated by nothing more than a temporary enchantment brought about by the personal powers of their leader. A more satisfactory history is lacking.

The uprising of the Awlad Sidi shaykh in Algeria in the 1860s, rooted in a saintly lineage, and a respected tribe, stemmed in part not from the sheer fact of their vassal-ship to France, but to the breakdown of that relationship, when France violated it through usurping the shaykhs administrative power, and his sphere of autonomy defined by a sharp limit on mutual contacts involving only a handing over of the tribute and a confirmation of family members in office. Si Suleiman wrote to the French with complaints as to his ‘reduction in power, strict supervision and constant interference’ adding up to ‘French treason’ (Von Sivers 1983: 120). When the shaykh called out his men in order to offer a show of force to encourage the French to pull back, a wider and less-controllable round of contention broke out.

The French were prepared to go to extreme lengths to destroy the resistance of the lineages, the tribes and the holy men. The French sought to achieve submission through engineering economic insecurity and subsistence crises, cutting tribes from their grazing grounds and so on (Brower 2009: 98–112, 137). These policies created the conditions for the famine of 1867–8, which involved some 800,000 deaths. Drought was an important part of the picture, but ‘the victims of hunger died as a consequence of history rather than climate’ (Brower 2009: 106). The genocidal violence faced by Algerians under French

‘colonization without restraint’ is still little appreciated in the English-speaking world. The remarks of a French general in 1851 offer a glimpse of French tactics:

I left in my wake a vast conflagration. All the villages, some 200 in number, were burnt down, all the gardens destroyed, all the olive trees cut down (cited in Quandt 1969: 4).

As historians now know, almost half the Algerian population was killed directly or indirectly by the French. The best demographic work has shown that 825,000 ‘Algerian lives were ended because of the violence of the first forty-five years of the French occupation, and an equal number died in the famines and epidemics triggered, in large part, by the colonial-induced economic mutations suffered by Algerian society’. Algeria’s indigenous population shrank from 4 million people in 1830 to roughly 2 million in 1872 (Kamel Kateb’s work, cited in Brower 2009: 4). The contrast with Tunisia after 1881, where there was settler colonization, but it was done in a less violent and provocative way, and where there were hardly any protests on a scale to compare with Algeria, is suggestive.

The largest uprising of the post-1847 period was led by neither saint, Sufi, Mahdi nor holy man, but by Muhammad Al-Muqrani, who issued a call for *jihad* on 16 March 1871. Al-Muqrani had been the Governor of much of Grand Kabyle with the French administration, accounting perhaps for some of the hysteria of those French who condemned him (Mercier 1901). Al-Muqrani’s initiative was new, because until that point no substantial official or *caid* associated with the French-imposed administration had turned towards insurrection. The French had just been defeated by the Prussians, Paris surrendering to the siege on 28 January 1871, implying a moment of objective weakness. Al-Muqrani and others were following these events closely, and read the defeat as a punishment by God for French usurpation and corruption of Muslim lands in Algeria. In addition, decrees giving citizenship to Jews in October 1870 (Schreier 2010) were widely seen as proof of the partiality and discrimination practised by the French authorities, a divide-and-rule device that made a mockery of French universalist pretensions, in regard to a practice deep within the French-Algerian state.

The rebellion spread quickly to encompass an area about 300 km in length, from the suburbs of Algiers to the heights of Al-Qull (Collo),

and southwards as far as the desert. An extraordinary 800,000 Muslims, 'involving about one-third of the Muslim population of Algeria' (Abun-Nasr 1987: 267) rallied to the banners of *jihad*. Rumours circulated in the country that the Ottoman sultan would move on the country against the French, or in regard to the imminent return from exile of the Amir Abd Al-Qadir's son to lead resistance to the French (Abun-Nasr 1987: 266). Whether or not Al-Muqrani had limited and personal aims, his actions sparked off a general rebellion which was by no means entirely within his control (Abun-Nasr 1987: 266–7).

The uprising was largely defeated by June 1872, and was met with extensive repression, collective punishment and the imposition of punitive indemnities (Evans and Phillips 2007: 31). The settlers insisted on criminal trials, and economic repression such that Muslims would not have the means to rebel again. A war indemnity of 36.5 million francs was imposed on the region of Kabylia, amounting to ten times the annual tribute. All the lands of the tribes who had participated were sequestered by a decree of 31 March 1871, invoking 'tribal collective responsibility' for the events. Alsatian and Lorrainian emigrants settled on 100,000 hectares of sequestered lands in the Summan valley and regions of Sétif and Constantine. Approximately 'seventy per cent of the total capital of the peoples involved in the rebellion was levied from them in the form of war indemnity or for freeing their lands from sequestration' (Abun Nasr 1987: 268–9).

A further uprising, which began in 1881 in the southwest, and continued on and off until the 1900s, was led by Abu Amama, an ascetic, Sufi preacher of reformist colour, whose emissaries declared: 'There is no god but God and Abu Amama is his friend (*wali*); there is no god but God and Abu Amama is the falcon of the Sahara, this guest of God' (Von Sivers 1982). Abu Amama linked tribe to religious cause, the immediate interests of oasis-dwellers and pastoral nomads to a larger organization, and their customs and proverbial wisdom to a wider and more abstract set of principles and identities. Insurrection broke out among the population of southwestern Algeria on 22 April 1881 with the assassination of a French officer, and a period of fighting lasted till summer 1881. The timing was propitious in that the French were partially diverted by their invasion of Tunisia, under way from 28 April to 12 May 1881. After the summer, Abu Amama's forces

regrouped, with the former in exile in Morocco; this challenge to the French only definitively ended with the death of Abu Amama in 1908 in exile in Morocco.

These uprisings straddled the border between Algeria and Morocco in important ways. In the 1860s, the Awlad Sidi shaykh in the Sud-Oranais drew into their orbit many of the Moroccan tribes on the southeastern frontier: the Doui Menia, the Oulad Jerir and the Beni Guil. This was the occasion of a French campaign of repression into the Guir valley in 1870 (Burke 1976: 29). The French repression of Bu Amama in the early 1880s brought the French closer to the southwest Moroccan border, involving the creation of a permanent French post at Ain Sefra (Burke 1976: 29). At this point, in the early 1880s, it was the turn of forces based on the Moroccan side of the border to take the lead. Si Al-'Arbi, a Darqawa shaykh, who possessed considerable influence over the tribes in the frontier region, became increasingly alarmed by the steady French advance. The weak response of Mawlay Al-Hasan did nothing to reassure him, and thus he began calling for the tribes in the area to launch a *jihad* against the French in the districts south of Oran. He had a considerable prestige, which meant a substantial following. By 1888, he started to expand the scope of his claims, and challenged the *makhzan* to take action against the French, failing which he would arm the tribes himself and send them against the infidel. But the movement lost momentum when its *marabout* leader died in 1892. The visit of Mawlay Al-Hasan to Tafilalet then worked to de-mobilize the tribes, and re-impose the precarious authority of the *makhzan* (Burke 1976: 29).

Egypt: petitioning in town and country

Not all *fellahin* in Egypt turned away from the centralizing state, kept their distance in silent hostility from state institutions, drew solely on popular traditions and local experiences, or used informal or forceful means of redress. Collective and individual petitions, either made as appeals in person to the ruler (something remarked upon in Mehmet Ali's time), or much more commonly lodged through procedures that were increasingly formalized and bureaucratized from at least 1830 onwards, were widespread in the 1870s in Egypt. There was also an extensive use of the court system in the search for justice. There was no Tanzimat as such in Egypt, but Mehmet Ali's use of the term *al-abali*

(meaning the populace) was a broader category than the more familiar Ottoman term *ra'iyya* (meaning the 'flock') and his claims that his policies were for the 'welfare of the populace' (*rafahiyyat al-abali*) (Abul-Magd 2013: 87) may have encouraged petitioners. Petitions lodged on stamped government-issued paper, and obeying conventions of address and language, were a routinized and official channel through which grievances of all kinds could be brought, by even the lowliest subject. Petitions were constructed by peasant leaders and their constituencies, and professional petition writers who frequented markets up and down the country. Petitioners' language was not grovelling or mindlessly subservient (Vatikiotis 1969: 160), but nor did it express some underlying and deeply rooted nationalist and revolutionary consciousness (Salim 1981).

Not all petitioners were male. Umm Muhammad from the village of Hamidiyya in Qina province petitioned on behalf of a larger group of villagers against the attacks of a local shaykh in 1846; in the same year a certain Amina from Nagada petitioned to recover palm trees inherited from her mother that had been seized by a certain shaykh Hasan (Abul-Magd 2013: 90–1). Abul-Magd notes that a number of peasant women in Qina province in the 1850s actually sued their husbands in the Shari'a court for not providing the family with sufficient staple foodstuffs (Abul-Magd 2013: 100). Women 'often complained to the courts of arbitrary confiscation of property or even coercion of person [by village shaykhs]' (Tucker 1985: 137–8), while '[w]idows or women whose husbands were absent went to the Shari'a court to demand payment of their husbands' wages from the State' (Tucker 1985: 138).

In Egypt, elections for village headmen were established in 1866, as part of Isma'il's constitution of that year, which was also designed to make local tax-raising more efficient (Chalcraft 2005a). These elections were associated with much petition-writing, and certainly served to widen the institutional opportunities available for this kind of action. Above all, they provided reasons for the active participation of peasants in a politics at the village level that surrounded the local headmen.

Peasants made strategic use of the figure of the just ruler, trying to draw the *khedive* and ministers into their disputes, and lodged sometimes assertive appeals to the rule of law and new and old rights in a dangerous and power-laden context. They stuck to the terms of official

discourse, while giving it a content, associated with their own interests and forms of moral economy, that it would not otherwise have had.

The peasants invoked the justice of the ruler in order to make claims and raise grievances as loyal subjects committed to justice, order and cultivation, and pitted against the ambitious, the greedy and the tyrannical, whether the latter were members of the government or not. Peasant petitioners in the Egyptian countryside sought justice against unscrupulous shaykhs who had over-taxed them, or against landowners who had evicted them, dispossessed them, or forced them to work for them at exploitative rates. During the summer of 1880, thirty-four cultivators from the village of Kafr Akhsha in Lower Egypt, who were protesting against a tyrannical headman who had seized their land and kept them 'in captivity and slavery', were bold enough to claim that 'the government is not well known for [delivering] justice other than [where] Your Highness [intervenes]' (cited in Chalcraft 2005a: 309), a sweeping criticism, by implication, of the host of mayors, *nazirs*, inspectors and even provincial governors who stood between *khedive* and peasant. In a partially centralized context, where so many local figures had state-like powers, the language of the just ruler and the loyal subject was not a form of 'traditional subservience', but expressed a political consciousness rooted in Ottoman statecraft, and was a strategic move aimed at intervention from the highest levels of the state against local power. And, while peasants asserted that the *khedive* had in mind the comfort, prosperity, and interests of the people (*masalih al-abali*), they played some role in defining and making reference to what the people's interests actually were. In this sense, petitioners clearly did not believe that only the ruler knew or was able to define the content of the interests of the people.

Contesting local exploitation, peasants laid claim to their rights or dues (*haqq/huquq*), a long-standing term conveying the meaning of 'what is deserved'. The government had a right (*haqq*) to a certain share of the surplus and, by the same token, said the petitions, so did the peasants. The violation of these rights, which could be used to refer to a wide variety of goods and services, was a form of tyranny which peasants were vigorous in protesting. Peasant petitions, further, especially in the context of elections, made regular reference to the wishes and consent of the people, and occasionally made reference to the need for equality (*al-musawa'*) among the people in the face of inequalities meted out by exploitative local figures (Chalcraft 2005a: 317).

In July 1869, one newspaper went so far as to report that ‘the Egyptian *fallah* has begun to emerge from the silence of slavery which he has been mired in for centuries and started to supplicate [the powers that be] with complaints, something not yet seen in Egypt’ (cited in Chalcraft 2005a). While this report exaggerated in typically modernist fashion the extent of the change, new repertoires of contention were developed where cultivators drew on languages and practices associated with state centralization, and coloured them with their own interests and concepts, in order to make a stream of claims on the authorities couched in assertive, changing and ‘secular’ languages of justice, rights, and the interests of the people. New concepts were stitched into old through contentious practice. A contentious politics had arisen that tried to make use of, rather than merely to resist, the centralizing state.

Something similar seems to have been at work in Palestine in the nineteenth century. Peasant petitioners in Palestine ‘openly adopted the government’s public interpretation of the Tanzimat and used it as a weapon against the authority and privileges of their traditional leaders’ (Doumani 1995: 18).

under the suffocating weight of both the rural and the urban elites of Jabal Nablus, the peasants’ best hope of carving out a political space for themselves lay in involving the state and appealing to its sense of justice (Doumani 1995: 175).

These avenues of participation were explored with remarkable persistence, even though they had mixed results. As Ottoman administrators and technocrats, Tamimi and Bahjat wrote, after their visit to Salbit in Palestine, ‘[t]he government in their eyes is nothing but sub-district administrators and a number of police ... and a door that does not answer the complaints of the people’ (Doumani 1995: 178).

Urban townspeople, merchants, artisans, crafts and services workers, from high to low status, drew up collective petitions to rulers, ministers and governor in order to obtain redress for their grievances throughout the century. Just as in the countryside, centralization brought central agencies closer to the affairs of the crafts and trades, and bureaucratization increased their capacity, heightening the incentive and the practicality of making use of these agencies for the resolution of disputes. Petition submission procedures became increasingly formal. Moreover, the state was busy enacting decrees and orders to

which crafts workers and others could legitimately appeal. In 1869, the establishment of elections for guild shaykhs, under police supervision, also created an institutional opening which increased the incentives to engage in petitioning in order to initiate, invalidate or object to candidates or procedures.

Petitions were used by a wide variety of social groups in towns. Not only merchants and notables sent petitions. So did boatmen, porters, weighers, measurers, box-makers, water-carriers, carters, cab-drivers, masons, dyers, retailers, wage-workers in larger enterprises, and many others. Women also sent petitions on occasion. Hejazis, Sudanese, Jews, Christians and Muslims, and others were also involved.

Many members of guilds, by custom, *qadi* judgment, or by agreement, held the right to practice a particular trade in a particular location. Many mobilized when these rights were violated – whether by contractors, guild shaykhs, masters, or outsiders. Others mobilized in regard to the corruption of weights in measures. Others found reason to act in order to reduce the burden of customary dues which weighed on them from within guilds. Others sought to reduce the level of forced labour to which they were subject. Still others objected to the way guild shaykhs carried out their state-like functions – in tax assessments, in assisting the police. In one case, a group of porters petitioned to get the police to carry out a redistribution of wealth. Many of these reasons to mobilize were intensified because of the spread of market relations, the existence of many new entrants into trades, heavier burdens in taxation and forced labour, and because the state co-optation of shaykhs divided the guilds. In competition with European imports and investment, some crafts and service trades were under pressure, and others engaged in labour-squeezing and self-exploitation in order to survive.

Crafts and service workers couched their petitions in a rich language appealing to custom, rights, the justice of the ruler, and the welfare and interests of the people. These languages appealed to official discourses sanctioned by the state, while giving them a content drawn from a long-standing and changing moral economy of the crafts and service workers themselves. They appealed to the state for the sultan's justice, to ensure the flourishing, comfort (*raha*), welfare (*maslaha*) and rights (*huquq*, just shares and dues) of the commoners (*re'aya*, *'amma*, *ahali*), to safeguard and guarantee the demands of custom (*'adat*), law, and regulation against tyranny (*zulm*). This social consciousness owed little or nothing to European liberalism or socialism. Egalitarianism of a

non-European sort existed, harking back to older movements, linked to Sufism and asceticism, or linked to customs of the trade. It is important to point out that communistic traditions on the Arabian peninsula hailed back at least to the Qarmatians of the ninth century. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw major movements in the Ottoman empire based around the equal distribution of wealth. Ascetic critiques of luxury and decadence were strongly articulated during the nineteenth century in many Sufi orders, organizations which overlapped strongly with urban guilds, crafts and trades (Baer 1964; Ghazali 1999: 20, 42–3; Raymond 1958, 1968: 107, 1973: 505, 507). The porters at weigh-stations in Alexandria proposed the redistribution of wealth (*al-rukiyya*) in their own guild in order to compensate those who had lost out. Al-Rukiyya referred to a little-known custom involving the redistribution of all the income of the guild among the rank and file of the workers, and was customary in some guilds in Egypt in the 1870s (Chalcraft 2004: 80–101).

On the other hand, reference to state regulations and to bureaucratic procedures was almost certainly on the increase, and petitioners were quick to adopt and adapt the new languages which the state used to justify centralization and self-strengthening – whether of the Tanzimat, of law and order, of civilization and progress, or of regulation. In the context of elections, there was much reference to the desires, wishes, and comfort of the people.

Petitions were written in conjunction with government scribes and were sometimes signed by scores of claimants. In 1871, for example, seventy-seven Sudanese and Nubian cab-drivers petitioned against an Arab shaykh they regarded as tyrannical, possibly for contracting outsiders to a job to which they believed they had a right. Organization was largely informal – at least in Egypt after 1863 – where petitions were signed and organized not by the guild as such but usually by some group within the guild, whether involving the shaykh, the senior masters, or not. Before the early 1900s, however, no new organizations were brought into being, although middle class reformers occasionally suggested that societies or leagues to regulate and reform the crafts and trades should be instituted.

Petitioning as a strategy was rooted in the way it could manipulate dominant terms and practices, giving official politics a certain colour that it might not otherwise have had, and thus enabling petitioners to obtain redress.

These kinds of protests were by no means always successful, even in the short term. The carpenter box-makers of Cairo failed to bring their leadership to book for unfair fiscal practice; the porters of Alexandria, for all the radical daring of their proposal on the redistribution of wealth, failed, and probably never stood a chance of persuading the state to get involved in such matters within the guild. On other occasions, elections could be rigged, voters bought off, and officials bribed. On the other hand, protests sometimes re-instated popular guild leaders; they held to account more powerful masters and shaykhs seeking to manipulate custom in their own interests.

Weapons of the weak, and collective petitioning alike played an important role in the attrition of the guilds. Where guild structures were co-opted, or unable to protect their members' livelihoods, crafts and service workers banded together in informal networks that were either sub-guild, or extended beyond guild boundaries. Guild members, in the search for more adequate protection, were to some extent rejecting their guilds, and forging informal networks in order to pursue their interests. Had guild members remained passive, the government might have retained guilds intact for the purposes of regulation and taxation. But the very resistance of guild members, on a variety of fronts, led to state intervention, which furthered the attrition of guild autonomy.

Urban crowds

From Morocco to Iran, urban crowds, in the face of unfair prices, dearth, hoarding, and monopolistic behaviour engaged in collective action more disruptive and evidently transgressive than weapons of the weak, petitioning and the use of the court system (Abrahamian 1993; Baer 1977; Raymond 1968). In Iran, the tradition of urban protest was marked. The shah declared himself ready to hang his own son to stop rising prices in the 1860s (Abrahamian 1982: 41–2). There were occasionally food riots in Baghdad, when famine threatened, such as those of 1877 (Batatu 1978: 470). In Morocco, this living tradition of protest continued to play a role in the nineteenth century: the rising in Fez of 1873 furnishes an example.

According to Laroui, Moroccan towns, part of the *makhzan*, were usually calm and well administered. Sometimes the *qadi* (chief judge) and the *muhtasib* (market inspector) were opposed to the *qaid* (local

lord) and this meant momentary conflicts, but revolts in general were rare (Laroui 1977: 129). Nonetheless, there was a tradition of urban and crowd protest. There was a revolt in Fez in 1818 by commoners (*'amma*) against merchants and *makhzan* which succeeded in thwarting the schemes of Sultan Suleiman (1792–1822) (Laroui 1977: 130). There was a revolt in Rabat in 1844 against Sultan Abdulrahman (1822–1859) and again in Fez in 1873 against the taxes of sultan Hassan I (1873–1894). The last was the longest. It was also carried out by poor and low-status townspeople, and various poorer rural elements integrated into the city economy (such as peasants who sold in the town), and took on the colours of an uprising against the merchants, notables and orthodox religious *ulema* of the city.

The merchants and notables, many of whom benefitted from the *maks* (the tax provoking the grievances) as they served as tax-farmers, viewed the crowds as a ferocious mob, at least in a letter they wrote to the sultan disclaiming responsibility. They spoke of

a day of great tumult . . . the city was full of people coming from everywhere, the towns and the countryside, all furious like lions and tigers . . . Having no judgment they were not able to be stopped except by a strong army . . . they were blind, hot-tempered, deaf, insensible to the existence even of those who exhorted them to calm (Laroui 1977: 129–31).

The *maks* were taxes imposed on primary materials and transactions, imposed by the sultan seeking revenue for centralization and ‘reform’, and the occasion of irregularities and injustices. The uprising was no elite plot, but a revolt of small artisans (the tanners were involved) and traders already organized in guilds with a sense of brotherhood and solidarity. Laroui observes that the opposition of the corporations to the sultan remained very strong throughout the nineteenth century. In Laroui’s terms they were flattened by taxation, impoverished by devaluation, and injured by European competition; nonetheless, these urban economic groups exploited the surrounding countryside, and, as we shall see, the more powerful challenges to the *makhzan* in Morocco were furnished by rural uprisings, involving tribes, brotherhoods, heterodox religious figures and pretenders to the throne. As elsewhere in the region, nonetheless, new impositions and forms of exploitation did not go unchallenged, and were limited by the collective action of those whose consent could not be won.

The people's republic of Kisrawan

In December 1858, a force of Christian Maronite commoners, under the leadership of a humble muleteer, rose up against their feudal lords in the district of Kisrawan on Mount Lebanon, northwest of Beirut. They took the unprecedented step of physically evicting the Khazin family, a Maronite lordly family that dominated the Kisrawan, from their homes and from the region itself. A peasant movement, led by peasants, and acting in the name of the people (*ahali*), 'autonomously sought to carve out their own place ... and to enter the realm of traditionally elite politics' (Makdisi 2000: 97). The popularity of the uprising quickly spread – and impoverished Maronite peasants flocked to its ranks. By late 1859, the republicans were in *de facto* control of most of Kisrawan, and the movement was soon to spread beyond. European elites at the time saw the overall episode in terms of barbarism, fanaticism, of lawless races and tribes (Makdisi 2000: 152). Yet, this was 'the most sustained popular mobilization' in nineteenth-century Mount Lebanon (Makdisi 2000: 97), and surely of the Mashriq as a whole.

At the head of Mount Lebanon's hierarchically organized nobility, and drawn from its leading family, stood the amir, loyal to the sultan. Below the amir were the various heads (*muqata'at*) of the tax-districts (Kisrawan, Matn, Shuf etc.). The leading families belonged to various confessions and faiths. Peasants and artisans, who formed the bulk of the population, whatever their faith, were supposed 'to produce and to do so with diligence' (Makdisi 2000: 43). They also had many obligations. In Kisrawan, 'they presented their shaykhs with a quantity of soap, coffee, honey or tobacco at Easter or on the occasion of the marriages of the shaykhs' daughters, sons or sisters. Villagers could not marry without the permission of their lord' (Makdisi 2000: 43). Holidays on saints days were restricted. And armed men meted out 'onerous' punishments for disobedience.

Tanyus Shahin, who led the uprising from December 1858, was a poor muleteer and blacksmith, a devout Maronite Christian, and almost certainly illiterate, from the district of Kisrawan. He associated with the Lazarist school in Rayfun, obtaining thereby credentials from the French consulate in Beirut allowing him to travel to cities. He kept close company with village priests (Makdisi 2000: 109). His movement – Shahin himself called it a movement (*haraka*), while his

opponents, the Khazins, called it an ‘excitement’ (Makdisi 2000: 102) and Ottoman officials condemned it as ‘unruly gatherings’ (Makdisi 2000: 122) – had a more subaltern character than the risings of 1821 and 1840, enjoying a ‘genuinely popular base’ (Makdisi 2000: 110) among Christians of Kisrawan on Mount Lebanon and Christians living in mixed districts in the Shuf. There was some indirect support from merchants and clergy, but ‘[a]part from wealthier villagers from the northwestern plains of Kisrawan whose commitment was temporary, the bulk of the rebels who permanently adhered to the movement were poor and perhaps landless peasants from the upper south of the area’ (Havemann 1991: 90).

The Maronite Church, a staunch supporter of social hierarchy, was paralysed by the movement which threatened its extensive property holdings, and its monopoly on the representation of the Maronite ‘nation’. The Church also saw the movement as dividing the Christians (Makdisi 2000: 103).

Peasant grievances existed in abundance in regard to local landlords, noble families and tax-collectors, being related to undue fiscal extractions, irregular fees, levies in kind, *corvée* services and so on. These were intensified by land-owners, who had lost income because of the declining fortunes of handmade silk production, and were making higher tax demands and exactions to make up the shortfall (Havemann 1991: 88). An economic downturn in 1856 must have added to feelings of discontent, and profitable land was in short supply (Havemann 1991: 88–9), making exactions even harder to bear. In this pressured context, the Ottoman imperial decree of 1856 promised equality and freedom for all Ottoman subjects, regardless of religion. Disgust at the fact that the Maronite Church was not necessarily serving the cause of oppressed Christian peasants motivated others. Debilitating feuds among Maronite notables (Makdisi 2000: 96) also may have presented an opportunity of sorts, although the Khazin family united in the face of the commoners in December 1858 (Makdisi 2000: 98). Christian peasants looked back with pride on earlier uprisings – in 1840 and 1821. The grievances of the movement were initially presented as ‘the excessive and unjust taxes and humiliating gifts they were traditionally compelled to present to the Khazin shaykhs’ (Makdisi 2000: 96).

The uprising was joined in the name of the people (*ahali*) of Kisrawan. The fighters of 1840 were referred to as the ‘army of the people of Kisrawan’. Delegates and leaders were referred to as representatives

(*wakil*) of the people of Kisrawan. Goods were requisitioned on the authority of the people. Electoral, representative and consultative mechanisms were put in place so that the desires of the people could be implemented. Leaders regularly pointed out that decisions could not be taken without consultation. The movement saw the people not in official terms, as a passive and quiescent flock, represented by others, but as 'an active, unified, discerning and mobilized population willing and able to legitimately represent itself' (Makdisi 2000: 104). Shahin styled himself the 'general representative of Kisrawan' and was addressed as such by partisans in 1859 (Makdisi 2000: 99).

The solidarity of Christians was very much enjoined by Shahin and his armed men. He presented himself, and was perceived as, especially over time, as the 'savior of the common Christian inhabitants of Mount Lebanon' (Makdisi 2000: 97).

One of the most insistent themes of Shahin's uprising was a defence of the rights guaranteed by the Tanzimat, and in particular the 1856 Hatt-i Hümayun, which proclaimed equality to Ottoman subjects regardless of confessional affiliation in regard to law, education, civil service, religious worship and the provision of public security. The Tanzimat implied that the state would no longer discriminate against non-Muslims, but it said nothing about the abolition of social hierarchy or economic equality. Nor were its political implications in a place like Mount Lebanon, where local state power was rooted in genealogy more than confessional belonging, anything but superficial, or at least so elites tended to assume. 'It never occurred to the reformers that the upheavals of reform would provide for a subaltern understanding of the Tanzimat' (Makdisi 2000: 105).

The interpretation taken up in the villages of Kisrawan was far more radical than this at all levels. First, in political terms, Shahin's movement did not push for a more developed notable Maronite representation on the flanks of the Amir. On the contrary, it pushed for the political representation of commoners (who were also Christians) at the level of the district, and the complete political equality of those commoners in regard to the noble families. 'Nobody from the shaykhs' they insisted 'will be an official over us' (Makdisi 2000: 101). These commoners 'represented themselves rather than allowed themselves to be represented' (Makdisi 2000: 97). Although the details never saw the light of day, the implication was a republican and representative system of government.

Second, in more economic terms, feudal exactions and dues were to cease. They aimed at ‘the repeal of oppressive customary obligations and payments, the abolition of forced labor [for noble families,] personal levies (such as gifts), [and] more favorable tenancy terms’ (Havemann 1991: 91). They ‘pressed for an end to the marriage taxes levied by the Khazins, the beating of the *ahali*, and the practice of passing the taxes due from the shaykhs on to the *ahali*’ (Makdisi 2000: 100–1). They sought compensation for previous extortions, and an end to encroachment on the common grazing lands in Kisrawan. They even demanded that the Khazins indemnify them for the costs incurred during the rebellion (Makdisi 2000: 100).

Finally, in social terms, titles, honorifics and humiliating modes of address and so on were to be removed. They insisted that the Tanzimat had abolished ‘distinctions and disdain in the forms of address’ (Makdisi 2000: 101).

Overall, the movement demanded that ‘the [social] station (*manzalat*) of the shaykhs be [equal] to ours without exception’ (Makdisi 2000: 101). The movement aimed to overturn the feudal relations of political, economic and social subordination that existed between the *muqata’aji*-s and the peasants and institute an egalitarian republic.

An executive council (*diwan*), headed by the general representative (*wakil ‘amm*), was formed to take charge of administrative and judicial tasks. Financing remains obscure; what monies there were most likely came from confiscations, as no taxes were levied. Otherwise, villages elected their representatives, who were supposed to look after the ‘common welfare’, and were recallable (Makdisi 2000: 114). The movement never developed much of an armed force. At most, the fledgling republic could put out a few hundred men, armed with old muskets or daggers (Makdisi 2000: 123). There is evidence that women were involved, for example in delivering water to fighters (Makdisi 2000: 124).

The movement aimed to keep the Ottoman forces at bay by maintaining absolute loyalty to the sultan and the Tanzimat, exhort the Maronite Church to protect them in the name of Christian solidarity, and focus on the iniquities of the Khazin shaykhs, while reshaping the social order in Kisrawan through the mass, forceful but non-violent appropriation of the means of production and the temporary eviction of the Khazin shaykhs.

The mass expulsion from the region of the Khazin family, several hundred strong, was successfully effected in January 1859. This was

certainly an innovative and audacious tactic, shocking to elites who had never seen anything like it and who did not know how to react (Makdisi 2000: 97–9). Notables were also physically beaten, but almost never killed. For a long time, the uprising was remarkably non-violent. The only confirmed fatalities occurred in July 1859, when the wife and daughter of a Khazin shaykh were found dead, but the killers were not found (Makdisi 2000: 99). Many petitions and exhortations were sent to the Maronite church and other figures, urging the church to remain faithful to the majority of its flock (Makdisi 2000: 103) and assuring them of the movement's loyalty to the Tanzimat. Shahin's men also cut down Khazin trees, presumably for fuel and other uses, appropriated Khazin harvests, made use of their grazing land, and seized their possessions and weapons. Share-croppers made good on outstanding accounts. Notable houses were not occupied as no one knew when the notables would return, and Shahin's men repeatedly informed them that they were welcome to come back in any case (Makdisi 2000: 100). Booty was taken to Shahin's own house 'by virtue of the authority of the populace', and from there distributed to his followers (Makdisi 2000: 99).

These strategies and tactics had their strengths. The Maronite church was certainly pulled in different directions (Makdisi 2000: 123, 125). For example, under pressure from Shahin's movement, the Church was ready to countenance the abolition of various forms of humiliation, beating, and the institution of elected representatives from villages (Makdisi 2000: 103). Some lower clergy were wooed to the ranks of the rebels. Shahin's growing exhortations to Christian solidarity – 'Return to your religion and stand united' (Makdisi 2000: 108) – were an attempt to win allies among an otherwise indifferent Christian notability. Further, the Ottoman forces, partly restrained by the Europeans for their own reasons, did not immediately move in to crush militarily the uprising (Havemann 1991: 90; Makdisi 2000: 106). Such non-intervention was a *sina qua non* of the movement's survival, as Shahin was not preparing for any sort of guerrilla war.

A popular, largely non-violent, socially radical peasant uprising in the name of the people and a republic gradually morphed into a violent sectarian conflict between Maronite Christians and above all the Druze. This had less to do, arguably, with the absence of the correct structural conditions, or an overdose of false consciousness (Smilianskaya 1966) and more to do with interactions over time and Shahin's

leadership. When the uprising spread to Maronites outside of Kisrawan, by late spring 1859, Christian peasants suddenly found themselves in confrontation with non-Christians, especially the Druze notables. The uprising quickly acquired a confessional colour familiar in Balkan conflicts, that, for all Shahin's personal devotion to the faith, had been absent in Kisrawan. Second, inter-confessional violence, once begun, started to spiral rapidly according to no pre-ordained plan, drawing in Christians, Druze and Shi'a who had nothing to do with the original uprising. A chain of trivial incidents, for example, set off the Druze–Christian battle of Bayt Miri in August 1859 (Makdisi 2000: 112; cf. Porath 1966; Dahir 1988).

Third, Shahin started to embrace rather than resist the Christian confessional colouring of his movement, taking on the title of 'general representative of the Christians' (Makdisi 2000: 110) especially when threatened Christians appealed to Shahin as their hero (Makdisi 2000: 113). Shahin failed to condemn and increasingly condoned confessional attacks against Druze and Shi'a, while accepting the title of 'Bek', in flat contradiction with the egalitarian principles of the original uprising (Makdisi 2000: 124). As champion of a much enlarged constituency, and now outright competitor of the Maronite Church, his prestige was raised, and he may have believed that confession was a potent glue to unify his forces (Makdisi 2000: 110, 123). Finally, amid the intensifying cycle of violence, Christians suddenly discovered that they had brothers in all parts of Lebanon, regardless of genealogy or village, developing a sense of horizontal kinship that implied a unity and strength in the face of their enemies. Not for the first or last time, republicanism and democracy for insiders implied exclusion and hostility abroad. From May and June 1860, there was widespread inter-communal Druze–Maronite fighting. At least 200 villages were destroyed and thousands injured or killed (Makdisi 2000: 127–35; Khalaf 1987).

The Druze emerged victorious following the rout and massacre of the Maronites. The legend of Tanyus Shahin was destroyed as he could not protect his Christian brethren (Makdisi 2000: 140). The Ottoman peace treaty of July 1860 stipulated that 'each person was to return to his place . . . and to take back all his property and lands as it was in the past' (Makdisi 2000: 145). In 'one day they [the republicans] went from being masters . . . of their own destiny to having not the slightest say in shaping the world in which they lived' (Makdisi 2000: 145).

Shahin retreated to Kisrawan utterly demoralized, without allies, and surrounded by Christian refugees 'for which he could do nothing' (Makdisi 2000: 158). He gave up the cause, denuded of his extraordinary audacity, swore obedience to the sultan, and repudiated his own movement as sedition. A few skirmishes with Ottoman troops, and a threat of excommunication from the Maronite patriarch dissolved what remained of the movement. The muleteer 'who had helped turn a world upside down' (Makdisi 2000: 159), and the people's republic of Kisrawan, was finished. The feudal hierarchy was restored.

The transformation of the uprising into a more general sectarian conflict was, as it turned out, the movement's Achilles' heel, as it changed its character and disorganized its strategies and tactics. For all its proclaimed eagerness to fight, Shahin's movement was not militarily equipped to take on the Druze, let alone confront the Ottoman state. Once a more general sectarian conflict was set in motion, whatever the movement gained in numbers could not – or at least did not – compensate for what it lacked in firepower. In the aftermath of the defeat, a weakened movement lost credibility with its new adherents, and was in no position to come to any sort of terms with the Church, the Khazins, and above all the Ottomans.

The peasant uprising of 1858–60 did bring into being a short-lived *de facto* authority, which by June 1859 was being referred to, even by its enemies, as a republic (*jumhuriyya*), the first of its kind in the Mashriq for centuries. The uprising did not spark wider movements in the region. But it did lay the basis, unwittingly, for the Mutasarri-fiyya of Mount Lebanon of 1861.

The 'Ammiyya of 1889

The rising of the common people of 1889 in Jabal Druze involved a group of secondary chiefs and peasants who formed a coalition to challenge the economic and political domination on the Jabal of important sections of the Al-Atrash family. The domination of the Al-Atrash chiefs in the Jabal was itself of nineteenth-century origin – stemming from migration there, especially after the 1860 civil war. The Al-Atrash were involved in the evictions of local peasants, and the subordination of Muslim and Christian villages. They claimed the right to dominate the mountain and plain, in competition with Ottoman authorities and notable families. They thus struck up new dealings with

the new grain merchants from the Maydan, on terms favourable to the Druze chiefs, who also established ascendancy *vis-à-vis* the Bedouin. Nonetheless, these chiefs insisted on supervising the communal division of land, thus interfering in customary arrangements, and in grasping larger shares for them personally, moves which led into evictions and dispossessions (Provence 2005: 33–6).

The result of the uprising was that the ‘power of the great chiefs declined. Peasants earned secure title to their land, or at least to their shares, and the chiefs gave up half their shares, to bring the amount of land they controlled in most villages to no more than an eighth. Involuntary evictions stopped’ (Provence 2005: 36–7). In many respects, this kind of uprising, because of its systemic implications, and its appeal to the state, went further than the moral economy style of protest. Here there were some systemic changes, and the state was more thoroughly a party to the action. Nonetheless, this kind of uprising fell well short of changing the system in a revolutionary way through millenarianism or nationalism.

Insurrections of the Druze, 1899–1910

Between 1899 and 1910, the leading figures in the Druze community mounted six armed insurrections against increased taxation and conscription by the Ottomans (Khoury 1987: 160; Provence 2005: 37). They were defending an autonomy that had been newly carved out through access to property rights and new markets and against the resistance of those they exploited in new ways. These uprisings were thus firmly situated in the political economy of the second half of the nineteenth century, rather than being some defence of the ‘old society’. Against the Ottomans they used new firearms, and the new skills associated with them, the terrain (mountains and deserts), tribal alliances, and codes of honour and bravery (Hassler 1926: 143–4).

The Mahdiyya in Sudan, 1881–1885

In Sudan and the Horn of Africa, a good deal of protest was focused not so much on the Ottoman state, or French imperialism, but on the Egyptian administration (albeit one increasingly backed by the British) and its empire-building projects that went back to the 1820s. Mehmet Ali, drawing on centralized state capacities and a large tax base,

conquered northern Sudan in 1821 in order to destroy the remnants of the escaped Mamlukes and to acquire gold and slaves and soldiers (Holt 1970: 2–3). A substantial state, the Funj Sultanate (1504–1821), along with its rulers and tribal vassals, was broken in the process. High taxation prefaced the 1823–4 revolt, which was ‘smothered in blood’ (Peters 1979: 63). Henceforth, Khartum developed as the centre of Egypt’s administration in Sudan, with the conquest of much of the northeast completed by 1841.

The advent of Isma‘il, who sought to extend dominion in Sudan and to suppress the slave trade, thus aligning himself with British policies, brought a new round of conquest. Isma‘il obtained with British support the cession in 1865 of the ports of Suakin and Massawa (present-day Eritrea) from the Ottoman government. The occupation of the hinterland of Massawa (later called Eritrea) then followed in 1874, while the occupation of Harar in 1875 gave Egypt a brief and precarious foothold on the shore of the Indian Ocean. By the later 1870s, Egyptian rule extended to the Upper Nile and the Equatorial Lakes, to the tributary of the Bahr al-Ghazal and the former sultanate of Darfur. ‘This growing Egyptian pressure in the east, led, not surprisingly, to a war with Abyssinia and so contributed to the bankruptcy which ultimately overwhelmed the *khedive*’ (Holt 1970: 2–3). By the 1870s, tribal leaders in large parts of Sudan had become dependent on the Egyptian administration. They were responsible for the collection of taxes, and could be disposed of at will. Meanwhile, orthodox Islam entered Sudan with the ‘Turco-Egyptian administration’ and hence was associated not only with wealthy, urban elites linked to the state, but also to a form of foreign and Turkish domination (Peters 1979: 63).

Two years after the deposition of Khedive Ismail [in 1879] the Mahdia began. It was a movement of religious origin which was assisted in its development by political, social, and economic stresses in Sudanese society, and which accomplished a political revolution – the overthrow of Egyptian rule and the establishment of an indigenous Islamic state (Holt 1970: 3).

Muhammad Ahmad (d. 1885), the Mahdi, led a rebellion in the 1880s that was able to defeat both the Egyptian forces and then the British and establish a state from 1883 to 1898. The Mahdi proclaimed himself Al-Mahdi in June 1881. He managed to defeat first the Egyptian and then the British garrisons under Hicks (1883), Samuel Baker and then Gordon (1885). His state was ruled by his successor from

1885 until being broken by the British in 1898. The Mahdist state covered an area almost as big as Egypt. It reached in the west to the borderlands of what is now the Central African Republic, in the north to just short of Wadi Halfa and in the east to Suakin on the Red Sea coast.

The Ottoman–Egyptian administration in Sudan was weak in winning the spontaneous consent of the mass of the population. As Holt has it:

Stronger than the tribal and religious systems of the Sudan in material force and formal organization, the Egyptian administration was far weaker in its emotional appeal to the loyalty of the individual (Holt 1970: 13).

With a few exceptions, the Egyptians ruled indirectly through local, tributary tribal chiefs rather than breaking up the tribes. Most of the northern Sudanese tribes ‘looked back to the era of the Funj and welcomed any weakness in the central administration which promised them a partial return to their old autonomy’ (Holt 1970: 16). Such memories of statehood and sovereignty were powerful:

During a political intrigue in Kordofan just before the Mahdia, the chief of the Ghudiyat tribe was incited to revolt against the governor by being reminded that he was ‘a descendant of the Funj, of the dynasty of the Black Sultanate, the kings of Sennar’ (Holt 1970: 17).

The northern Sudanese were frustrated in their political loyalties: they ‘regretted the loss of their tribal independence’ and sought the regulation of local affairs according to tribal law and custom. ‘Egyptian rule was unpopular, not merely by its faults but by its very nature, since it was alien, unremitting, and exacting’ (Holt 1970: 17, 22).

Once the Egyptian administration started to back British-led attempts to abolish slavery, the impositions became not only administrative, but cut into the material interests of many sections of Sudanese society in every part of the country. Heavy taxes were imposed on slave merchants. Command was given to a foreign, Christian colonial official, Sir Samuel Baker. It was generally asserted that ‘slavery was an institution permitted by Islam, and the appointment of a Christian to suppress the trade aroused the religious resentment of the populace generally’ (Holt 1970: 34–5). Baker imposed a series of coercive measures. ‘Thus the extension of Egyptian rule and the measures against the slave trade were associated with an increasing European official

personnel.’ The suppression confronted ‘the ramified influence of the slave traders, the suspicions of the southern tribes, and the unwilling co-operation of a lethargic bureaucracy’ (Holt 1970: 34–5). These impositions and violations alienated many from the Turkiyya in Sudan. After 1877, the Ottoman–Egyptian authorities adopted an ever more proactive stance on the abolition of slavery, while entering a period of weakness related to the indecisive and expensive war with Abyssinia, bankruptcy, and then the suspension by the Khedive Ismail of salaries to officials in Sudan in 1875 until all taxes were collected (Holt 1970: 37). The European dual control in Egypt after 1876 and the deposition of the Khedive Ismail by the British and the Ottoman sultan, signalled a certain weakness at the centre. Divisions appeared among power-holders: rivalry among elites led to a short-lived rebellion in July 1878 which was suppressed (Holt 1970: 38).

The spread of revivalist Sufism in Sudan contributed a key dynamic. Sufi renewal, as elsewhere, went back to teachers in Mecca and Medina. Of Moroccan origin, Ahmad b. Idris Al-Fasi (1760–1837) was probably the most important of these. His disciples, who moved in North Africa and the Arabian peninsula as missionaries and pilgrims, and their descendants, founded and led what became two of the most important Sufi orders in Sudan, the Khatmiyya and the Mirghaniyya (Holt 1970: 19–20). A Medinan-based shaykh, Mohammad Ibn Abdul Karim Al-Sammani (1718–1775) founded another important order, the Sammaniyya, which spread in Sudan through the preaching of Ahmad Al-Tayyib Al-Bashir (1742/3–1824), a renowned *mujaddid* and shaykh. This *tariqa* was especially successful between the Blue and White Niles. Al-Bashir’s grandson, Muhammad Sharif Nur Al-Da’im, was the future Mahdi’s first Sufi shaykh (Holt 1970: 21). Proselytization was carried out by individuals, not necessarily backed in a formal way by the orders to which they belonged. Successful teachers came to be regarded as saints (*walilawliya*) and miracles were attributed to them. Saints were revered as transmitters of holiness (*baraka*). Their tombs became places of pilgrimage; their possessions, relics endowed with sacred power. The headship of orders became hereditary (Holt 1970: 17–18).

While urban, scriptural and orthodox Islam was often distinct from rural, experiential, Sufi and heterodox Islam, the ‘great gulf’ between the personal faith of many Sudanese and the ‘official Islam of the Egyptian administration [and the urban *ulema*]’ (Holt 1970: 17) was

in many ways a result of the Islamic and Sufi revival of the preceding century. Adherence to these forms of the faith, and the organizational structures with which such loyalties were intertwined, were an important element in the background to a ‘revolt against a Muslim government’ (Holt 1970: 17). This background, however, should not be exaggerated. The Egyptian authorities co-opted and ruled through leading religious shaykhs. The Mirghani family were especially favoured, and the Khatmiya was closely associated with Egyptian rule in the Sudan. There was nothing inevitable about the incidence or shape of the Mahdiyya that was to follow.

Muhammad Ahmad (1844–85) was born at Dongola on the Upper Nile in the land of Nuba, and grew up in Karari just north of Khartum. His father was a boat-builder, while the family traced descent from the Prophet. Muhammad Ahmad devoted himself from an early age to religious learning, going to study under the grandson of the founder of the Samaniyya Sufi order in the 1860s. He was recognized for his piety and asceticism, became a shaykh, and travelled the country for religious purposes. In 1870, he moved with his family to Aba Island on the White Nile near Al-Kawwa south of Khartum, built a mosque, and established a reputation. He fell out with his old master in 1878 after objecting, in Islamic revivalist fashion, to dancing and music at a circumcision ceremony. He became leader of a different branch of the Sammaniya in 1878, and established good relations with the notables of the important provincial town of El Ebeid. He developed a reputation for piety, asceticism and charisma among common people and good relations with a number of important tribes.

Muhammad Ahmad then devoted a period to solitary meditation before disclosing his mission on the island of Aba on 1 Sha‘ban 1298 (29 June 1881) (Berque 1972: 142). He wrote letters to various notables, assuming the style of Muhammad Al-Mahdi, and calling on adherents to rally. Initially, he stressed not *jihad* but *hijra*: ‘the flight for the Faith from among the infidels to the Mahdi’ (Holt 1970: 54). Here was a conscious parallel with the Prophet, who had undertaken a *hijra* (emigration) from a hostile Mecca in 622 AD (1 AH) to depart from those who would not accept Islam, and to gather strength in Medina before effecting a triumphant return. The idea of *hijra* as a means of resistance implied not an outright confrontation with the enemy but a withdrawal from abodes deemed Dar Al-Harb and an emigration to locations within the Dar Al-Islam. It was an idea enshrined in the Qur’an:

They will say, ‘We were oppressed in the land.’ The angels will say, ‘Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?’ For those, their refuge is Hell – and evil it is as a destination (4: 97). And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance (4: 100) (cited in Peters 1979: 41, 47–8).

The idea appeared elsewhere in the contentious history of the nineteenth century. Several hundred Muslims emigrated from the region around Constantine in 1893, and from around Tlemcen in 1911. Here there were economic grievances over land registration, as well as fear of being conscripted – a fate which might have involved fighting fellow Muslims in Morocco. Peters notes that the emigration from Tlemcen was the last instance of typically religious resistance against French colonial domination in Algeria (Peters 1979: 61). Further afield, there was a *hijra* from India in 1826 and the Hijrat movement in India in 1920 ‘when tens of thousands of Indian Moslems set out for Afghanistan, following a *fatwa* to this effect’ (Peters 1979: 41, 47–8).

The sequence *hijra–jihad* announced by the Mahdi was ‘characteristic of West African Islamic movements in the nineteenth century’ (Holt 1970: 54 n. 2). The bulk of the Mahdi’s forces in Sudan in the 1880s were drawn from a nomadic cattle-herding tribe, the Baqqara, whose grazing lands reached as far as Lake Chad. The Baqqara would presumably have been familiar with the West African contentious repertoire, and may even have helped bring it to Sudan. The Mahdi called for *hijra* to be done during the sacred month of Ramadan, adding to its divine association and appeal to piously minded constituencies. The call to *hijra* did not just evoke an abstract piety: it battened onto tissues of common sense and widely known living traditions of protest. Holt notes that this call for *hijra* with Faith was a

sanctified version of a traditional Sudanese reaction to oppression – the mass emigration of a tribal group from its territory (Holt 1970: 54).

Flight was also a widespread response to heavy taxation and regulation among the settled peasantry up and down the Nile Valley: its association with *hijra* turned it into a more explosive and revolutionary act. Only when Egyptian troops were sent to arrest the Mahdi was *jihad* declared:

I am the Mahdi, the Successor of the Prophet of God. Cease to pay taxes to the infidel Turks and let everyone who finds a Turk kill him (Holt 1970: 54).

With this declaration, at once religious and political, the Mahdiyya was definitively under way.

For centuries, a mass of beliefs in an Expected Deliverer ‘whose coming will restore the Golden Age’ were to be found among the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities of the MENA (Holt 1970: 22), as well as among Zoroastrian and pagan communities, and in Europe and elsewhere. Mahdi means ‘divinely guided one’. The term *mul s-sa‘a*/Lord of the Hour was often used in North Africa. The idea is that, in times of calamity or oppression, or when the day of judgment draws near, a messiah-like figure will appear in order to put an end to oppression and establish the rule of justice. The appearance of the Mahdi will have its own precursors – catastrophes, signs, and inspired or charismatic individuals. The spread of non-Muslim rule was one of the signs that would precede the coming of the Mahdi (Peters 1979: 42). Ibn Khaldun’s classical formulation of the idea ran as follows:

inevitably there will be manifested at the end of the age a man from the People of the House, who will support the Faith and cause justice to be manifested. The Muslims will follow him, and he will acquire domination over the Islamic realms, and he will be called the Mahdi. The emergence of Antichrist and the subsequent Signs of the Hour, as established in the *Sahih*, will ensue. Jesus will descend after him, and kill Antichrist, or will descend with him [the Mahdi], and assist him [the Mahdi] to kill him [the Antichrist]; and he [Jesus] will take the Mahdi as imam in his prayer (cited in Holt 1970: 23–4).

In Ibn Khaldun’s formulation, the Deliverer will be: (1) from the Prophet’s kin; (2) called Mahdi; (3) will support Faith and justice and restore the unity of Islam; and (4) his manifestation will be one of the ‘Signs of the Hour’, that is, ‘an eschatological event preceding Doomsday’ (Holt 1970: 24). The idea was derived from *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet) foretelling the Expected Deliverer under certain kinds of circumstances (Holt 1970: 24). The notion had become a staple of Islamic eschatology – the study of end times, the day of judgment, and heaven and hell. Yet, the link with end times was not inherent to the idea of a Deliverer, and had only grown up over time as an attempt by orthodox *ulema* to limit the subversive potential against established authorities of those claiming to be the Mahdi (Holt 1970: 29). Among Sunni Muslims, the line could be blurred between Mahdi and *mujaddid* (the renewer of the faith) (Holt 1970: 30).

Millenarian expectations were not confined to the implementation of justice in the purely legal or political sense, but extended to questions of prosperity and welfare. In one tradition cited by Ibn Khaldun ‘a generous ruler shall give abundantly, and neither the heavens nor the earth shall withhold their increase’ (Holt 1970: 28–9). In another, ‘[a]t the end of my Community, the Mahdi shall come forth. God shall send him abundant rain, and the earth shall bring forth her plants. He shall give wealth fairly; the cattle shall abound, and the Community shall be great.’ In another, ‘He shall fill it [the earth] with justice and equity as it was filled with injustice and oppression. The heaven shall refuse nothing of its rain, nor shall the earth withhold anything of her plants’ (Holt 1970: 29).

Sometimes millenarian hopes and expectations were ‘passively held as an inner consolation to the individual, or projected into a vague and indefinite future’ (Holt 1970: 23). In this sense, this idea could be quietist or actively de-mobilizing, where believers were to patiently endure all wrongs and passively await the coming of the Mahdi. The *Tayyibiyyah* Sufi *tariqa* in Algeria in the 1840s employed the term in this sense in order to undermine Abd Al-Qadir’s position, arguing that mobilization was pointless until the Mahdi actually appeared (Peters 1979: 42). At other times, claimants to the Mahdi went unrecognized – as in the two obscure Mahdis from the Nile valley (Khartum and Upper Egypt) in the 1880s mentioned in a tract opposing Muhammad Ahmad of Dongola (Holt 1970: 30–1 n. 3). In other cases, many expected and hoped for the arrival of a Mahdi, but such a figure never appeared – as in Egypt for a few years after the British occupation of 1882 (Berque 1972).

At times, however, of particular strain, arising from alien domination or from the inner tensions of an unstable society, expectation becomes active: the Deliverer, it is felt, will shortly appear, and the floating beliefs are given precise significance through attachment to, or appropriation by, a claimant to this status. Thus there comes into being a movement subversive of the existing political or social order, led by (or at least propagated in the name of) the Expected Deliverer (Holt 1970: 23).

Eschatology had occupied urban scholars and preachers, but was also well known in legends and popular sayings in town and country alike. It was an idea of near-universal import to very wide-constituencies, and part of the common sense and proverbial wisdom of many

Muslims, Sunni and Shi'a alike, from all walks of life. It seems to have been especially important along the Nile and in North Africa.

In Sudan, Muhammad Ahmad claimed that he had been appointed as the Mahdi by a prophetic assembly (*al-badra al-nabawiyya*), an idea familiar generally in the Sufi tradition – only prophets could certify a new prophet. There were also local expectations as to signs and portents. Leaders of the Samaniyya order had asserted that the redeemer would come from among them. Shaykh Al-Qurashi, the previous head of the relevant branch of the Sammaniyya, had said that the Mahdi would ride the shaykh's pony and erect a dome over his grave. The idea that the Mahdi would manifest himself at the turn of an Islamic century was particularly potent in the early 1880s, given that 1 Muharram 1300 (the first day of the new century) corresponded to 12 November 1882.

A sign of the revolutionary framing of the Mahdist project was that Muhammad Ahmad adopted the terminology and practice of the Prophet. He referred to himself as a successor to the Prophet, changing the *shahada* (declaration of faith) to indicate this. He also replaced one of the five pillars of Islam (pilgrimage) with the obligation to undertake *jihad*, and added a sixth pillar: belief in the Mahdiyya. He named his four closest deputies after the four successors to the Prophet Muhammad; he named his followers Ansar (after those who had supported the Prophet in Medina following his *hijra* from Medina), forbidding use of the term *dervish* which applied to other Sufis. This framing implied sweeping change of the kind conveyed by the term revolution, as it implied the founding of a new community, a fundamentally new form of socio-political system. Indeed, the Mahdi may have started out in the Sufi Sammaniyya order, but his radical intention was to supersede and abolish Sufi orders. This kind of framing could only be believed on the one hand, or entirely heretical on the other. In regards to these kinds of claims, there was no 'middle ground'.

The Mahdi did not derive his authority to speak from the *ijtihad* of the scriptural authorities, but claimed instead to receive direct inspiration from God. His was a charismatic and prophetic, not a scriptural authority. His proclamations could thus supersede this or that jurisprudential tradition, including the four Sunni schools of law, heresy in the eyes of most urban *ulema*, some of whom were employed by the Ottoman–Egyptian government and were loyal to the Ottoman sultan.

These critics did not deny the concept of the Mahdi, but aimed to discredit Muhammad Ahmad's claim to it.

The Mahdiyya marched under the banners of Islamic millenarianism in opposition to Ottoman–Egyptian domination. Political power and religious inspiration were woven tightly together. As the Mahdi proclaimed:

Verily these Turks . . . thought that theirs was the kingdom and the command was in their hands. They transgressed the command of [God's] apostles and of His prophets and of him who commanded them to imitate them. They judged by other than God's revelation [i.e. the Qur'an] and altered the Shari'a of Our Lord Muhammad, the Apostle of God, and corrupted the Faith of God and placed poll-tax [*al-jizya* – usually reserved for non-Muslims] on your necks together with the rest of the Muslims . . . Verily the Turks would drag away your men in chains, imprison them in fetters, take captive your women and your children and slay unrighteously the soul under God's protection, and all this was because of the poll-tax, which neither God nor His Apostle had commanded. Moreover, they had no mercy upon the small among you nor respect for the great among you (Holt 1970: 42).

Here the corruption of the true faith and political injustice and tyranny are linked tightly together. Unfair taxation, coercion and the violation of honour are intimately intertwined with the corruption of faith, law and prophecy. Indeed, the Mahdi at other points went out of his way to execrate Ottoman and Egyptian officials and soldiers posted to Sudan as part of a tyrannical Turkish government (Holt 1970: 14). It was said that the Mahdi had long before refused to eat the food provided by one of his early religious teachers as that teacher was subsidized by the government (Holt 1970: 45). The Mahdiyya was framed in terms at once religious and political. The Mahdi did not just propose a new religious community, but at the same moment, a new political order and alternative form of government. This point is highlighted where in the terminology of the movement the 'Mahdiyya' was opposed to the 'Turkiyya' – the Ottoman–Egyptian government.

The authorities at the outset understood that this was a profound threat to their temporal power as well as to the established ways in which they turned to Islam to legitimate their rule, deploying troops at once in order to crush the Mahdi. This terminated the previous strategy of co-optation, whereby the authorities had implicitly recognized the growing status of Muhammad Ahmad by ceasing to levy wood from Aba Island. The declaration of the Mahdiyya was something

different: no longer were the authorities dealing with a pious ascetic and Sufi with a reputation, but a revolutionary challenge against which the only response was military force.

Muhammad Ahmad's movement was not only framed in opposition to religious orthodoxy and Turkish domination, but, unlike Wahhabism, it explicitly opposed the wealthy, the powerful, the high status, and those who claimed a monopoly of the pen and education, especially in the cities, along with their particular tribal allies. This framing did not rely on the terminology of social class, but drew on indigenous, syncretic and living traditions, in some ways comparable to the rugged 'visions of the people' mobilized against the wealthy in England (Joyce 1993). Powerful languages here involved asceticism, world-rejection, and the corruption and vanity associated with wealth and luxury. A glimpse of this comes in the memoirs of one of the Mahdi's key followers. He wrote that, after the fall of Khartoum in 1885:

they opened for him [the Mahdi] the room where all the gold was kept, and there it was – jewellery and guineas and ingots. But as soon as the door was opened, and all the gold glowed at us, the Mahdi, with whom be God's peace, turned his back on it with the quickness of lightning, and left. I stood where I was, and thought about the gold, and remembered the line of Al-Busiri: 'They tried to tempt him with the hills of gold', and I said to myself, 'Here indeed is disdain for the things of this world' (Bedri 1969: 32).

Thus the reader was to understand the importance of the Mahdi's dramatic repudiation of wealth and its temptations.

Consonant with this was the charismatic defence of his humble followers mounted by the Mahdi himself in response to the demand for submission by Yusuf Pasha Hasan Al-Shallali, a key military commander in the Turco-Circassian administration under Giegler Pasha, the new Governor General, on 4 Rajab 1299 (22 May 1882). In this letter, in a context where urban opinion was prone to seeing pastoral nomads as only semi-civilized at best, he extolled the poverty, ignorance and unorthodoxy of the pastoral nomads of the Baqqara cattleherders, one of the important constituencies of his movement:

You say that Our only followers are the ignorant Baqqara and the idolaters. Know then that the followers of the apostles before Us and of our Prophet Muhammad were the weak and the ignorant and the nomads, who worshipped rocks and trees (Holt 1970: 58).

In other words, by analogy with the sanctified histories of those who turned to Islam in its earliest days, he was able to frame the 'ignorant', the 'weak' and the 'nomadic' in terms of the highest social value (true belief), and suture this to potency, in that the Mahdi is reminding the Egyptian general here that it was out of these simple true believers that the Prophetic mission and thence the glories of Islam had been constructed. These sentences suggest powerful, innovative and charismatic framing capacities with which Muhammad Ahmad was endowed. They are also highly suggestive of both the social class, in the broad sense, of his constituencies, and those against whom his movement took aim.

The strategy adopted by the Mahdist movement was a radical one indeed. It involved an outright assault on the established political order, the forms of religious orthodoxy, the ruling classes, their tribal allies, and large segments of the wealthy in the cities and major towns. The new order would be brought about by declared, outright assault on and defeat of the existing order. Whether or not these revolutionary goals were achieved is one question, but the radical strategy, both proposed and largely undertaken in practice, was not in doubt. As the Mahdi also wrote in the aforementioned letter:

As for the *'ulama* and the rich and the people of power and luxury, they did not follow them [the Prophet's supporters] until they [the Prophet's supporters] had ruined their palaces, killed their nobles and ruled them by force ... know that Our going is only the command of the Apostle of God (Holt 1970: 58).

This excerpt is a clear enough indication of a thoroughly non-accommodationist strategy of force and defeat, one read into the example of the Prophet, which, in an act of time-space compression, was to be re-enacted in the present. It was comparable to the mode of action adopted by Al-Hiba in southern Morocco in 1912 as we shall see – while a strategy more distant from that of the Islamic modernist Muhammad Abduh, who was accommodationist towards British rule, the Egyptian state, urban and landed wealth and notability, could hardly be found.

As far as is known, the Mahdi had no explicit theory of guerrilla warfare, or how it could be that small, lightly armed, dispersed and mobile groups linked to local populations could defeat a larger, slow-moving and heavily armed alien foe. The tactics followed by the Mahdi in Sudan were effective precisely because they were guerrilla tactics

with or without such a theory. The summons to make *hijra* during Ramadan was carefully timed in this regard. The Mahdi's dispersed followers could prepare in one month, whereas the 'dilatatory bureaucracy' in Khartoum would not be able to organize countermeasures because administrative and military action would be retarded during the fast. Moreover, in 1881, Ramadan coincided with the height of the rainy season 'when travel by road and navigation by river would be difficult'. Indeed, the second attempt to send a large body of troops against the Mahdi had to turn back in September 1881 because of heavy-rainfall (Holt 1970: 56). In these circumstances, 'the lightly clad, hard-living tribesmen who formed the bulk of the Mahdi's supporters would have the advantage of mobility over the troops of the Egyptian administration' (Holt 1970: 54–5). The forces of the Mahdi were initially armed only with swords, spears, and wooden staffs. They later developed a centralized and disciplined corps carrying firearms. Avoidance of direct, open confrontation on the battlefield, surprise, ambush, harassment, mobility, the knowledge of terrain, the seizure of arms and booty, links to the indigenous population which solved problems of supply and cover were basic to the tactics deployed against the relatively slow-moving and concentrated forces of the Ottoman–Egyptian conscript army, and of the British-commanded columns.

The first military confrontation with the authorities took place when two companies of troops were sent by steamer from Khartoum on 12 August 1881 to arrest the Mahdi. The troops were ambushed, by night, as they filed away from the steamer. They were routed, even though their ambushers numbered only 350 men, and were inferior in firepower, having no firearms whatsoever. The Mahdiyya suffered only twelve casualties (Holt 1970: 55). This was an important victory: it seemed miraculous to the Mahdi and his followers; it triggered the *hijra* into Kordofan (Holt 1970: 55–6). Ambush was again important in securing victory in the second major encounter with the authorities. On 9 December 1881, Rashid Bey of Fashoda's force was ambushed and overwhelmed. Rashid Bey was killed and a large quantity of arms and other booty accrued to the Ansar. The victory was hailed as a miracle and the prestige of the Mahdi was again raised (Holt 1970: 57). It was fortuitous for the Mahdiyya that appeals by Khartoum to Cairo for reinforcements from December 1881 to March 1882, made while Egyptian imperialism was paralysed by the 'Urabi movement, went 'almost unheeded' (Holt 1970: 57). In spring 1882, once Cairo

realized the seriousness of matters in Sudan, ‘the Mahdi had already won his first successes’ and attained a strong position (Holt 1970: 41).

One of the distinctive strengths of the Mahdist movement in Sudan had to do with the revolutionary ideas that stitched it together: what Holt refers to as ‘moral strength’ (Holt 1970: 42). Mahdist ideas, far from being part of the backwardness and weakness of the movement, were in fact capable of rallying a broad constituency under one banner; they were capable of inspiring a deep commitment and motivation. As Holt argues, a key problem for Cairo was precisely that the Mahdiyya was not a mere civil rebellion, like those of Al-Zubayr, Sulayman, or the pretenders in Darfur. Instead, the Mahdi was primarily a religious leader. He had ‘arisen to purge the Muslim world of its faults and to break the power of the infidels’. In other words, he led a *jihad* claiming support of all Muslims (Holt 1970: 41) – drawing on foundational, radical forms of Islam, putatively universal in the social formation as a whole. Such claims, credibly made, gave the movement a powerful spine. For the Mahdi’s followers, these ideas brought into the present, in an act of appropriation and time-space compression, a deliberate re-enactment ‘in their own persons [of] the sufferings and the triumphs of the early days of Islam . . . their consciousness of playing a part in this great drama was an inspiration to them’ (Holt 1970: 54). It is not clear how else it is possible to explain the Mahdi’s refusal of British and Egyptian attempts to turn him into a vassal of the Turco-Egyptian administration, in a region full of such figures, tempted by the seductions of power. Through client-status, guns and means of statehood could be obtained, interests and profits pursued, and prestige acquired: but such vassal-ship would have violated the basic principles and identities on which the Mahdi built his movement. A figure no less august than General Gordon, representing the world’s largest empire, sent the Mahdi in March 1884 a pacific letter appointing him Sultan of Kordofan, urging him to release European prisoners, and giving him a red robe of honour and a tarbush. As Holt writes, the recipient was ‘no puppet prince in exile’ but a ‘religious leader and political master of half the Sudan’. The Mahdi replied:

Know that I am the Expected Mahdi, the Successor of the Apostle of God. Thus I have no need of the sultanate, nor of the kingdom of Kordofan or elsewhere, nor of the wealth of this world and its vanity. I am but the slave of God, guiding unto God and to what is with Him . . . As for the gift which you have sent Us, may God reward you well for your good-will and guide you to the right . . . It is returned to you herewith (Holt 1970: 93).

Gordon's policy vacillated between accommodation and aggression: the Mahdi as Hajj Ahmad of Constantine had done in the 1830s and as Abd Al-Krim was to do in the 1920s, stood firm. The principles which united his movement could not be violated so lightly.

The appeal of the Mahdiyya sapped the loyalty and morale of the Ottoman Egyptian troops:

Against the Mahdi the troops of the Egyptian government fought with divided hearts and uneasy consciences, particularly since the Mahdi's victories seemed to them to bear witness that his was indeed the cause of God (Holt 1970: 42).

Here was a moral strength, capable of motivating and mobilizing an important constituency, whether or not it was dismissed in London as fanaticism (Holt 1970: 42) and by urban modernists as irrationalism and backwardness. Ill-omens and signs of God's will appeared to dog the authorities' campaign. When, for example, the contingents of the Ottoman–Egyptian forces paraded near Khartoum under the German official in Egyptian service Giegler Pasha in preparation for a new attempt to crush the Mahdi in March 1882, 'its well-wishers shuddered to see the great drum of Abdallah Dafa'allah [a tribal chief allied to the Egyptians] fall to the ground from the camel which bore it . . . [and] the men of El Obeid marched out with heavy hearts' (Holt 1970: 57). Like the rainfall which had fallen to stymie the army, this was read in religious mode as an ill-omen and a sign that God was on the side of the Mahdi. When some of the Mahdi's spies were hacked to death in front of the paraded troops 'they embraced martyrdom with such fortitude that the spectators were deeply impressed' (Holt 1970: 57).

The loyalty and adherence that such a mobilizing project could inspire in the local population could generate important intelligence about the enemy. The only reason that the Mahdi was able to ambush the forces of Rashid Bey in December 1881 was because news of their advance was 'brought in by a woman of the Kinana tribe' (Holt 1970: 57). This was not purely a matter of links to an indigenous population considered as monolithic, because the population of Sudan was heterogeneous and often divided.

Once the Mahdist forces created a state, they became, paradoxically enough, easier to crush by conventional military superiority, because at this point they now defended fixed points, and were forced into open confrontations against superior weaponry – in this case machine guns.

The Mahdiyya had attracted attention, from Morocco to Singapore. It demonstrated that a revolutionary religious project could stitch Sufi orders, pastoral nomads, peasantries and townspeople together into new forms of community and state. In the end, this new political community succumbed like Abd Al-Qadir's to colonial violence.

Morocco: tribes, Sufis, pretenders and millenarians

The central government in Morocco was less able to exert sovereignty, or impose new kinds of order and taxation, especially outside the country's cities, than most states elsewhere in the region in the nineteenth century, with the possible exception of Iran. Even though attempts made by the *makhzan* (the central government, literally, 'the treasury') to centralize power, in alliance with various, mostly urban groups, were relatively modest, at least compared to Egypt or Istanbul, a wide variety of mostly rural-based groups (tribes, Sufis, provincial lords, pretenders and heterodox religious figures), were able to hold even these forms at bay, resisting centralization, attempts to raise taxes, and the sultan's effective collaboration with urban *ulema*, merchants, and European geopolitical and economic interests that increasingly accompanied them. When the sultan finally handed over formal sovereignty of the country to the French in 1912, boarding ship to escape the consequences as he did so, even then the levers of power were not in place to guarantee a stable handover to the new rulers.

The authority of the Makhzan in Morocco had long been limited, opposed and sometimes came close to disintegration. In the early seventeenth century, an uprising had played an important role in putting an end to a state-led attempt to impose a Spanish–Caribbean-style sugar-plantation economy based on black slave labour (Le Tourneau *et al.* 1972: 78). The short-lived republic of Bu Ragrag was founded by Andalusian Muslims near Rabat in the 1610s. One group 'formed a self-governing community, ruled by an elected governor who held office for a year with the assistance of a *diwan* of elders'. These citizens also engaged in piracy and were reputed to hate Christians (Abun-Nasr 1987: 221). During the first half of the eighteenth century, the Alawi dynasty, which originated in the seventeenth century, became the plaything of the slave troops who were originally brought in to protect it. It was during these years that the well-known notions of bilad *al-makhzan* (the lands under the control of the sovereignty,

taxation and regulation of the central government), and the *bilad al-siba* (the lands outside of that direct control), came into being.

On the other hand, the centralization of the second half of the eighteenth century under Mawlay Muhammad b. Abdulla (1757–90) was relatively successful. At that time, when European consular and debt pressure was less, and where different models of state power prevailed, centralization was armoured by important forms of consent: for example, during 1775–82, a period of conflict, plague and famine ‘The sultan had large amounts of wheat imported and sold without profit. He reduced taxes, had bread distributed free to the poor, and gave money to tribal leaders in order to enable them to cater for the pressing needs of their groups’ (Abun-Nasr 1987: 240). No ‘savage God’ of liberal economic doctrine impeded, as in British India and Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the sultan’s readiness to ‘interfere’ in market forces to engage in provisioning during a time of famine. On the other hand, Mawlay Suleiman’s (r. 1792–1822) high-handed treatment of certain Berber tribes and religious figures, and his flirtation with Wahhabist doctrine, was a cause of resistance to his powers by tribes and various Sufi orders in the 1810s. Under royal sponsorship, there was an attempt to reinvigorate traditional theology and purge it of heterodox influence. The court launched a campaign against Sufi brotherhoods as decadent and prone to excess, and against saints’ cults, and strove to ‘prevent religious shrines from granting protection to refugees from *makhzan* justice’ (Burke 1976: 37).

The sovereignty of the sultan as ruler of Morocco and as caliph and Amir Al-Mu’minin of the Muslim community at large was important in accounting for the overall coherence of Morocco as a political community. But underneath such an over-arching principle, the central government was weak and the forms of local autonomy strong. It was widely held and practised, for example, that the shrines and mausoleums of holy men or the founders of revered lineages, offered sanctuary to those sought by the *makhzan*. The shrine of Mawlay Idriss, who brought Islam to Morocco in 789 AD, for example, in the hill-top town of Meknes, was a place of pilgrimage and of sanctuary for those who had incurred the wrath of central authorities (cf. Laroui 1977: 160). The bureaucracy was relatively small throughout the century (Burke 1976: 17). State power, in turn, was limited by the low degree of urbanization. In Morocco, the cities, which were identified with the *makhzan*, were relatively small in demographic terms. As late as 1905,

it was estimated that Morocco's population of around 5 million included an urban population of only 230,000 souls (Burke 1976: 3). Urban notables were very far from controlling the countryside through effective access to property or rights to the surplus, as in the Mashriq and much of Egypt. In place of a settled peasantry in easily patrolled plains fed by navigable rivers, and railways used by the forces of coercion, administration and taxation (as in Egypt), in Morocco were mountains, hills, desert regions, non-navigable rivers, rugged coasts, powerful provincial lords and numerous clans and tribes. These areas were protected against incursions from without by the low capacity of the transport infrastructure, and endowed with a strong sense of the ways in which their own forms of power and consent, tribal leaderships and tribal customs, holy lineages and local ways of living, should determine how things were done.

Forms of local cohesion were enhanced by the fact that there was no entrenched hereditary aristocracy – 'few families or groups enjoyed substantial power for more than three generations' (Burke 1976: 15). Class conflicts were moderated by the 'obligation of wealthy patrons to defend even their humblest servants, the traditional rivalries between notables, and the periodic re-division of land among the adult males of the clan that was practised in many tribes' (Burke 1976: 9). The fact that Morocco's capacities to disrupt the economic interests of Europeans who appeared there deterred those interests from coming in the first place. After the 1880s, tribal uprisings were greatly assisted by the use of smuggled Remington and Winchester repeater rifles, which stripped the *makhzan* of the one advantage it had traditionally had – superior firepower (Burke 1976: 32–3). In general terms, military engagements between the government and this or that tribe or movement were by no means decided in advance.

After the death of Mawlay Suleiman (r. 1792–1822), there was a period of heightened conflict, just as there was after the defeat at the hands of the French at the Battle of Isly in 1844. On that occasion, the sultan showed himself as Amir Al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful) and caliph (head of the Islamic community) to be incapable of protecting the Muslim faithful against the power of the Christian French; his more temporal duty to provide security and protection to his flock was also in doubt. The sultan had been drawn into the battle by the resistance in Algeria to the French. The defeat meant the dishonourable imposition of the humiliating 'infidel' Treaty of Tangier

(10 September 1844). Article 4 of the Treaty declared Abd Al-Qadir, a hero in the eyes of many, to be an outlaw. As a result of the Treaty, 'serious tribal revolts sprang up in many parts of Morocco, forcing the sultan to focus his efforts on putting them down' (Danzinger 1980: 66–7). This pattern was repeated following the defeat of Tetouan at the hands of the Spanish in 1860, except that, on this occasion, the tribes were more significantly bolstered by heterodox religion in the shape of one of the most important Mahdist uprisings for a long time. For this radicalism, '[t]he criticism of the inertia of the Sultan seems to be the fundamental reason' (Laroui 1977: 158 n. 91).

After this defeat, the Moroccan elite started to make more significant efforts to centralize power and to strengthen the administration, which in turn linked it more closely to European geopolitical and economic interests, not to mention European ideas, and involved it in an assault on spheres of autonomy that it did not in reality have the capacity to take on (Burke 1976: 20). The 'reforms' were provocative not only because they were launched by a weak centre aiming to extend its power, but because they signalled to many a deviation from the faith. As one scholar who opposed them, Al-Nasiri, put it of the reformers: 'They want to learn how to fight to protect the faith, but they lose the faith in the process of learning how [to protect it]' (cited in Burke 1976: 38–9). Not only this, but in practice 'reform' was carried out selectively, involved double-standards and violent repression.

In the 1890s and 1900s, incidences of extortion and corruption in the collection of taxes increased and, in the early 1900s, 'The needs for tax revenues of the *makhzan* ... caused the rural administration to become progressively harsher and more unjust in its collection of taxes. Movements of rural protest appeared with more frequency' (Burke 1976: 34). There was a small-scale and mostly successful *jihād* repulsing a Spanish territorial incursion from Melilla into the Rif in 1893 (Burke 1976: 30). The sultan, Mawlay Hassan (1873–94), failed to support it for fear of being drawn into a losing military confrontation with the French (Burke 1976: 30). His authority and prestige took a beating as a result. With the death of Hasan I in 1894, tax rebellions became more frequent in the countryside (Burke 1976: 36). This was a deployment, under new conditions, of a familiar repertoire of contention acting to check over-weaning extraction as noted by Burke:

The local *qaid* tended to exact as much in taxes and extraordinary levies as the population under his control would put up with. The principal check against abuses of this system lay in the revolt of the people, or in the alienation of the local notables. Tribal administration thus often consisted of a familiar cycle of 'squeeze', 'revolt' and 'repress' (Burke 1976: 15).

Older traditions of protest were thus drawn on in the face of new and more systematic pressures over taxation.

The increased burdens that the *makhzan* was imposing upon the population, and its weakness in the face of French power, especially after the French were given a free hand in Morocco after the Entente Cordiale of 1905, and thus accelerated their commercial and military penetration, along with various economic problems, were important in driving the three great uprisings of the early 1900s, led in turn by the heterodox and charismatic Abu Himara, during 1902–3, the pretender to the throne, Al-Hafiz, during 1905–8, and the millenarian of Mauretanian origin, Al-Hiba, during 1912.

The rising of Abu Himara or El-Rogui as he was also known, ran from autumn 1902 to January 1903. Abu Himara was a skilled thaumaturge, claimed to be Al-Mahdi, and propounded the necessity of *jihad*. He had also been a student engineer in government service, had links to a *qaid* (provincial governor) by marriage, and claimed to be none other than the usurped but 'rightful' sultan, Mawlay Muhammad, whose claim to the throne had been usurped by Abd Al-Aziz (r. 1894–1908). His attempt to seize and transform the reigns of state power was defeated militarily in 1903, but he maintained a zone of independent rule until 1909 (Burke 1976). His ultimate demise did not owe above all to the power of the *makhzan*. Abu Himara 'was really defeated by the local tribal alliances, not by the sultan. The tribes were unwilling to submit to direct rule [and taxes] from outside' (Pennell 1986: 33).

The rising of Abd Al-Hafiz ran from 1905 to 1908 and succeeded in deposing Abd Al-Aziz and putting Al-Hafiz on the throne. His uprising proposed a better model of what existed but not a new model. The movement developed amid the recession of 1905–1907, crop failures, livestock deaths, and the lack of rainfall in 1906 which led to widespread famine and epidemics. 'At Fez, rioting was averted only by the massive importation of grain from Marseilles' (Burke 1976: 90). This concession was only a palliative. The 'fierce opposition' to the sultan in the mosques and brotherhoods broke out finally

in the most substantial urban uprising of the period in Fez against Abd Al-Aziz in December 1907 and continued into 1908. Just as in 1873, the Sufi brotherhood was important, in this case the Kattani order, which recruited numerous new members (Laroui 1977: 130). The reigning sultan, Abd Al-Aziz, was also seen as a Europeanized dilettante, who played with European trinkets, engaged in foolish dalliances (such as riding bicycles), and handed out concessions to European opportunists, when he should have been protecting the state. The crisis was sharpened by the fact that, by 1904, French policy had shifted from encroachment to conquest (Balfour 2002: 6), posing an intense threat to the Moroccan state itself. Abd Al-Hafiz carried half the country with him on his ascent to the throne on the promise of the protection of Morocco and Islam from the French.

In the event, Sultan Abd Al-Hafiz signed over Morocco to a French protectorate in March 1912. Once in power in 1908, he discovered that the Moroccan *makhzan* was more or less in the hands of European creditors and the ascendant military power of France, no longer obstructed by British or German manoeuvres, to whom recourse was no longer effective. He turned his back on his erstwhile supporters, even in ideological terms, eschewing the heterodox and religious concepts which had mobilized the uprising which put him in power, and drew somewhat on Arab liberal currents and the constitutional movement in Istanbul to legitimate his rule. This was something new in Morocco: a sultan turned not to the traditional *ulema*, nor to the Al-Muwahhidun, nor to Islamic modernism and pan-Islam, but to constitutionalism and liberalism. In this case, it signalled little more than a willingness to co-operate with France. But, unlike in Egypt, the Moroccan urban elite drew far less wealth from European-linked commerce and investment, meaning that those ready to go along with a policy of collaboration were far fewer in number.

The sultan's betrayal of the Moroccan sultanate, of Islam, and of his own supporters triggered a mutiny at Fez and the *jihad* of Al-Hiba in the south. The betrayal was so profound because it eviscerated the very meaning of the most universal principles of authority in the state: it implied at once the renunciation of the temporal powers and religious meaning of sultan-caliph. The crisis of authority may have been more intense in Morocco, because its ruler combined the positions of sultan, caliph and sharif (descendant of the Prophet). The sharifian claim had

been important to the Alawi dynasty since its inception in a way that had not applied to previous Moroccan rulers. In Egypt in 1882, for example, these posts were divided between Istanbul (sultan and caliph), *khedive* in Egypt (viceroy of the sultan) and *ashraf* (descendants of the Prophet) – a group which included neither Ottoman sultan-caliph nor Egyptian *khedive*. Thus in Egypt in 1881–2 one could be a supporter of both the sultan-caliph and Colonel ‘Urabi, but an opponent of the Egyptian *khedive*. In Morocco, the sultan’s position could hardly be so minimized. Holding all these positions, his dereliction was felt profoundly. Nor could the sultan claim that he was seeking protection from the French against powerful neighbours as the ruling families of the Persian Gulf could as they struck deals with the British, because of the real threats posed by Saudis, Ottomans and, to a lesser extent, Iran.

Al-Hiba was the son of the renowned Mauretanian religious and tribal warrior, Ma’ Al-’Aynayn, who had defended the emirate of Adrar against the depredations of French colonialism from the 1880s onwards, only succumbing to defeat in 1910. Al-Hiba’s movement was the most revolutionary of all the Moroccan movements so far. ‘[I]t was a revolution’, writes Burke, ‘aimed at nothing less than the overturning of the existing political regime, that of the great *qaid*-s and the *makhzan*, and the substitution of a new society modelled on the early Islamic community of Medina’ (Burke 1976: 202). Extraordinarily, the sultan Abd Al-Hafiz, who had betrayed the movement that brought him to power, notified Al-Hiba of his abdication, implicitly passing him the baton of *jihad* against the French usurpation. The radicalism of Al-Hiba’s movement was a mark of his origins and beliefs, but it also reflected the depth of discredit to which the *makhzan* had sunk. It was no longer a new pretender to the sultanate that Morocco required, as Abd Al-Hafiz and Al-Rogui had declared, but an entirely new socio-political order. That Al-Hiba was able to win support for such a project owed much to the crisis in the authority of the *makhzan* that the French protectorate provoked.

Tunisia before 1881

Where state centralization was less violent, and where it took more ‘national’ forms, such as in Tunisia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, protests against central power were less marked. The

Husaynid dynasty, which was to rule Tunisia until 1957, was founded in the process of repulsing the Algerian invasion of 1705. The dynasty developed the Beylicate less as a ‘foreign military caste’ – as in Algeria – and more as a ‘quasi-national monarchy’, ruling through local leaders (Abun-Nasr 1987: 173). The drawing up of the constitution of 1860 was an elite affair, resulting not from popular mobilization. On the other hand, the rebellion that broke out in Tunisia in spring 1864 was the exception that proved the rule: it was a direct response to the decision of the Tunisian government in December 1863 to increase revenue by doubling the poll-tax. The uprising began among the tribes and spread among the urban population whom the Bey had alienated by his decision in 1864 ‘to levy the poll-tax on the inhabitants of towns usually exempted from it: the capital, Susa, Munastir, Sfax, and the religious capital of the country Qayrawan’. In addition, categories of people previously exempt from taxation were now taxed, including the *ulama* and soldiers. Britain, France and Italy sent squadrons to ‘protect’ their subjects and interests in April 1864. The Bey made promises seeking to control the situation: the reduction of taxes, the appointment of local chiefs as governors in place of Turkish officers, and the abolition of secular tribunals which *ulama* resented. By the end of the year, several of the tribes that took part in the rebellion had been induced to give up their arms (Abun-Nasr 1987: 280–1).

Istanbul, debt crisis and constitution, 1876

The fiscal crisis of the Ottoman state in 1876, rooted in indebtedness to European financiers, threatened the hard-wiring of the Ottoman state and called into question the basis of its administration and the high-handedness and autocracy of those who ran it. It simultaneously raised the spectre of European control over some section of the finances of the Ottoman state, which posed basic questions about the integrity and autonomy of the empire. Before payments on the debt were suspended in July 1876, however, a socio-political crisis more political than fiscal struck. News of the Bulgarian atrocities hit the new Istanbul press in May 1876. Massacres of helpless Muslim villagers were perpetrated as a result of the territorial designs on Ottoman territory of expansionist European powers, the Russians foremost among them – massacres which vivified the dereliction and weakness of the Porte in protecting

fellow Muslims and its own subjects threatened by European imperialism. A popular sense of injustice was stirred further by the distortion of events in a European press seemingly thirsty for Muslim blood. The crisis mobilized both liberal and conservative opponents of the Tanzimat. The former opposed autocracy and demanded a constitution – just as the Porte tried to censor the clamouring press; the latter opposed un-Islamic innovation and demanding a pan-Islamic policy and a renewed Caliphate. Both constitution and Khilafa were touted as the basic ways to save the ship of state from European intervention and internal break up and secession.

Students of religious schools (*softas*) left classes on 8 May 1876 and joined mass meetings attended by *ulema* and townspeople at the main mosques and public squares of Istanbul, denouncing the government for cowardice in the face of large-scale massacres of Muslims and European intervention (Shaw 1977: 163). Sultan Abdulaziz attempted to appease the movement by appointing a new *şeyhulislam*, but this only encouraged the students' demands. To obtain popular support, the new ministry rejected the recent financial arrangement with foreign bankers (Shaw 1977: 163). The army then moved to depose Sultan Abdulaziz by surrounding his palace on 30 May with two battalions. He was replaced in short order by Murat V. The latter mentioned the will of the people in his accession speech. It was the first time since 1807 that a sultan had been deposed in a politics that went far beyond the palace. All payments on the foreign debt were suspended in July 1876. Midhat Pasha was pushing for a constitution with encouragement from the British ambassador (Shaw 1977: 164–5). In August 1876, Murat V in turn was deposed as insane. Abdulhamid II succeeded him on the promise of a constitution which was duly promulgated under Midhat Pasha, who argued in instrumental fashion that the constitution would serve as a foil to deny the Europeans a pretext for intervention (Shaw 1977: 157–74). The first Ottoman constitution was granted very much on the basis that it would defend the sultan's domains against Great Power machinations. Although there was a link to the uprisings and protests over the massacres of Muslims in the empire, in every other sense, the constitution descended from on high. Those protesting under the banners of constitutionalism remained an elite minority, and it was the popular call for pan-Islam that Abdulhamid II was to take up and make the basis of his legitimacy.

Strikes before unions, parties and socialism

In 1863, coal miners staged a walk out over pay and conditions at the Zonguldak coal mines on the Black Sea coast of Anatolia. It was perhaps the first labour strike in the history of the region (Karakışla 1995: 20). In February 1872, there was a strike by telegram workers in the Beyoğlu Post Office in Istanbul, and during 1872 and 1873 there were strikes involving hundreds of workers on Ottoman railways and in the Maritime Arsenal in Istanbul. In October 1878, workers employed in tailor shops in Istanbul left their jobs, demanding a wage increase of 70 per cent (Karakışla 1995: 20–1). In the 1870s, there were a number of substantial strikes by journeymen weavers over wages paid by masters operating within merchant-dominated putting-out systems in Damascus (Vatter 1994). In 1882, coal-heavers working in the docks of Port Sa‘id in Egypt went on strike over wages and conditions (Beinin and Lockman 1998). There were strikes by porters on the docks in Beirut, Istanbul and Salonica in the early 1900s. In 1907, the cab-drivers of Cairo organized and carried out a strike involving thousands over a heavy-handed regulatory intervention into their trade by the colonial state (Chalcraft 2004). By the first decade of the twentieth century, strikes, walk outs and labour stoppages, whereby workers of various kinds protested in order to negotiate the pay, conditions, organization, regulations and extra-economic coercion that they encountered in work-places or at the hands of the state, addressing those who organized and controlled their labour, whether bureaucrats, private capitalists or state officials, became a by no means atypical or peculiarly new occurrence in the Ottoman empire and Egypt.

Early strike action and work stoppages and other forms of labour protest were undertaken by a wide variety of social groups of varying backgrounds in town and country alike. Highly stigmatized silk-spinning women, often from low-status village families, organized some strikes on Mount Lebanon in the 1890s to improve their ‘appalling sweat-shop conditions’ (Beinin 2001: 64; Khater 1996). Machine-breaking, which first appeared in the Ottoman empire in 1839, was pioneered by women, and was used by female textile workers on a number of occasions, for example, in 1851, at Samokov (Karakışla 1995: 20). Jews were prominent in Ottoman Salonika (Quataert 1995). Several factories employing conscripted peasants were burned

to the ground by suspicious fires in the 1830s and 1840s in Egypt (Tucker 1985: 144). The coal-heavers of Port Sa'id were rural–urban migrants, closely connected to their villages of origin, and mostly Nubian or Sudanese (Chalcraft 2001). Many of the coal-miners of Zonguldak were provincial villagers and minors drafted as conscripts to provision the state (Quataert 2006). The cigarette-rollers of Egypt, who struck in 1899 and subsequently, were mostly Greek-protected subjects. The telegram-workers of Istanbul were minor civil servants. The strikers in the weaving sector in Damascus were mostly journeymen whose wages and chances of obtaining a master-ship had been reduced.

Lockman has suggested that various forms of social consciousness informed workers' collective action in Egypt before the early 1900s: guild solidarity, popular Islamic notions of justice, notions of equity and concepts of masculinity (Lockman 1994a: 186). For such a diverse sociology, what Beinin called '[t]heir radically different life experiences and mentalities' (Beinin 2001: 69), an emphasis on variety must be plausible. Studies of the sorts of identities and principles that informed early strike action, nonetheless, are rather thin on the ground, as well as sources. The existence of new forms of heteronomy associated with new large-scale enterprise did not necessarily translate in any automatic way into new forms of worker consciousness. The most plausible hypothesis must be that, prior to the 1900s, at least among Ottoman subjects, it generally did not: workers already had access to a rich moral economy, and it was this that informed their protests. The term for worker – *'amil* – continued to mean something like agent, someone charged with carrying out a task (Lockman 1994a). Strike action was most likely undertaken according to similar sets of principles and identities that obtained among other townspeople and peasantries who faced tyranny and injustice in town and country alike. The evidence cannot bear a back-projection of labour socialism into the nineteenth-century MENA region. The justice of the ruler, the protestor as loyal subject, the search for redress in the face of violations of faith, justice, state regulations, custom, egalitarian tradition and forms of local autonomy, and opposition to injustice, tyranny, treachery, greed and ambition, were the by no means flimsy identities and principles that informed and drove the emergence of this new repertoire of contention. Such indeed were the watchwords of a number of petitions and reports submitted by the coal-heavers of Port Sa'id to the central

authorities in the 1890s and later (Chalcraft 2001). The Cairo cab-drivers presented themselves to the government as those who were wronged by arbitrary punishments, heavy fines, and an inability to carry out their trade or eat decent food. During the nineteenth century, few strikes were carried out by those who saw themselves as workers, or as belonging to the working-class, or still less by those committed to revolutionary socialism. Strike action preceded these forms of consciousness, and was most likely rooted in the ways that new forms of production and state control violated existing tissues of moral economy.

Strikes were a highly transgressive act. They were banned, along with all forms of labour organization, almost everywhere in the region. The Ottoman Police Regulation Law of 1845, for example, stipulated that ‘the associations of workers must be removed, and . . . [the possibility of] revolutionary events should be prevented’ (Karakişla 1995: 30). The law was a word-for-word translation of the French police law of June 1800, and was used for suppressing labour strikes and demonstrations. While revolution may have been far from the minds of those who protested, the authorities, not for the first time, exaggerated the level of the threat, fearing socialism, and acted accordingly. Strike action in the Ottoman empire before 1908 was invariably met with repression. Under Abdelhamid II, even the use of the words for strike (*tatil-i eşgal*) was forbidden in the press.

Moreover, educated opinion had little time for strike action. In Egypt, the renowned jurist Muhammad Abduh expressed a relatively benign view when he suggested in 1904 in Egypt that strikes should be judged on their merits according to Islam and the public interest (Lockman 1994a: 175). More common among Egypt’s educated classes was dismissal. In 1894, for example, on hearing of a strike in Port Sa‘id, Muhammad Farid, then an official in the prosecutor’s office at the national courts and later Mustafa Kamil’s successor as leader of the Nationalist Party, commented in a highly unfavourable judgment that ‘this European disease has spread to Egypt’ (Lockman 1994a: 171–2).

The organization of protest was relatively informal and fleeting. ‘Trade unionism was very weak, almost non-existent [in the Ottoman empire] before 1908’ (Karakişla 1995: 26). There were some Ottoman workers’ aid societies, formed in the 1860s and 1870s, mostly by Italians or Greeks, but these do not seem to have played a role in

organizing strikes, at least among Ottoman subjects (Karakışla 1995: 26). Instead, strikers had to rely on their own means of informal organization, and visibility or continuous organization was neither tolerated nor possible. The first worker's organization that also exhibited signs of class consciousness was established illegally in 1894 by workers in the Tophane factories, employing 4,000 workers, at the Ministry of War. The Ottoman Workers' Society (*Osmanlı Amele Cemiyeti*) elected a board of eight from among their number, and made contacts with Young Turks exiled in Europe. In 1895, its activities were discovered by the regime and the board exiled. Before 1908, further attempts to organize were also repressed (Karakışla 1995: 26). Strikes in Egypt among local subjects were organized on an informal basis and without organizations until the turn of the century. Before the 1900s, strikes, stoppages, or acts of machine-breaking, arson or sabotage were not formally organized by unions or parties, and they were more likely to be dismissed than encouraged by the urban intelligentsia.

Urban retailers and artisans had a tradition of shutting their shops in protest at taxes or regulations, a work stoppage of sorts, a tactic which must have informed new forms of strike action. The tradition of flight from over-taxation and conscription was also important among workers who were drafted in to work in Mehmet Ali's factories in the 1830s and 1840s. Some 'ran away' from their places of work, stating that their taxes exceeded their wages. In a case from Qina province in Egypt in 1844, the governor of Isna responded to the absconders by raising daily wages for workers' 'comfort' and to end the problem of flight (Abul-Magd 2013: 91–2). This model of collective action was close to strike action, and surely informed the strike repertoire. Later strikes were complemented by other, less overt, and sometimes less collective strategies: flight, failure to show up for work, avoidance of dangerous tasks, individual refusals to work under given conditions, and so on (Quataert and Duman 2001). While repression was often meted out, strikers did have genuine powers of institutional disruption. They could not be ignored because employers needed their workers to work in order to realize profits; governments could only avoid at their peril their responsibility to maintain systems of extraction and provision. Dismissal was costly for employers and not always a viable option. Workers were able to win concessions on numerous occasions on pay and conditions, although sometimes at the cost of the

repression of their incipient leaderships. In Damascus in 1879, for example, more than 3,000 of the city's 4,000–5000 journeymen weavers struck to protest a cut in piece work rates. 'To ensure that all journeymen honoured the strike, militants threatened potential strike breakers and cut threads mounted on looms to keep them from working' (Vatter 1994: 3). After a four-week stoppage, the masters re-instated the old pay rates, and the journeymen returned to work. Workers in the abortive Qina coal-mines protested their irregular wages in 1858, successfully obtaining the promise of regular wages from the governor of Qina, and, following accidents, instructions from Sa'id Pasha to the foreign concessionaire to improve safety (Abul-Magd 2013: 107–8).

We should not miss the way labour protests went in search of the state, which they hoped would be the main agent that would resolve their problems, amid the failure of local or de-centralized organizations, such as guilds. Migrant coal-heavers in Port Sa'id, for example, looked increasingly to the state to regulate disputes over labour-contracting, the rates paid by the shipping companies, the miserable and over-priced state of the food that they were forced to purchase in the docks, and the exploitative practices of their labour contractors (Chalcraft 2001). Such mobilization, no less than petitioning, contributed to, rather than hindered, the ongoing centralization of the state and the development of its powers.

The 'Urabi movement, 1881–1882

In July 1882, a patriotic and constitutional movement led by an Egyptian-born colonel in the army, Ahmad 'Urabi, stood at the helm of the Egyptian state. The *khedive*, Egypt's now only nominal ruler, sought refuge with the British, who were occupying Alexandria. Popular mobilizations were breaking out all over the country in the face of a looming British occupation – *ulema* were calling the faithful to arms, peasants were seizing land, artisans were demonstrating in the streets, and urban crowds were seizing European property. No more was the dynastic and modernizing rule of the Khedive Isma'il, seemingly impregnable in the mid-1870s, backed by the Ottoman sultan, a rubber-stamp Chamber of Deputies, the European powers, and a strong, Turco-Circassian elite. In its place was a Common Law Assembly (*majlis al-'urfi*), arrogating to itself the powers to govern, justified

by reference to the will of the Egyptian people, horrifying the Great Powers, and led by an Egyptian *fellah* from the army and his allies among Egyptian-born merchants and wealthy provincial farmers.

The revolutionary situation was triggered by the debt crisis of 1876, and the divisions and manoeuvring within the state, and the European control that ensued. But it was pushed forward by the coming together of the 'Urabi movement by September 1881, the gains made by that movement over subsequent months, the threat and then the reality of a British bombardment and invasion in June and July 1882, and the popular mobilizations, well beyond the control of the 'Urabists, that arose in this *status quo*-shaking context. The revolutionary situation did not, as it turned out, contain a cohesive revolutionary movement adequate to the moment, and was terminated with indecent speed. The (second, much larger) British invasion of early September 1882 defeated 'Urabi's forces at Tal Al-Kabir and all too easily repressed the scattered popular mobilizations that remained.

For at least the first five years of the drama, from 1876 to 1881, it is not possible to speak of an 'Urabi movement as no such cohesive socio-political movement existed. Instead, the pre-history of the movement was marked by the crisis of Khedive Isma'il's state which, egged on by consuls and European businessmen, had spent its way into a debt default by 1876. The debt crisis paved the way for sharpening divisions and manoeuvres among ruling elites and segments of the state, and the advent of European control of the treasury, which taken together operated, partly inadvertently, and certainly dialectically, to develop on the one hand the forces of the Chamber of Deputies (established 1866), the fledgling liberal and patriotic press, and notions of constitutional government, and, on the other to upset the army, which had grievances of its own.

First, the Debt Commission directly threatened Isma'il's previously uncontested control of the state, and, because it meant European and Christian control over Egypt, heavily damaged his prestige. This led him to make new alliances as he fought for his position. In seeking to claw back revenue and power in the face of European control, Isma'il reconvened the Chamber of Deputies in 1876 (Hunter 1999: 210–11), a Chamber that he had largely ignored (and failed to convene) in the early 1870s. The *khedive* even temporarily supported (in 1879) aggrieved junior officers in the army, and sponsored journalism 'in hopes of gaining help in his battle against Egypt's creditors' (Hunter

1999: 192). Isma‘il proved too independent for the Europeans, who had him deposed in 1879 via a *firman* from the sultan. The puppet Tawfiq (1879–92) was put in his place.

Second, the debt crisis precipitated grievances in the army because pay and privileges were cut amid austerity and 1,600 officers were threatened with the sack. A satirical song circulated in Cairo: ‘The Egyptian troops, Because of lack of payment, Their tails [are] hanging down, Let their ears drop, They separated from their wives’ (Schölch 1981: 65–8). Likened to donkeys, and seen as incapable of providing for their wives, the army was also a site of considerable discontent, focusing on the tension between the senior and privileged ranks of Turco-Circassians, and the junior ranks of Egyptian born soldiers and junior officers, who faced discrimination and were often contemptuously referred to by the Turks as *fellahin*/peasants. In February 1879, petitions were written and a demonstration was organized, with the soldiers focusing much of their ire on the European debt controllers (Schölch 1981: 65–8, 90–1; Hunter 1999: 179, 215). These grievances could not simply be ignored, Isma‘il was in any case in tacit support, and action was promised.

In convening the Chamber, and appealing to ideas of popular consultation, Isma‘il created more substance than he intended (Cole 1999: 30–1). The Chamber of Deputies (*majlis shura al-nuwwab*) had been established in 1866 in the crucible of centralization and extraction: through it, Isma‘il sought to diffuse the responsibility for the imposition of heavy burdens on the population (Hunter 1999: 39, 51–4). It was, as Rifa‘i Al-Tahtawi (a major Egyptian writer, educator and intellectual) saw it, an instrument to lighten the burden of rule (Schölch 1981: 14–17). But from 1876 onwards, the Chamber gradually became a site through which meaningful demands for representation within the state were made by Egyptian-born provincial notables and merchants, made wealthy by the new cotton economy, but chafing against the political and other privileges of the Turco-Circassian elite. Members of the chamber had started forging alliances with cabinet members opposed to the European control from at least 1878.

The leading figures in the chamber, one a Cairean merchant, Abd Al-Salam Al-Muwailihi, signalled their intent at the convocation of the Chamber in January 1879. First, Al-Muwailihi’s speech hailed the *khedive* as the leader on the path of progress and civilization. More significantly, he went on:

we, the delegates and representatives of the Egyptian people, the defenders of its rights, and the promoters of its welfare which is at the same time the welfare of the government ... [thank the *khedive* for the convocation of the Majlis which] ... represents the basis of civilization and order ... [and] the necessary means for the achievement of freedom (which is the source of progress and advance), and the true driving force for the development of legal equality, which in its turn brings about the essence of justice and the spirit of equity (cited in Schölch 1981: 80).

The Chamber thus staked its place in the state on the basis of its representative function, and its claim to promote the welfare of the people (*maslahat al-umma*), the advantage of the fatherland (*manfa'at al-uatan*) and the rights of the subjects (*huquq al-ra'iya*). Similar principles had been at work in the Tunisian constitution of 1860, in the thought of the Young Ottomans, and the short-lived constitution in Istanbul in 1876, but in Egypt this was innovative talk indeed. The key criticism made by the Chamber, furthermore, in 1879, was of 'the heavy load of taxes being laid upon the country, and, in particular, their collection in advance of the harvest when the country was suffering a severe famine' (Hunter 1999: 212–13). The reality of what the Chamber actually demanded only amounted to control over half the government budget by February 1882, the beginnings of a fully fledged constitution as 1882 progressed, and nothing relating to socio-economic equality or rights for the people. Nonetheless, it started to play a role in the elite politics of the state in a way that it had not done before.

Isma'il's deposition only fanned the flames of patriotism against the collaborationist Tawfiq. The press was increasingly assertive, invoking the rights of native-born Egyptians, the unity of the Islamic *umma* in the face of the European threat, the role of representative government, and the need for a constitution.

In this context, senior politicians, the provincial notables and merchants of the Chamber, and their allies in the press, and the army officers led by Ahmad 'Urabi, slowly started to come together, united in their opposition to Turco-Circassian privilege, the autocracy of the *khedive*, and European control. These alliances were made, partly in response to the solidifying positions of others; they did not simply happen because of the weight of pre-existing interests. Campaigns were launched in the press, secret meetings were held in the houses of key figures, such as Muhammad Sultan, a leading provincial notable, who

also showered ‘Urabi with hospitality in order to win him over to the cause. The French invasion of Tunisia through the spring and summer of 1881 was a key galvanizing moment, as it urged action in the face of the European threat. Through the summer of 1881, an alliance between the army and the leading elements in the Chamber was formed, with ‘Urabi coming out into the open for the first time in the demand for a constitution in September.

‘Urabi now cemented his position as the leader of a movement, which, under the banners of representative government, pan-Islam, and Egyptian patriotism linked merchants, provincial notables and army together. While mainly operating within the corridors of power, the movement also appealed to crowds through demonstrations and speeches, and to the educated public through the press, and to wider constituencies through the extraordinary eloquence of the poet Barudi. ‘Urabi spoke not formal Turkish, nor French, nor did he use stereotyped Friday-sermon rhetoric. Instead his eloquence ‘excited the crowd’. According to Berque ‘the revival of the native idiom proved the strongest ally of these men in their struggle against inhuman forces’ (Berque 1972: 109). ‘Urabi’s language now encompassed a wide variety of grievances in the country. He indicted khedivial conscription, forced labour and taxation as oppressive insofar as its fruits were bestowed on pampered Circassian officers, privileged by birth, and bypassing meritorious Egyptian junior officers. Such favours, ‘Urabi noted, were ‘sucked from the blood of the poor Egyptians and the sweat of their brows’ (Schölch 1981: 23). Egyptians who, as ‘Urabi had to explain to Colvin (Tawfiq’s right hand man) in November 1881, were ‘imprisoned, exiled, strangled, thrown into the Nile, starved, robbed, according to the will of their masters’ (Schölch 1981: 185–6). ‘Egypt for the Egyptians!’, indeed, the slogan raised for the first time by ‘Urabi, was directed as much against the Turco-Circassians as it was against the Europeans (Schölch 1981: 41), and it was sutured to widespread socio-political grievances.

This campaign clearly had support in the country, especially through the activism of intellectuals such as Abdullah Al-Naim. Villagers near Tanta demonstrated their support of ‘Urabi in early 1881, as did petitions from village notables in February and the summer of that year, who also called for the convening of the Chamber of Deputies. Some of these had been printed and circulated by Abdullah Al-Naim (Cole 1999: 261–2). While some *ulema* opposed ‘Urabi, on the basis

that he had no authority to oppose a representative of the sultan, others supported him. They saw in him the chance to establish a government that could limit the influence of European powers, rebuild ties with the Ottoman empire, assert Egypt's Islamic identity at the heart of the *umma*, and defend the country against the infidel occupation (Mirza 2014). Certain key Islamic modernists, notably Muhammad Abduh, threw their weight behind the movement in late 1881.

The 'Urabists were able to form several governments, and force several climb-downs by Tawfiq, above all because 'Urabi was able to command the loyalty of the army, to the growing horror of the European consuls, who were not reassured by 'Urabi's insistence that he posed no threat to the Suez Canal or the bondholders. Whereas the British had urged a constitution, in the absence of mass mobilization, in Istanbul in 1876, they looked on and acted with increasing hostility as a more popular constitutional movement developed in Egypt. The idea of the 'Urabiyyin was to cement the place of the Egyptian officers within a strong army, to diminish Turco-Circassian privilege, to maintain control over half the Egyptian budget, and to subject the *khedive* to some constitutional guarantees. While there was rhetoric about wider forms of oppression and exploitation, concrete demands or proposals in this regard were wanting. The movement expected to achieve its goals through the institutions of the state, notably the army and the Chamber, and through appeals to the populace.

This was a programme both radical, in that it sought to introduce a representative principle of legitimacy into the body politic, and limited, in that it promised political reform, but without uprooting the system, or offering social or economic transformation. In this regard, 'Urabi's speech to the crowd in Bab Al-Hadid, Cairo's railway station, on 6 October 1881, was significant. He spoke eloquently to the crowd, who were supposedly listening raptly, of

the end of tyranny, the opening of the gate of freedom for the rights of the people, and also of obedience to the Khedive, of faith in the government ... and of the need for unity and fraternity (Schölch 1981: 183).

On the one side, the rights of the people, which in reality meant the rights of the Chamber, on the other, obedience to the *khedive*. 'Urabi, meanwhile, sought to curb European control, but not to throw it out completely. Moreover, 'Urabi did not oppose the Ottoman sultan, or the notion of dynastic authority *in toto*: indeed, he was 'horrified' to

learn, on 6 September 1882, the eve of battle, that the sultan repudiated him (Berque 1972: 107). ‘Egypt for the Egyptians’ was conceived in terms of autonomy and not national independence. Certainly, the idea that the ‘Urabi movement represented the first time in centuries that Egyptians had taken their destiny into their own hands is a modernist hubris, substituting destiny for constitutional government and a limited patriotism, and taking the predictable hysteria of the Great Powers far too much at face value.

The bombardment and invasion of Alexandria by the British gave the *khedive* his chance on 20 July 1882 to dismiss ‘Urabi, who could be held responsible as Minister of War. ‘Urabi promptly convened the ‘representatives of the people’ at the Interior Ministry to form an entirely new body, a Common Law Assembly (*majlis al-‘urfi*), which decided to favour ‘Urabi over the *khedive*, but without specifying in detail what this meant or declaring a new government (Schölch 1981: 270ff.). This assembly went on to try and govern the country and ignore the *khedive* for almost two months before the British invasion.

‘Urabi’s challenge to khedivial autocracy, and his airing of wider grievances, presented a political opportunity of which more popular forces now sought to make use. What created a revolutionary situation, however, was that, on the one hand, the British embarked on an invasion, sending the navy in the spring, then bombarding and occupying Alexandria in June and July 1882, while failing to advance beyond that in the face of popular resistance. And, on the other hand, groups far from the ‘Urabiyyin, peasants, village headmen, urban townspeople, with grievances and beliefs of their own, started to mobilize amid the opportunities provided by the divisions among different groups within the state, the threat of British invasion, and the hope that ‘Urabi may be a leader who would respond to their claims.

The situation for the mass of the rural population in Egypt in the late 1870s was appalling. The peasantry had been beaten out of its surplus to the limits of its endurance, and a famine was causing deaths by starvation in the thousands. Probably around 10,000 people starved to death in Qena and Isna alone in 1878–9 (Schölch 1981: 60; cf. Tignor 1966: 17). Until around 1880, the Debt Commission only intensified the tax burdens suffered by the peasantry. Rivers Wilson was ‘authorizing tax-collecting forays into the countryside without regard to the means used’ (Hunter 1999: 212–13). Village shaykhs were starting to

appear in the towns, furnished with petitions with ever lengthening lists of petitioners, demanding tax remission (Hunter 1999: 212–13; Schölch 1981: 36–7). This was an innovation. Demands almost always revolved around injustice and oppression in tax procedures and allocations, not an absolute reduction in the level of taxes, which challenged the highest levels of the state, who were responsible for setting these taxes.

The 'temporary triumph' of the 'Urabi movement (Brown 1990a: 192–3) was a formidable mobilizer for the peasantry and townspeople alike. The *status quo* was crumbling, and the foreigner was at the gates. 'Urabi, who set about trying to lead his army at Kafr Al-Dawwar against the British, now had recourse to the doctrine of *jihad* for 'a merely mobilisatory and propagandistic purpose' as his movement was not dominated by religion and had 'no framework of puritanistic and revivalist Islamic ideology' (Peters 1979: 154–5). Nonetheless, this call was received among ears more receptive in the countryside and among the *ulema* alike. The latter began to issue calls to arms from the minarets. Moreover, the rumour spread that 'Urabi was the Expected Deliverer, the Mahdi who would inaugurate a reign of justice in symmetry with Muhammad Ahmad of Dongola, much further up the Nile. The auspicious date of 1300 AH played a role in stirring millennial sentiments. Cobblers, coffee-servers and tailors ran into the streets shouting 'God, destroy the army of the infidels' (Cole 1999: 250). Fisherman and coal-heavers demonstrated, as did railway workers in Bulaq. In Mahalla Al-Kubra, violent protests broke out when the British bombarded Alexandria on 11 July. 'Urabi sent troops to quell them (Cole 1999: 258) 'Uthman Hasan, the headman of the village of Abu Husaybah in Al-Minya was accused of having announced the 'return of the *çiftlik* land grants back to their original villages; the sugar factory would belong to the people, and the lands bought by Tal'at Pasha and Sultan Pasha near his village, from the viceregal lands, would belong to the people' (Cole 1999: 260). Another village headman said that the lands of the nobles would be confiscated and 'made available for homesteading, and the government would be a government of village headmen not of "Turks"' (Cole 1999: 263). The British consular agent in Luxor spoke of the 'most seditious and frightful language' as well as of banditry on the roads. Some peasants refused to pay debts, and resisted the arrival of debt collectors.

‘Urabi had been concerned earlier to reassure Europeans of the safety of their investments, but the conjunctures of peasant renunciations of debt and the British landing pushed him and his colleagues toward a more radical position (Cole 1999: 264).

In summer 1882, the ‘Cairo-based government pledged that peasants would not have to repay their loans’. This pledge was then quoted for several years, much to the exasperation of British officials (Cole 1999: 264). There were peasant attempts to arrest officials loyal to the *khedive*. There were, moreover, land invasions, one at Samhah in Buhayra, another at Dilga near Asyut. Property division took place elsewhere. Volunteers came from the countryside to serve in the army (Cole 1999: 267). There was talk of an Arab kingdom, and the opening of government jobs to the sons of village notables.

For the ‘Urabiyyin, these popular mobilizations, far from signalling the arrival of a revolution which the ‘Urabi movement could lead, more likely signalled that movement’s downfall, because the ‘Urabists had no plan or strategy for a popular uprising. The ‘Urabi movement expected the crowd to follow it, not to mobilize on its own. It sought the rights of property, not their usurpation. It sought to counter accusations that it was stirring chaos, not give them credence; and, above all, it sought to avoid a pretext for a European intervention, while the crowd actions against Europeans and their property in Alexandria in June 1882 gave Britain the pretext to bombard and then occupy the city. ‘Urabi’s army could never take on the British colonial army: ‘Urabi was a poor military leader indeed by Schölch’s account (Schölch 1981: 292ff.) and was still trying to come to an agreement with the powers even after July 1882 (Schölch 1981: 299). On the other hand, as Berque pointed out, ‘Urabi was not the leader of a peasant uprising capable of ‘baffling’ the British military, even if he may have made some confused gestures in this direction in the summer of 1882 (Berque 1972: 122). ‘Urabi had not planned to be the head of a Common Law Assembly in the midst of a revolutionary situation. He had sought a position in a constitutional monarchy, and had pursued much of the battle in the corridors of power. The recourse to *jihad* was a desperate expedient. As were the contradictory responses to peasant demands and protests. When the British arrived, the military confrontation was a rout, the ‘Urabi movement fell apart, and the scattered and uncoordinated mobilizations in the countryside were easily repressed.

'Urabi was not a revivalist preacher, scholar, saint or Sufi. Nor was he a Janissary or tribal leader. He had no genealogy such as the Awlad Sidi shaykh of Algeria. In fact, he was a product of the state centralization of the nineteenth century, a native born Egyptian peasant who became an officer. The 'Urabi movement of 1881–2 was not an attempt to reject the state in libertarian or millenarian ways, nor to resist its advance in the name of local autonomy or vested interests, nor to alter its terms of regulation in reformist mode by appeals to justice and custom. Nor yet was the 'Urabi movement a matter of religious renewal, nor a peasant upsurge from below after the manner of Tanyus Shahin. The movement he led was an attempt to re-organize the state and to institutionalize the political representation in the polity of new groups under the banners of new ideas. It was a movement flanked by more subaltern mobilizations that it did not control. The 'Urabi movement was not undertaken by challengers from outside the polity, but by polity members, and those with regular access to the polity. It developed out of the manoeuvrings of established actors within a crisis-ridden state, who then came together to create a movement making appeals to, and to some extent developing larger links to, wider constituencies in the press, the urban intelligentsia and the modernist *ulema*.

The key constituencies of the movement, the officers, the Deputies, the merchants, the provincial notables and much of the urban intelligentsia were the product of the new order: the incomes of the cotton economy, the emergence of a wealthy peasantry, their property rights entrenched by state guarantees, and the rise of state-sponsored education, journalism and the press. The 'Urabi movement was thus led by those seeking change from within the new order, not those who had been marginalized or ousted by it. As such, it was the first time in the nineteenth century that those who owed their existence to state centralization and the new, dependent economy had arisen to change substantially the state. This fact may help explain why the movement was so easily scattered. As Schölch has it:

The provincial notables were anything but revolutionaries, and the majority of them also were no firm patriots. They were concerned about the protection of the socio-economic positions they had acquired in the context of the emergence of a dependent agrarian capitalism. When they were not able to secure their positions against the European control, they were prepared to consolidate and to improve them with the European control,

i.e. under British rule. In the face of military intervention they deserted the ‘Urabiyyin (Schölch 1981: 314).

The movement was, nonetheless, a watershed, signalling in contentious politics for the first time deep, political contradictions *within* the state-strengthening and modernizing projects of the nineteenth century. Perhaps, therefore, it was no accident that a new word was applied to the ‘Urabi movement, initially by its enemies. One of the great mobilizing notions of the twentieth century received one of its first mentions here. A hagiographer of Khedive Tawfiq spoke of how ‘he [Tawfiq] came, stirring all hearts and bringing happiness by extinguishing the flaming torches of the *thaura* [the revolution]’ (Berque 1972: 111). The idea of *al-thawra* (revolution) was born in the midst of a constitutional, Islamic, and patriotic challenge to privilege, autocracy and European control. It was an idea that was to matter all over the region for more than a century to come.

The constitutional movement in Istanbul, 1908

The Ottoman constitution had been presented in 1876 by Midhat Pasha as a way to prevent European intervention and to save the empire. Many of those who mobilized under the banners of the constitution in the period leading up to the grant of the constitution in July 1908 also thought that the constitution would save an empire facing a crisis; above all, limiting the rights of the sultan was supposed to solve the problem, ever more pressing, of minority rights, autonomism, separatism and nationalism, which by the early 1900s presented the empire with a ticking time bomb: the gunpowder the polyglot and multi-ethnic population (Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, Greek Orthodox, Maronites, Kurds, Assyrians, Arabs and others), and the fuse the ever-rising currents of separatism and nationalism, typically linked to the machinations of the European powers. The constitution would, in the eyes of many of the Young Turks, provide rights to minorities both religious and ethnic and thus ameliorate their grievances on the one hand, and, by providing a reason to remain loyal to the sultan and the Ottoman empire as a homeland for all, defuse the minority drive for national independence on the other. At the same time, it would diminish European encroachment, by demonstrating that the ‘sick man’ of Europe was actually reforming in terms that

Europeans could understand, and stripping Europe of the pretext of intervention to 'protect' oppressed subjects of the sultan (Shaw 1977: 266).

Constitutional ideas were backed by a Young Turk ideology that was 'scientific, antireligious, and elitist' (Hanioglu 1995: 26). Rejecting any Young Ottoman attempts to reconcile Western civilization and science with Islam and traditional values, the Young Turks drew particularly on the ideas of the German philosopher, physician and scientific materialist Ludwig Büchner (d. 1899), who pitted progress emphatically against religion. The true poets, wrote one Young Turk, were scientists who 'invented ships and the telegram' (Hanioglu 1995: 19). Such science underpinned Western superiority, and had to be taken on without compromise against all forms of religious 'fanaticism'. A Young Turk banner held aloft during the celebrations of the 1908 revolution, 'le salut de la nation c'est la science', expressed their deepest feelings (Hanioglu 1995: 20). Darwin's theory of evolution, in addition to social Darwinism, loomed large in Young Turk thinking: the Egyptian branch of the CUP justified a new committee on the basis that the 'law of evolution' had made the old one redundant (Hanioglu 1995: 22). Young Turks drew on and were heavily impressed by the racially determined anthropology of Charles Letourneau (d. 1902) and especially the works of the French psychologist and sociologist Gustave Le Bon (d. 1931), who wrote key tracts on the madness of crowds and claimed that through phrenology (the measuring of skulls) intelligence could be determined. Intellectuals turned out to have larger skulls than servants or workers, and were thus entitled to lead and to educate.

Young Turks chafed against the personal loyalty demanded by the sultan, preferring instead to pledge loyalty to the state or the fatherland. Many of the Young Turks were frustrated Young Ottomans, who lamented the failure of Midhat Pasha's constitution and had rejected Abdulhamid II's Islamic turn from the outset. Much discontent was expressed in the late 1880s by intellectuals, students and bureaucrats when censorship was not so strong, especially when budget-balancing staff cuts in the ministries created unemployed graduates who felt they had a right to government employment (Shaw 1977: 256–7). In May 1908, the CUP stated to the Great Powers that all the peoples of Macedonia were suffering from the sultan's oppression, that they sought the recall of parliament to provide equality before law

which would enable all elements of the empire to work together for the common good (Shaw 1977: 266).

The aim of the Young Turks was to submit the empire to a constitutional regime, limiting the powers of the sultan, and to bring back a parliament and associated representative institutions. The Young Turk Congress of December 1907 clearly enunciated that the sultan had to be deposed and constitutional and representative government established (Shaw 1977: 265).

The mobilization for the short-lived uprising that led to Abdulhamid II's grant of the constitution involved mostly a relatively small, and relatively high-status, band of educated students, officers, teachers, civil servants, intellectuals and some members of the *ulema* (Shaw 1977: 257); most of the *ulema* and the soldiery, and the overwhelming majority of peasants, crafts and service workers, shopkeepers, tribesmen and artisans, stood to one side. This was certainly not a mobilization by an industrial bourgeoisie. Many of the Young Turks had been educated in the greatly multiplying European-style schools of Abdulhamid II; they were not necessarily native Turkish speakers, self-identified Turks, or Turkish nationalists; they came from very varied ethnic and national origins; they felt the centrifugal forces that were threatening the empire and the need to do something about them. Many were drawn from the lower ranks of the officers: educated, politically minded, and drawn from the ranks of the *re'aya* (the subject class). These were new entrants into what had long been conceived of as a military class (the *askeri*), comparable to Colonel 'Urabi in this sense. They were frustrated by long years of unsuccessful struggles against Macedonian and Armenian separatists, who they regarded as 'terrorists', a sentiment especially marked in the Third Army at Salonika, where the young Mustafa Kemal was stationed, although he remained in the background; Young Turk officers were willing to use force to change the system and remove ineffective courtly politicians; they felt that Abdulhamid II put limits on the army because he was afraid of its power (Shaw 1977: 264).

Other Young Turks were civilian men of position, wealth and respectability. Ahmet Riza (1859–1930) was an important early leader among them. Against many a more conservative land-owner, he believed in the education of the peasantry. He had spent much time in Europe. He was wealthy. He espoused a positivist, Comte-like dream of order and progress. He justified the demand for a

parliament on the basis of old Islamic and Ottoman traditions of consultation (*meşveret*). Mehmet Murat Efendi (1853–1912) was a Caucasian Turk with a Lycée education from imperial Russia. He wrote history, taught in the Civil Service School, issued reform proposals to the sultan, and published a newspaper, *Mizan*. He also spent time in Egypt (Shaw 1977: 256–7).

The CUP was an underground organization based in the officer corps and colleges, with sympathizers outside. The CUP was only the most important of a number of secret groups with similar aims that appeared in the army garrisoned in towns such as Damascus, Jerusalem and Jaffa, especially after 1905. Military barracks provided some protection against the sultan's secret police. The Ottoman Liberty Society was organized in small cells on the model of Bulgarian 'terrorists'. These secret groups and 'societies' were also organized among students, such as those of the Imperial Medical Academy in the 1880s. Young Turks and their sympathizers made use of the new print media to disseminate their views. *La Jeune Turquie* was a small newsletter published by Halil Ganim, a Lebanese Maronite and former deputy to parliament of 1877. Secret groups often encountered repression at the hands of the state, driving them into exile. This move stamped politics into their social being, and, although intended to terminate their political activities, could also imply new spaces in which to communicate and mobilize, in Alexandria, Bucharest, Cairo, Geneva, London and Paris. Abdulhamid did all he could to either entice exiles back with promises of high office, or to get Europe to suppress them, 'but a sympathetic public opinion and the Young Turks' ability to travel freely from one place of exile to another frustrated these efforts' (Shaw 1977: 257, 265). The suppression of the Istanbul group after the failed coup of 1895 increased the strength of the movement elsewhere. In Egypt, for example, Ishak Sükûti organized a new chapter, and published several newspapers. There were also links between army groups and exiled liberals in Paris, such as the Ahmet Riza faction. The Young Turk Congress of December 1907 was held in Paris.

Their main strategy was to use a show of military force, coupled with demands, and some large meetings and demonstrations. The army had deposed Sultan Abdulaziz when two battalions had surrounded the palace in May 1876. 'Urabi had shown that officers in Egypt could draw concessions from the *khedive*: the *khedive* had only been saved by turning to the British, whereas such a move was impossible for

Sultan Abdelhamid II, whose reign was built on Islamic resistance to European imperialism. The CUP drew lessons from their failed coup attempts in 1895 and in 1902–3. The idea of ‘revolutionary violence’ popularized by the Armenians had increased the Young Turks’ willingness to contemplate the use of force. The CUP also aimed to organize strikes, the refusal to pay taxes, the circulation of propaganda and arrangements for a major uprising if all else failed (Shaw 1977: 265). After their declaration of intent in May 1908 and clashes with the sultan’s men, some of whom defected to the CUP, the latter’s cells withdrew to the hills to start guerrilla operations. Incidental factors such as bad harvests, which meant slow taxes, and thus salaries in arrears and the suspension of promotions, generated a wider appeal among civil servants (Shaw 1977: 266). Joint military and civilian uprisings took place at Monastir, Firzovik, Serez, Üsküp and in other towns and cities. Mass meetings held between 20 and 23 July proclaimed support for the constitution. Telegrams were sent to the sultan expressing demands. The CUP in Salonica was not planning open revolt, and was now caught unawares, and hastily planned for an uprising on 27 July.

At this point, Abdulhamid II, the ‘master politician’, anticipated the next move, and recalled parliament on 23 July 1908. ‘Without any real revolution, then, without any soldiers storming the palace, and without bloodshed, the Young Turk Revolution in fact had taken place’ (Shaw 1977: 267). Abdulhamid II now gave up most of his powers; he quickly issued further decrees abolishing espionage and censorship, and he ordered the release of political prisoners. For a moment it seemed to many – or at least to those celebrating on the streets – that a panacea had been achieved and that the empire would be saved as one community, with rights for all and minority allegiances secured. Shaw speaks of ‘a wave of mass demonstrations, without equal in the empire’s long history, in Istanbul and other major cities. Happy mobs of Turks, Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Serbs, Bulgars, Armenians, and Europeans embraced in the streets and made eternal vows of brotherhood for the common good.’ Armenians, Greek nationalists and Young Turks had co-operated in Paris, and together brought about a major change to the Ottoman polity with a remarkable lack of bloodshed. It seemed to many as if the ticking time-bomb had been defused (Shaw 1977: 273). A memoirist wrote that: ‘Men and women in a common wave of enthusiasm moved on, radiating something extraordinary, laughing,

weeping in such intense emotion that human deficiency and ugliness were for the time being completely obliterated.' It 'seemed that the millennium had come, the tension was over, and the empire would in fact be preserved' (Shaw 1977: 273). A period in which a 'freedom of the press and political association hitherto unknown in the Ottoman empire' was inaugurated. Newspapers and political parties blossomed (Shaw 1977: 276). And peasants and workers, who had not made the uprising and for whom very little had changed, started to mobilize in large numbers, making use of new political liberties and the promise of progress, in order to attempt to improve their social and economic conditions.

The Young Turk movement drew much strength from the fact that its liberalism and elitism stitched liberals (including civil servants, students, and others) not to any (largely inexistent) industrial bourgeoisie, but to important elements (especially the rising officer corps) in the army. For liberals, constitutionalism, science, progress and social Darwinism was a creed; for the military it was a way to save the empire in the face of minorities and 'terrorists'. Liberalism and patriotism were not thus merely 'frames' that could be discarded at will, or bent to any purpose: they served to unite otherwise disparate groups in hegemonic ways that could form a basis for a powerful movement, a basis that would outlast setbacks and transformations in the political landscape. Indeed, as Hanioglu argues, the Young Turk *Wel-tanschaagung*, which continued to exert a profound influence well after 1908, formed 'the underpinning and the single relatively constant element' in an otherwise shifting organizational and factional and political environment (Hanioglu 1995: 6).

The uprising in the name of Islam, 1909

Yet, the euphoria was not as widespread as some have maintained, and it was short-lived. One key problem was that the constitution and the recall of parliament was in fact no panacea for the dilemma of multi-ethnic empire in an age of nationalism. Minorities of all kinds thought their demands for autonomy and for rights would be satisfied by the new arrangements: they were sorely disappointed when their demands were refused. The CUP thought that minorities would be appeased by the new regime: they, in turn, were completely mistaken when minorities went on fighting armed struggle in the name of what seemed to the

CUP to be excessive demands. Parliament was no magic wand. Territorial losses in the Balkans continued. By October 1908, the Bulgarians had declared independence, the Austrians had annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Greeks had announced a union with Crete. The external debt continued to press. In addition, there were those who directly lost out under the CUP: dismissed officials, palace spies and army officers (Shaw 1977: 279). The new regime, seized of an elitist ideology in any case, handed out mostly repression to newly mobilized peasants and workers. Divisions among the Young Turks – between the conservative Liberals, favouring de-centralization and Great Power tutelage and the Unionists favouring a stronger role for the state and a more unified nationalism – now came to the fore once these figures attained power. The social base of the Young Turks movement was far narrower than it might have seemed, and there were many who had rallied to Sultan Abdulhamid II's stand on Islam and Caliphate, who saw ways to achieve progress, unity and order under the banners of Islam, and viewed the turn to a European-style constitution as an unnecessary and un-Islamic deviation from the traditions and faith of the empire, a course which would only lead to ruin and collapse.

Opponents of the CUP, especially after the Unionist elements in the CUP took the upper hand in early 1909, viewed the constitution as a basic threat to Islamic law on which the polity was thought to stand. As Blind Ali, the muezzin of a mosque in the Fatih district of Istanbul, who mobilized crowds in October 1908, maintained, the Shari'a orders that the 'flock be led by its shepherd'. The rise of the Young Turks implied external Christian domination over the polity, and at best the equality and at worst the internal superiority of non-Muslim subjects over Muslims within the polity; it enacted an unwarranted and secular separation of Islam and the state; it provoked the appearance of a decline in morality and values, manifested by the appearance of unveiled women in the streets. The contention here was that the empire's decline was in fact caused not by an insufficient liberalism, but by a departure from its basic Islamic foundations. Islam could be adapted to meet the needs of the modern age. Indeed, Islam could provide laws to regulate every aspect of empire's social and political life. Only Western technology need be borrowed (Shaw 1977: 279–80) and, in this context, Islam would provide the cohesion and the unity required to withstand the European onslaught, and its manipulation of

minorities and the question of the constitution, which was in fact a trojan horse for European power.

Hafiz Derviş Vahdeti's movement, that spearheaded the mobilization, propounded a Sufi and popular Islam opposed to government secularism and the influence of minorities and foreign representatives. The movement sought to replace the constitution with the Shari'a, and to use Islam to modernize and rescue the empire. There were echoes of pan-Islam here also as the movement declared its intention to free Muslims all over the world from the tyranny of non-Muslim oppression. They sought to promote the interests of Muslims, while supporting the Islamic principle of consultation as the basis of government. They sought a wider application of Shari'a in the Mecelle code used in secular courts, and to encourage the development of Muslim morals and traditions in daily lives (Shaw 1977: 280). The position of *Volkan/The Volcano*, Vahdeti's newspaper, founded in December 1908, was initially

liberal and humanistic, supportive of liberty and the constitutional order. At the same time, Vahdeti was anti-Unionist and a supporter of Kamil Pasha's 'English policy'. But after the founding of the Muhammadan Union on 5 April [1909] when *Volkan* became its official organ, its tone changed dramatically. At this point, Vahdeti began to receive subsidies from a number of anti-Unionist sources: some [Young Turk] Liberals [by now opposed to Young Turk Unionists], a group in the Palace, and possibly the British embassy. *Volkan* abandoned its liberalism and adopted Islamist polemics, denouncing the Unionists as freemasons, a code word for the anti-religious and the secular (Ahmad 1991: 4–5).

Whether the changed ideas were a result of the subsidies, or the subsidies were a result of the changed ideas, is not clear. The ideas, nonetheless, were clearly of considerable importance in defining and building up the Islamic position against the constitution in 1909.

Volkan attacked the constitutional regime for bringing with it tyranny (*zilum*) and the 'age of devils' (*seytanlar devri*). The Ottomans were now in a sad state, everywhere there was hunger and poverty. Thanks to the importing of western values, general morality was in decay and the empire crumbling as a result. *Volkan* claimed not to be opposed to the constitution; on the contrary it was a supporter provided 'the constitution was made the guardian of the sharia'. However, 'four or five people ardent for European morality' could not undertake such a task. This could be undertaken only by the army in alliance with the *ilmiye* class. The soldier must know soldiering

and remain a soldier; the army must therefore withdraw from politics. In the Assembly, the source of law must be the sharia of Muhammad; laws which did not comply with the sharia could not be considered legally binding (Ahmad 1991: 5).

In sum, *Volkan* maintained that the army should withdraw from politics, the basis of CUP rule was too narrow, the Assembly must not pass legislation that contravened the Shari'a, morality was in decay, and hunger and poverty stalked the land.

The narrow base of the constitutional movement stood in contrast to the broad and subaltern sociological base of the movement in the name of Islam. Sympathizers of the Islamic movement were found everywhere: among the *ulema*, the religious students, the bureaucracy, the army, the Sufi orders, and the mass of Istanbul's Muslim population – artisans, merchants, coffee-house proprietors, public bath-keepers, porters, fishermen, peasants staying in the capital to sell their crops, and the tribes of eastern Anatolia chafing against conscription and centralization. Vahdeti was born in Cyprus where he became a *hafiz* and, at some point, he joined the Naqshbandi order. In 1902, he moved to Istanbul (Ahmad 1991: 4):

The counter-revolution of 13 April was not the work of a few *hojas*; this time virtually the entire *ilmiye* class allied with the troops of the Istanbul garrison and non-academy trained officers (the *alayli*) joined forces. They were supported by the Naqshbandi order, the most extensive and influential Sufi order in the late Ottoman period. The Bektashis had been crippled by Sultan Mahmud II (1808–39) because of their ties with the Janissary corps whose power he broke. Bektashi revival began only after the fall of Abdulhamid. As a part of his Islamist policy, Abdulhamid had patronised the Sufi orders popular in the Arab provinces. But the Naqshbandis, well known for their loyalty to the dynasty, also received his patronage (Ahmad 1991: 5).

The movement in the name of Islam sought the end of constitutional rule, the restoration of the absolute authority of the sultan, the closure of drinking places and theatres, a ban on printing pictures in newspapers, and on the appearance of Muslim women in public (Ahmad 1991: 4). Some called for a *jihad* against European Christian powers in order to resolve the external crisis (Ahmad 1991: 4).

The organizational networks of Sufi orders and mosque imams were present in the mobilization under the banners of Islam, but the movement was actually spearheaded by a new type of organization – a sign

of things to come – not a Sufi order, not a mosque imam and his flock, not a *marabout* or tribal network or a guild, but a ‘society’, the Society of Islamic Unity (*ittihad-i Muhammadi*) (est. 5 April 1909). This Society was organized, under the leadership of Vahdeti, amid the mobilization. Like other societies, committees, and organizations seeking to organize subaltern constituencies, it had its own newspaper (Ahmad 1991: 4).

The active elements in the mobilization were mosque imams, and the Society of Islamic Unity, founded and led by Vahdeti, with rank and file in the urban crowds. Blind Ali had led crowds, whose appearance was spontaneous in that they were not the result of major prior organization, to the sultan’s residence in Yildiz Palace in October 1908. There was a mass meeting organized by the Society of Islamic Unity in the Aya Sofya mosque in April 1909. The celebration of the birthday of the Prophet was used to gain further popular support. The sultan refused to finance *Volkan*, and his links to the movement are unclear (Shaw 1977: 280). Chapters of the Society of Islamic Unity, which had members in the First Army, opened in other cities. Petitions demanded further application of the Shari‘a.

There were impromptu meetings of students of religion to demand an end to the constitution. Army soldiers grumbled openly in the barracks, many artisans and labourers, themselves adhering to orthodox and mystic religious leaders, talked with increasing fervour about the threat to the Shari‘a and the danger of Christian domination (Shaw 1977: 279).

The demonstrations of October were ruthlessly repressed: ‘The religious demonstrations were crushed and their leaders punished, Kor [Blind] Ali being put to death’ (Ahmad 1991: 4). The Young Turks thought they were avoiding being dragged into a dangerous *jihad* against European powers. But repression of this kind multiplied those protesting the tyranny of the new rulers.

The uprising to restore Islam to centre stage came on 13 April 1909. Shaw speaks of a ‘[a] groundswell of mass support [that] soon pushed the conservatives to open action’ (Shaw 1977: 280). During the night of 12–13 April, soldiers of the First Army and students of religion assembled at the Sultan Ahmed mosque. They marched to parliament and surrounded it. One of their demands was that Ahmet Riza be removed as president of the Chamber of Deputies and a ‘true Muslim’ be appointed in his place. The crowds began flooding into the

parliament buildings, and two deputies were killed. The Minister of War refused to order the army to disperse the rebels, and so the government faced a crisis. Abdulhamid II accepted the resignations of the cabinet and all the demands of the movement.

The CUP members in Istanbul fled, and party and newspaper headquarters were sacked (Shaw 1977: 280–1). The CUP tried to rally supporters round the empire – appealing also to minority national groups with whom it had co-operated in 1909. Instead, there was an Armenian uprising in Adana, which was severely repressed. After massacres and then some counter-massacres, 20,000 people of all religions were killed in April 1909 (Shaw 1977: 281). The Armenian question, coupled with the secessions in the Balkans of autumn 1908, had confounded the whole ‘empire-saving’ rationale of the constitutional movement. A new policy would have to be found. Meanwhile, the question of power pressed, and the senior officers of the Third Army moved in to seize it under the rubrics of restoring order (Shaw 1977: 281–2). They deposed Abdulhamid II on 27 April 1909 and inaugurated a formal constitutional regime controlled by the army, with the CUP initially in the background. Thus began an army role in ‘politics that has been exercised from time to time ever since’ (Shaw 1977: 281–2)

The insurrection was crushed by the modern, academy-trained officers of the army (the *mektepli*), men who were committed to saving the empire through constitutionalism and reform. The CUP, which shared the same ideology, continued to operate from behind the scene until it seized power in January 1913 (Ahmad 1991: 5).

The CUP and the senior officers of the Third Army became the effective rulers of the Ottoman empire. Where popular support was lacking, coercion did its work. The fact is that the so-called counter-revolution had a good deal more popular support than the so-called constitutional revolution.

The failure of the constitutional and multi-ethnic path under a sultan-caliph with newly limited powers set the stage for what came to be known as Turkification – and the increasing application of Turkish nationalism at the highest levels of the state. The central authorities, just as in the Balkans, proved unable to resolve the questions of class power that oppressed townspeople and peasantry. From now on, the core of the Ottoman empire would start to fragment on

ethnic and national lines, and the Arab world would start to chart its own path in terms of political sovereignty. This direction was confirmed with the Albanian revolt of 1910–12, when claims for autonomy and then national self-determination were bolstered by resistance to centralization, fortified by armed bands operating in the mountains with a long tradition of independence, and emboldened by the Italian attack on Ottoman Tripoli in 1911. Defeats in the Balkans precipitated protest in the empire itself. In November 1912, hard on the heels of Ottoman defeat, unpaid bureaucrats and teachers led ‘a series of violent demonstrations which soon spread to the other major cities of the empire’ (Shaw 1977: 294). These demonstrations nudged rulers to deliver new formulae. We have already seen how, in the Balkans, it was the inability of the Ottoman polity to resolve the movements of peasants and minorities that paved the way for Balkan nationalism. By the same token, it was the failure of the reformed dynastic form of political order, a failure that turned less on inexorable socio-economic change, and more on the by no means entirely pre-determined grind and spark of contentious politics, that above all set the stage for the rise of Arab and regional nationalism. The relative capacities of movements now joined under the banners of nationalism would play a vital role in determining the generalization of nationalism in the Arab world.

The Albanian revolt of winter and spring 1910, in Shaw’s words, ‘was as much a campaign against the new efforts at efficiency and centralization as it was a national movement’. Shaw continues, ‘the new census and tax regulations struck especially at mountaineers who had long treasured their independence and avoided conscription’. Laws against vagabonds and national societies ‘struck Albania in particular because of its traditional armed bands, which had dominated the mountain for centuries’. These ‘laws transformed general resentment against government controls into open support of the nationalists’. Harsh repression by Mahmut Sevket only ‘won new supporters for the nationalists’. The concession of June 1911 were not enough, because the Italian invasion of Tripoli (Libya) now emboldened the Albanian movement, which now demanded ‘a united Albania, fully autonomous, administered by and for Albanians’ (Shaw 1977: 288).

Centralization was not just problematic because of the debts it incurred. It also stirred up resistance that made its continued viability, at least on an imperial scale, extremely problematic. The euphoria of

1908 (Shaw 1977: 273) reflected the idea that the constitution would solve the problem of minorities and secession by giving them a place in the empire and brought new grievances linked to new forms of economic exploitation to the fore. But the authoritarian powers required to keep the constitution in place meant that such inclusionary forms became unworkable.

Egypt: nationalists, workers and peasants, 1882–1914

The crushing of the ‘Urabi movement by the British invasion was followed by a marked absence for at least two decades of mass movements confronting colonial rule (Baer 1969: 101). This was in marked contrast to the tenacious and mass-based protests that confronted the French occupation of the same country more than eighty years before. It was also in contrast to the protests that were so prolonged and intense in Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Libya and elsewhere in the face of occupation from foreign parts, as well as in contrast to the armed struggles that broke out following the partition of the Mashriq after the First World War. Indeed, Egypt was comparable only to Tunisia after 1881 in this regard. The collapse of the ‘Urabi movement has already been discussed. Economic interests could be pursued with or without a Chamber of Deputies and a constitution. British rule in Egypt was despotic, especially under Evelyn Baring (1883–1907), but relatively indirect. Formal sovereignty belonged to the Ottoman empire. A head of state had not been formally removed: Isma‘il had been deposed in 1879 by a *firman* from the sultan. The Egyptian *khedive*, his palace, prime minister, cabinet, government and ministries remained in place, albeit attached to British advisors who wielded real, if vaguely defined, power. When Cromer over-reached himself with the executions that followed Dinshaway, he was gone within a year, and replaced with the more concessionary Gorst.

More important still was tax remission. The policy of abolishing taxes felt to be oppressive but yielding little or no revenue became increasingly important in Egyptian and British policy from 1880 onwards (Schölch 1981: 53–6). During 1876–9, the European control sought to collect at all costs, but this policy changed. Hunter suggests that perhaps Mustafa Riyad Pasha – from around May 1878 when he moved into the European camp – ‘regarded co-operation with the Europeans as an opportunity to curb the power

of a tyrannical ruler and introduce long-needed changes into the country', especially where European intervention would not last for ever. '[H]e disliked the *corvée* and detested arbitrary and heavy taxation' (Hunter 1999: 191). Tax remission was implemented after 1882, going some way to meeting one of the most important popular demands in recent living memory. For more than two decades, mass protests directed at the state were virtually non-existent. Islamic modernists hoped for gradual progress under British rule, and many among the growing ranks of the *effendiyya* that went on to challenge the British after the war did little or nothing to oppose them before it. Most of the Sunni *ulema* stuck with their books.

Small groups of urban notables, professionals and salaried middle classes started to espouse nationalism in Egypt from the 1890s, and, under the direction of the orator Mustafa Kamil, looked to bring pressure to bear on the British occupation through the diplomacy of the powers. When this strategy failed with the Anglo-French Entente in 1904, some turned towards thoughts of mobilizing more domestic constituencies (Beinin and Lockman 1998: 66). Such a strategy was powerfully suggested by the outpouring by the literate, urban classes of sympathy for the peasantry that followed the British repression at Dinshaway in 1906. Egypt's urban intelligentsia had already paved the way for such a moment by articulating a discourse that figured themselves and peasants as occupying the same national, political community (Gasper 2009).

In 1906, Cromer insisted that the courts hand down egregious punishments – including executions and floggings – for a number of peasants from the village of Dinshaway. The peasants were guilty of nothing more than self-defence against British, occupying troops, who had shot their pigeons for sport and set fire to a village threshing-floor. Further, when the local branch of the British Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals engaged in a heavy-handed and in practice rather arbitrary attack on the livelihoods of Cairo's cab-drivers, many of the newspapers of the educated were sympathetic to the cause of the low-status cab-drivers who joined a mass strike in March 1907 (Chalcraft 2004).

Responding to these developments, the circle around Mustafa Kamil, following his death, formed the National Party (Al-Hizb Al-Watani) in 1908 under the leadership of Muhammad Farid, a lawyer. Farid aimed to build a base among the masses, and thus engaged in organizing

among workers and others, forming night schools for artisans that impacted thousands, unions and agricultural co-operatives (Lockman 1994a). Muhammad Farid sought, among other things, to raise their standard of living, ‘to teach them [workers] their rights and obligations’ and to improve their speaking skills, as he put it in 1910 (Beinin and Lockman 1998: 70). The National Party’s organ, *Al-Liwa*, told the tramway workers after their strike in 1911, that it welcomed the workers’ desire to be ‘men like other men’ (Beinin and Lockman 1998: 71). This was a dramatic innovation on the Egyptian scene, and an important precursor of forms of mass mobilization that were to become much more general during the 1914–52 period.

When press censorship directed at the nationalists followed, there was a demonstration in protest in 1909 of around 4,000 printers, whose livelihoods were also threatened (Beinin and Lockman 1998: 78). Nonetheless, the National Party was not as resolute as it might have been regarding mass mobilization, and, after serving a six-month prison term in 1910, Farid left the country in 1912 (never to return) to avoid serving a one-year sentence. The strategy of mass mobilization was dropped for the time being by the National Party which in any case was repressed in 1914 with the imposition of martial law.

Relatively unorganized attempts to make socio-economic gains by workers, mobilizing under the banners of an older moral economy and the precepts of Ottoman statecraft, had existed in the region from the 1860s and in Egypt from the 1880s. In Egypt too, a number of strikes were carried out among foreign workers, beginning with the Greek cigarette-rollers in 1899. Over the next decade and a half, labour organizing entered a new phase as nationalist organizers connected with workers’ grievances and started to mobilize them for the first time.

In Egypt, a wave of strikes begun on the initiative of workers, who still sought the justice of the *khedive* and lodged demands linked to the customs of their trades (cab-drivers, carters, butchers, bakers, fishermen and various other trades), took place between March and April 1907 (Chalcraft 2004: 164–87); it was followed up by strikes by tram and railway workers in 1908, 1910 and 1911. Workers’ consciousness was diverse. It drew on the search for the justice of the *khedive*, the demands of custom, and common sense, and spontaneous philosophy from a variety of sources. In the railway workshops of Cairo in 1908, workers discussing a strike sought rules not arbitrariness, merit not

nepotism, dignified treatment not beatings, and an end to economic misery. ‘There is absolutely no system’, they maintained, ‘the energetic worker is denied all rights and the bootlicking fool rises quickly’ (cited in Beinín and Lockman 1998: 73). These railway workers characterized themselves as human beings not animals, and thus as having ‘courage and culture and concern for . . . [their] happiness and future’ (Beinín and Lockman 1998: 73).

Egypt was not alone on the regional stage. In Ottoman lands, more than strikes involving ‘virtually every category of labour in the empire’ (Quataert 1995: 72) took place between the July revolution of 1908 and the end of the year. In Iran, the ‘labor movement followed on the heels of constitutional government’ (Ladjevardi 1985: 2). Print workers organized a trade union in Tehran in 1906, opened a newspaper, and carried out one of the first strikes in Iran in June 1910.

The colonial state in Egypt after 1882, like its predecessor, continued to try to count, police, tax, register, and reorganize the peasantry. The British, after crushing the ‘Urabi movement, dismantled the elections that had been instituted for village headmen in 1866, and thus put an end to the elections that had surrounded these posts. Authorities both Egyptian and British, pursuing their own agenda, unsuccessfully attempted to repress the peasant bands that continued to attempt to live outside the law. These bands benefitted from the non-co-operation of peasants with external law-enforcers (Brown 1990b). Peasant millenarian politics, which appeared on several occasions during the nineteenth century, for all Cromer’s fears, and for all the inspiration of the Mahdiyya in Sudan, dwindled and then more or less vanished from the scene. On the other hand, urban middle classes and intelligentsia started to take an enormous interest in Egypt’s peasantry, as a repository of authentic national identity, as an object for reform and uplift, and also, to some extent, especially after Dinshaway in 1906, as a rights-bearing subject. Such interest almost never translated into direct mobilization of peasants by unions and parties, as it did in the case of urban workers, and the diffusion into the countryside of new political ideologies was limited. Certainly peasants had to rely on their own political resources during these years in particular, especially as many village mayors, for whom property qualifications were raised, signed up to a British colonial strategy of co-optation. There was no respite whatever from the pressures that commercialization, the spread of debt, or the weight of feudal obligations placed on the poorer strata

of the peasantry (Abul-Magd 2013: 122ff.). In this context, a good deal of peasant collective action was relatively spontaneous and direct, locally and informally organized, and governed by forms of moral economy. Nonetheless, peasants continued to press demands on central and regional authorities in petitions and complaints.

Individuals and small groups carried out direct attacks, sometimes fatal, on locals doing the bidding of the state, government property, officials, or on transport or communication infrastructure (Brown 1990a: 7) especially when these forms were associated with the collection of taxes, the organization of forced labour, or with unwanted forms of policing, reform, enumeration and reorganization (Brown 1990a: 88–9, 215). More than 100 such atomistic attacks took place in some years (Brown 1990a: 90). Sabotaging the railway, for example, was sometimes actually about an attack on the reputation of the local *'umda*, as it would show that he was incapable of keeping order, and this might lead to his dismissal (Brown 1990a: 92). Banditry, the uprooting of crops, arson, cattle-poisoning, and attacks on 'landlords or their agents' (Brown 1990a: 7, 1990b), were also part of this repertoire. While such actions appeared to the authorities as crime, depending on their intent and on the wider reaction, they could be judged political (Brown 1990a: 7). Women in particular were charged and fined for 'insulting' behaviour and comportment with British soldiers (Tucker 1985: 146).

Peasants also had more communal ways of applying their own standards of justice, taking matters into their own hands, bypassing authorities, and redressing wrongs. Here, larger groups took direct action, taking 'matters into their own hands to enforce their will' through land invasions, rent strikes, attacks by large groups on landlords and officials, and so on (Brown 1990a: 7). Such actions of which there were hundreds in the Egyptian countryside between 1882 and 1914, could involve 'entire villages, estates, or significant sectors of them' (Brown 1990a: 111). These repertoires were not the result of formal organization or planning. Most, instead, were

immediate responses to specific threats or offenses to a community. These threats or offenses included events such as the confiscation of land, raising of rent, or arrest of a member of the community (Brown 1990a: 111).

Some communal actions, judged by the authorities to be forms of disorder, were based on long-standing disputes, others from a more

specific confrontation. They involved conflicts between renters and landlords, or moments where a villager's land was seized for failure to repay debts, where most residents were in debt. Such conflicts could spark confrontations with authorities or the wealthy that made use of physical assault. 'Crowds gathered and took violent action when a member of the community was defending rights that villagers felt were theirs' (Brown 1990a: 111). Brown writes that 'peasants had definite ideas about when they deserved land, water, or lower rents and acted communally to enforce these ideas' (Brown 1990a: 116). He argued that 'a common political outlook grants peasant communities the ability to act communally in the face of formidable obstacles' (Brown 1990a: 127).

Peasants achieved a degree of success in keeping the state at bay. Clément's study of Egypt's law courts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrates the extraordinary opacity of the peasant village world to police, prosecutors, lawyers, bureaucrats and officials (Clément 2012). The intense frustrations that these officials experienced, the fact that peasants would dissimulate, the fact that testimonies in court would change or contradict one another, were less an indication of some inherent peasant peculiarity, irrationality or lack of competence, and more a reason to believe that the *fallabin* treated the new court system, especially when it arrived to judge them in capital cases, as at best a necessary evil and at worst an unwanted intrusion from distant parts into their lives and conflicts, which in general were better dealt with and settled through other means. It is not always clear who was using whom, and who was making a fool of whom, when winding through these cases. Elites found the peasant voice incomprehensible. In some sense, just as in the court rooms of colonial India, the subaltern could not speak (Spivak 1988). In another sense, however, the subaltern did not want to speak. Silence and dissimulation was a way of keeping police and judges at bay. Looking from below, it is possible to discern some of the ways in which peasants maintained forms of relative autonomy in their own forms of contentious politics.

Peasant contentious politics, however, was not hermetically sealed from the wider world. Just as in the 1860s and 1870s in Egypt, or on Mount Lebanon in 1858–60, peasants seized on languages and potential opportunities stemming from ideological and political transformations. One illustration comes from the protests of the peasants and

small-holders of Diyarbakir in Eastern Anatolia in 1910. Here petitioners referenced the ‘sun of liberty’ that was supposed to have risen with the constitutional revolution of 1908. To this they appealed in their search for justice against the destruction of their houses, seizure of their land, the harassment of their womenfolk and the killing of their children by feudal land-owners (Özok-Gündoğan n.d.: 1). Here, in a labour-repressive context where customs were violated by profit-making land-owners who had not abandoned their feudal attitudes, local moral economy was intertwined with a local interpretation of wider events.

Conclusion

The foregoing account offers only a synoptic glimpse of some of the protests, uprisings, movements and truncated revolutions of the long nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to argue, on the basis of the evidence submitted here, that it is impossible to understand the long crisis of the dynastic and Islamic states of the region from 1798 to 1914 without some grasp of the role played by contentious mobilization. In matters of centralization and reform, contentious politics was always at stake. Even the implementation of the Tanzimat, usually conceived of in highly top down ways, was fraught for imperial power-holders thanks to the ways in which it unleashed mobilizations in its name, especially in the Balkans and on Mount Lebanon. These mobilizations could transform into secessionist and nationalist movements. One reason that this did not happen on Mount Lebanon had to do with the transformation of Tanyus Shahin’s popular uprising into a sectarian conflict, a shift which did not take place purely because of circumstances, but owed something to Shahin’s own decisions and proclamations that put him at the head of all Christians. Not for the last time in world history, we find an example of the dangers for the dominant bloc, and opportunities and potentials for subaltern social groups, of projects of reform from above that work significant changes on the hegemonic bases of rule.

We note that Egyptian imperial power in the Sudan was always confronted with resistance, was broken completely for almost two decades by the Mahdiyya in the 1880s and 1890s, and only restored through British power, which in turn had been foiled for the same period by heavy losses in the ranks of the colonial army. The Greek

uprising, as well as those in the Mashriq, not to mention the movements of the Al-Muwahhidun in Arabia, raised the costs of Egyptian expansionism and Ottoman rule alike. The Al-Muwahhidun continued to regroup throughout the period in spite of suffering military defeat. The Ottomans could not prevent secession in the Balkans, which owed not just to European machinations but also to tenacious, contentious mobilization. Revolutionaries under the banners of Islam brought two new states into being, one in Sudan, the other in Arabia, while Abd Al-Qadir in Algeria and Al-Hiba in Morocco also instated new forms of statehood, albeit temporarily.

Ottomans and Moroccan rulers had to be careful lest their tax-raising went too far and provoked uprisings or protest, or evasion which reduced tax revenues. Weapons of the weak could blunt the force of the burdens imposed by the centralizing states. Merchants, land-owners and others could not always get away with land dispossession, profiteering, or exploitation without finding themselves confronted with collective mobilization, whether of the transgressive-communal or the contained-petitioning type. These tenacious efforts sometimes acted to restore the terms of the *status quo ante*, while working changes on that *status quo*, and to entrench subaltern claims to rights, welfare and protection, and define these terms in ways which were coloured by the interests and ideas of peasants and townspeople. The 'Ammyya in the Hawran of 1889, for example, was successful in winning back rights for cultivators against Druze overlords. Strikes by wage-workers from the 1860s proved themselves capable of winning socio-economic concessions. Mobilization around elections for headmen and guild shaykhs alike pushed forward representative and electoral principles in Egypt in the decade or so before 1882. Appeals to the state also helped to consolidate state centralization itself. On the other hand, Sufi orders, tribes, guilds and peasants proved themselves capable on various occasions of defending their forms of autonomy in the face of deprivations from without.

The uprising in Egypt against French imperialism played a role in the ignominious exit of the French in 1801. Protests in Algeria constantly put the French on notice that they could only push violence and domination so far. Heavy-handed dual control in Egypt after 1876 provoked challenges to the existing order which in turn occasioned a British invasion, a blow against Whitehall's (and Lord Salisbury's) wish to combine mastery with indirect rule and empire on the cheap

if possible. Protests in Morocco blocked the advance of European investment and made European economic encroachment and direct rule very difficult to secure. Mining concessions and infrastructural works were always difficult to obtain and take forward in the face of many-sided forms of Moroccan resistance. Even the sultan of Morocco could not deliver the country securely to the foreigner, as the French and Spanish discovered after 1912. The tobacco boycott in Iran in the 1890s was remarkably successful in causing the cancellation of the corrupt concessions handed out by the Qajar shah.

Urban and liberal reformists, sometimes with the support of wider groups, established the principle of representation in the state on at least three occasions, in Egypt during 1881–2, in Iran in 1905 and Istanbul in 1908. In Iran, *ulema*, bazaar, and urban intelligentsia forged alliances in the name of the Iranian patriotism, won representation in the state through an elected parliament (*majles*), and limited at least for a period the absolutist powers of the corrupted and relatively weak Qajar shah (Afary 1996). These were dramatic achievements. Even though short-lived or truncated, they challenged the principle of dynastic sovereignty, subjected *khedive*, sultan and shah to a constitution, and brought into being parliaments that were supposed to represent the will of the people and ensure binding consultation. They left an important legacy for the future in all three major states.

Likewise, while the revolutionary mobilizations of the nineteenth century were often eventually crushed, their legacy too was not simply dispersed. The Mahdist revolution, as we have noted, was no local, tribal affair. Holt writes that ‘the form which the revolution took proved in the end more hostile to tribalism than either the Egyptian rule which preceded it or the Condominium which followed’ (Holt 1970: 17). Above all, perhaps, before the Mahdi’s successor put a Ta’ishi tribal stamp on the Mahdist state, before means of administration based on the Egyptian model were borrowed, the Mahdist movement integrated tribal elements on a new basis. None of these movements (the Mahdi of Sudan, Abd Al-Qadir in Algeria, Al-Hiba in Morocco, Al-Sanusi in Cyrenaica and the Al-Muwahhidun in Arabia) were tribal in the sense that they all counter-posed a new principle of authority that could unite different tribes under one banner, and they undercut the authority of tribal chiefs in various ways. By mobilizing around principles that could unite tribes, these revolutionary movements developed a principle that nationalism was later to take up, but

not to invent. They also developed a mode of integration which indirect forms of imperial rule were usually unwilling or unable to bring about: either because imperialism ruled indirectly through local tribal shaykhs, as in Iraq, and especially in the Persian Gulf; or because imperialism, when it engaged in heavy-handed forms of centralization, such as in Jabal Druze in the early 1920s, provoked such resistance as to make the experiment unworkable.

In other words, far from being 'backward' and 'peripheral', the great movements of the 'Arid crescent' played a role in the development of centralized forms of statehood and integrated and horizontal notions of political community. The legacy of these movements too stretched into the twentieth century.

On a great many occasions, however, the picture was not so positive, protest attracted repression and even imperial occupation, and had numerous unintended consequences. Uprisings in the borderlands of empire regularly had the unintended consequence of increasing the extensity and intensity of colonial rule. Colonial invasions took place with or without protest, such as that of the French of Algeria in 1830. Nonetheless, protest could provide the pretext and even an important reason for invasion. This took place in southern Algeria and Morocco after the 1840s, on Mount Lebanon after 1858–60, in Tunisia in 1881, in Egypt in 1882, in Sudan in the 1880s and 1890s, and in Iran in 1911. Not for nothing did people in Egypt mutter '*ya 'Urabi ya khurrabi*' ('Urabi you destroyer') after his movement played a role in precipitating the British invasion of 1882. Where contentious mobilization did not challenge British clients, as in the Persian Gulf, highly indirect rule remained the norm. There is something indeed in Robinson and Gallagher's excentric theory of empire.

In the face of the constant threat from without [their colonies], which also affected the attitude of the Moslems under their rule, [empires] ... felt compelled to extirpate these inimical movements and to enlarge their territory (Peters 1979: 153).

In other words, repressive and reactionary elements at work within the structures of imperial power were activated against movements in the region. The Moroccan sultan Mawlay Hassan (r. 1873–94) understood this logic well. It was for this reason that he failed to support the small-scale *jihad* that broke out in the Rif in 1893 against a Spanish armed attempt to seize territory outside Melilla. He feared that the

French would then use such a challenge as a pretext to establish a protectorate, to bring in the apparatus of direct colonial rule, as they had done in Tunisia in 1881 (Burke 1976: 30). Resistance, in short, had a highly mixed record in keeping out direct colonial rule. It was a dynamic that was to invert itself between 1914 and 1976, as we shall see. The revolutionary, religious mobilizations were generally crushed and failed to achieve their objectives, in part because of the way Europeans found their threat to be intolerable.

An important consequence of this dialectic, nonetheless, was a crucial contribution to the crises of the states that remained standing, beset as they were by colonial encroachment, the causes of which came from both above and below. Likewise, the breakdown of constitutional movements, and the moments when spheres of autonomy and defensive gestures were not respected, which were many, thinned out the hegemony of the dynastic states guaranteed by divine favour, Islamic law, sultanic justice and customary autonomy, and fuelled reasons to countenance new measures of how these failures were to be judged. Mobilizing projects were neither able completely to replace, escape, sustainably reform, nor adequately defend the state. Thus, the crisis of the Alawi, Ottoman and Qajar states in the early twentieth century, and the combinations of coercion and consent that they used, was not brought about solely by European pressure or the activities of elites, but also by the tenacity, partial success and perhaps even more regularly the failure of a great array of contentious mobilization.

In order to understand and explain this contentious mobilization, the argument here is that we must pay significant attention to the dynamics of hegemonic expansion and contraction on the one hand, and the content and dynamics of the mobilizing projects and their forms of leadership on the other. Protests were not rooted in some pre-existing set of Oriental, Arab or Muslim essences: above all because Islam, justice, reform, and custom were defined in widely divergent and changing ways. Nor can any modernist, teleological reading suffice. We are not dealing here with primitive, archaic, or elementary forms of protest: immature, 'somewhat inchoate and naïve', stymied by the 'dye' of 'traditional culture' that was yet to 'wash off', and alienated by an irrational attachment to religion (Guha 1983: 10–13, 76, 170, 277). This reading of South Asian protest cannot be grafted onto the history of the MENA because it cannot capture the peaks and troughs of protests, their geographic origin, their diversity and creativity, what

they owed to 'secular' state-craft and custom, as well as their strengths and weaknesses and their consequences for political struggle. We must be careful, moreover, before conceiving of protest in terms of objective contradictions, or ascribing contestation to the arrival of new forms of 'social mobilization', or emerging social classes and groups, the urban intelligentsia, wealthy peasantry, middle classes and wage-workers. Centralization in itself did not always stir protest. Neither, even, did colonial rule or world economic integration. And where new social groups were able to find a place in the state, or were given the liberty to earn a living without interference or exploitation, or found that their ideas were in consonance with ruling projects, their rise was not associated with significant protest either.

Instead, protests were much more likely to be associated with the dynamics of hegemonic contraction and expansion. Where authorities broke up existing sites of consent without replacing them with new ones, and thus altered the existing balance of coercion and consent in favour of the former, protest was commonplace, especially in transgressive mode. Heavy-handed forms of state centralization, involving excessive and unfair taxes, conscription and regulation were crucial here, especially in Egypt, for example, in the 1870s and early 1880s. Equally important in stirring protest was the dereliction of the state. This history was particularly marked in North Africa (from Morocco to Cyrenaica) and in Iran, where the central authorities were weaker on the one hand, and repeatedly seen as derelict in the face of colonial encroachment, on the other. The inability of the forces of successive Moroccan sultans to protect the Dar Al-Islam against European political and economic intrusion, and their successive military defeats, particularly the retreat from Algeria in 1832, the defeat at Isly in 1844 at the hands of the French, and the defeat against the Spanish in 1858–9, and the capitulation of 1912, drove protest and mobilization throughout the period. Egypt's debt crisis in 1876 paved the way for the 'Urabi movement and to a lesser extent the revolutionary Mahdiyya in Sudan.

On the other hand, when the authorities opened the door to authorized sites of contention and grievance, such as petitioning in Egypt from the 1820s and 1830s, or elections among shaykhs of guilds and villages there from the 1860s, the populace were often quick to make use of these sites, often for forms of contained contention, insofar as they provided meaningful sites of articulation and participation in the socio-political order.

Hegemonic contraction and expansion is not enough to explain the dynamics of protest. When were burdens deemed ‘excessive’? Who judged the state to be ‘derelict’? How could effective organization for change be organized? Much depended on mobilizing projects, their social bases, leaderships, ideology, goals, organization, strategies and tactics. The ‘Urabi movement and the Mahdiyya, for example, may have drawn on a similar over-arching crisis, that of the Egyptian state in the wake of the debt crisis, but they were completely different, and had different dynamics and consequences, in part as a function of the mobilizing projects that they organized, and the sharply contrasting ideas and frames that were stitched into their contentious actions. While ‘Urabi is usually seen as modern and the Mahdi as traditional, the latter was the more effective military leader, emerged from a much humbler position of complete exclusion from the state (unlike ‘Urabi), and managed to create a new (albeit short-lived) state where ‘Urabi largely failed. As we have seen, it is hard to ignore the point that Al-Mahdi’s revolutionary project was stitched together at its centre by a set of very powerful normative commitments; such apocalyptic certainties played hardly any role in the ‘Urabi movement itself. On the other hand, the ‘Urabi movement unwittingly created an important political opportunity for Al-Mahdi because it worked to diminish the military capacity of the Egyptian empire for several important months. Ultimately both movements precipitated the colonial occupation and rule of their respective countries.

The use of guerrilla war *avant la lettre* was a surprisingly powerful strategy in the face of slow-moving, centralized colonial armies operating in remote areas and facing difficulties of re-supply. They were among the only military forces in the MENA capable of actually defeating European invaders in battle. Berque was right to speak of the ‘striking power’ of this kind of revolt. Just when ‘coastal Islam’ was collapsing, ‘inland peoples . . . from the borders of the Sahara to the verge of the equatorial forest resisted the advance of the colonizers under the banner of religion’. He cited Ma’ Al-‘Ainain in Mauretania who fought off the French from the Adrar Valley in northern Mauretania in the 1890s and 1900s, Al-Sanusi, Al-Mahdi and the Al-Muwahhidun. He noted the 1881 defeat of the Flatters Expedition at the hands of Tuareg near Bir Al-Gharama, and the 1883 death of Hicks along with 10,000 men in Darfur (Berque 1972: 36–9, 139). Von Sivers points out in regard to the rising of Abu Amama in

southwest Algeria in 1881 that the 'French troops were barely superior militarily to the insurrectional Algerian contingents', but that the latter broke up before colonial peace was threatened (Von Sivers 1982: 145). The guerrilla tactics of the Mahdi in Sudan were able to defeat Anglo-Egyptian forces.

The comparison with the ease with which the large, centralized, wealthy and populous state of Egypt was conquered by Britain in 1882 is striking. While Egypt, which compared to Sudan had a significant military capacity, could be taken over in late 1882 with a peculiar lack of military confrontation, the same could not at all be said of Sudan, Algeria, Morocco and so on. The weaknesses of 'Urabi's military leadership and strategy have already been examined. While the urban and European-educated classes may have rather derided the rural forms of resistance against colonialism, it was in many ways guerrilla tactics, borrowed from a forgotten nineteenth-century drama, that urban groups ended up taking up, to some extent in the 1920s, but above all after 1945. In the case of Al-Mahdi, it was, counter-intuitively enough, the journey towards statehood that turned out to be a weakness, not a strength – as it involved the loss of all the tactical advantages of guerrilla warfare, and made the Mahdi's position and forces vulnerable to open confrontation with more numerous and better-equipped colonial forces.

Guerrilla tactics were not invulnerable. According to Peters, the main reason for the ultimate defeat of the Qadiriyya, the Sanusiyya and the Mahdiyya was the military and technical superiority of colonial adversaries (Peters 1979: 151–3). This superiority boiled down above all to a question of re-supply and the sheer numbers of soldiers that the empires could put into the field. All these movements operated away from areas where the colonial armies supply lines were stretched thin or disrupted. The success in Egypt was only possible because Napoleon's army was cut off there because the fleet was sunk. The Mahdi was successful in part because the British were stretched thin in Sudan because it was difficult to get there, and because Egyptian political will to 'get there' was paralysed at a crucial moment (1881–2). The Algerian countryside, but not the cities, were defensible up to a point thanks to topography. In other words, mobilizing projects could only account for so much. The will and capacity of colonial empires to put soldiers in the field eventually was able to overwhelm most of the guerrilla movements of the nineteenth century.

The strengths of normative commitment, on the other hand, are illustrated by the dogged continuity of the Arabian Al-Muwahhidun of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were far harder to suppress – in Shaw’s judgment – than the Anatolian notables. This was partly due to the fact that they made use of geography, remoteness and the use of organizational bases far from Ottoman control. But it was also because they had a cause; they promoted an alternative principle of order which could serve as an effective basis of cohesion. The key weapon that the Ottomans had against the Al-Muwahhidun was the Egyptian army. In the face of superior military force, Abdullah Ibn Saud surrendered on September 1818, ending the early Saudi state; during 1818–20, Egyptians occupied most of Nejd and Hejaz with only distant provinces remaining outside their control. But after Ibrahim’s return to Egypt in 1822, the Egyptian presence disintegrated. Wahhabism as an idea endured, even when its immediate political and economic achievements had been destroyed. The Saud were then able to rebuild their state and army in Nejd under the leadership of Turki Ibn Abdullah Ibn Muhammad Ibn Saud (1823–34) (Shaw 1977: 15). On the other hand, as we shall see, normative commitments aside, it was only when the Al-Saud decided to play the game of accommodation with the British empire, not to mention develop new forms of organization, that they managed to secure statehood in the 1910s and 1920s.

One of the key weaknesses of the urban reformists was that they lacked a popular constituency. In some respects, this owed to the fact that they were generally unwilling to develop or mobilize one. Indeed, the reformist milieu often took a dim view of popular protest. Butrus Al-Bustani, for example, a key literary figure of the *nahda*, the Arab ‘enlightenment’ centred on Beirut in the 1860s and 1870s, saw the Bedouin as only semi-civilized, who fell outside the purview of an emerging, perfectible and progressive ‘society’ (*al-hay’a al-ijtima’iyya*), defined by its lack of fanatics and troublemakers, its more complex socio-economic organization and its more advanced needs and wants (Bustani 1999). Other elites, given a European-style schooling, were typically highly detached from and opposed to popular mobilization. The engineer and technocrat and government official Ali Mubarak was ‘strongly opposed to public disturbances’ (Berque 1972: 107); he characterized the millenarian Ahmad Al-Tayyib as ‘a sinful, subversive man who led people to disobey God’, and transgress the Shari’a because he

disobeyed the ‘imam’ of Muslims, the *khedive* (Abul-Magd 2013: 112). ‘Urabi was very different, and did appeal to wider grievances and attempt to mobilize popular support. Nevertheless, he mainly manoeuvred within the state, and had few strategies, goals, ideas or forms of organization that could genuinely link his movement to larger constituencies. The CUP detested the ‘mob’, imposed their constitution by force in the end, largely against the wishes of the wider and more popular constituencies that opposed them in the name of Islam. They in turn did not do very much to develop the means of mass mobilization and took fright at strikes and popular protests. The liberals of the *majles* in Iran in 1905–11 also lost the support of the urban crowd at an early stage because of their failure to pursue social and economic rights (Abrahamian 1993; Afary 1996). For this reason, we cannot ignore the weakness of reforming mobilization that stemmed from its own inability and unwillingness to build stronger links to wider constituencies.

By the same token, revolutionary, defensive and autonomist movements, especially in Egypt and the Ottoman centre after the marginalization of the urban crowd in the early nineteenth century, often lacked significant allies among urban, educated classes. Islamic modernists, for example, for all the attention they have garnered, were not really to be found among the ranks of defensive, revolutionary or autonomist forms of mobilization. After the idea of armed struggle for the faith lost ground to more accommodationist interpretations of the faith, many an Islamic modernist promoted reform not rebellion. Al-Afghani’s goal was to create a more united and cohesive Islamic world capable of eliminating the scourge of Western imperialism, direct and indirect. For all his influence, what he actually did was produce words and urge rulers to do certain things. His emphasis on imperialism drew him away from the central drama of nineteenth-century commoner mobilization, which revolved around the state. He urged the Afghans to make a deal with the Russians against the British; he urged Iran to withstand the British, the Ottoman sultan to stand up to the Russians, and sought British help for Iran at another point. In other words, Al-Afghani acted as an advisor to monarchs and powers, albeit a radical one who frequently fell out of favour and was permanently in exile. He did not build a movement. Acknowledging his lack of success, he also came to oppose at the end of his life the edifice of royal despotism, wondering if he might not have been more effective had he

spent more time mobilizing among the mass of the population and less time on the ‘sterile soil’ of royal courts (Abrahamian 1982: 62–5). Pan-Islam in Morocco in the early 1900s, indeed, was by and large about small groups in the pay of the Ottoman state trying to win adherents but without much success (Burke 1972). It was not a popular movement.

Almost all movements, especially outside of Iran, suffered from a lack of support from the religious establishment, especially the Sunni *ulema*. The urban, scriptural *ulema* waded into the stream of contentious mobilization only rarely, and almost never *en bloc* or on an institutional basis. They moved in Istanbul in the 1800s, in Egypt in 1798–1801, and again, to some extent, in Egypt in 1881–2. Only in Arabia did an important section of the *ulema* side with the state-building project of the Al-Saud, although we note that the intellectual architect of Salafi-Wahhabism, Abd Al-Wahhab, was opposed by even his own brother. But the *ulema* stayed quiet in Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, or for the most part in the Mashriq, Egypt and Anatolia. Even in 1909 in Istanbul, it was a Sufi and a member of a reforming society that led the uprising in the name of Islam. It was no wonder that so many forms of protest (Islamic and secular) took as their point of departure the inertia, rigidity, silence or political irrelevance of the religious establishment. Many of the movements under study were actively opposed to the scriptural *ulema* of the cities, whether in Sufi or millenarian clothes. The conservatism in regard to the *makhzan* of the Sunni *ulema* of Morocco, for example, was apparently a nineteenth-century phenomenon, linked to the nexus of interests between urban merchants, pious foundations, and the central state which developed over the century (Abun-Nasr 1987). The situation was markedly different in Iran where the religious establishment had more financial autonomy, where it was not headed by an appointee of the state, and where Shi‘ism in turn, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had developed a tendency to stand in independent judgment on the state through *ijtihad*. These factors weighed in the tobacco boycott, and contributed to the success of the constitutional revolution. They were to matter in Iraq in 1920 as we will see. There can hardly be any doubt that the scriptural Sunni *ulema* of the cities commanded the loyalty and attention of significant sections of the populace, and they also seem to have played a role in constraining that populace from contentious mobilization. In addition to economic

interests and state control, quietist, conservative interpretations of the faith stressing obedience and order and opposing chaos and disturbance played an important role in this inactivity. The Sunni *ulema* contributed thereby in no small way to the long crisis of the hegemony of the Islamic state: only radicals and renegades from their ranks sought to re-formulate the meaning of such a state. Most maintained their silence on these matters, and failed to seize the initiative in theorizing a new form of Islamic politics. It was a failure that lay Islamists in later years were determined not to repeat.