

In Memoriam

Charles Issawi (1916-2000), a prolific scholar who created the economic history of the Middle East as a field of study and helped at least two generations of scholars and students better understand the origins of the Modern Middle East, a former president of MESA (1973) and the Middle East Economic Association (1978-83), and an individual of great modesty, charm, and wit passed away on 8 December 2000.

Issawi was born in Cairo to Syrian parents. He spent his childhood in Cairo, Khartoum, and Lebanon and attended school in Alexandria. He matriculated at Magdalen College at Oxford in 1934, where he met Albert Hourani for the first time. Unaware of each other, they had both attended a History Scholarship examination earlier that year and had taken two of the three history scholarships offered by the College, "leaving the third for the whole British Empire," as he put it years later. Upon graduation, Issawi returned to Cairo and began working for the National Bank of Egypt. By 1942, in the midst of the War, he was at work on a book on the Egyptian economy (*Egypt: An Economic and Social Analysis*). Just as the manuscript was completed, he accepted an offer to teach politics and economics at the American University in Beirut. In 1946 he was invited to work in the Arab Office in Washington, DC, which soon led to a position at the United Nations where he worked on surveys of economic conditions in the Middle East.

In 1951, Issawi began teaching in the Economics Department of Columbia University, where he stayed until he accepted an endowed chair at the Near Eastern Studies Department of Princeton University in 1975. He formally retired in 1986, but this apparently meant "putting on new tires and moving full speed ahead," as he defined retirement in a ceremony held jointly for him and Bernard Lewis. Over the years, he supervised many excellent students including Timothy Mitchell, Christopher Taylor, Ami Ayalon, Arnon Grois, and Timur Kuran.

When Issawi began work on the economics of the Middle East in the 1940s, there was hardly anything written on the subject. By 1960, international institutions, as well as scholars in the region, had begun to work on the subject. Always historically minded, he decided to shift his focus to the economic history of the Middle East, about which there existed almost nothing at that time. The result was a series of edited volumes on the economic history of the region since 1800: *Middle East* (1966), *Iran* (1970), *Turkey* (1980), and *The Fertile Crescent* (1988), culminating in his grand synthesis *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa*, first published in 1982. These volumes examine the integration of the Middle East into the world economy after 1800 and explore the origins of the region's underdevelopment compared to Western Europe and other parts of the world. Many of his articles on economic history were reprinted in *The Middle East Economy: Decline and Recovery* (1995).

Issawi was deeply influenced by Ibn Khaldun as well as great economists and political economists from Smith, Ricardo, Marx, and Marshall to Hicks, Lewis, and Kuznets. He came to believe that while Islamic civilization had many achievements in its formative years, there had occurred little progress in Middle Eastern science, philosophy, technology, or economic thought after 1400. In contrast, there had occurred a good deal of technological development in Europe, particularly in the field of energy, during the late Middle Ages. In his assessment, the Middle East was technologically less advanced and economically less dynamic than Europe already by 1500. He argued that even though European competition and imperialism did have adverse effects on the region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and helped the rise of nationalism in the region during the twentieth century, the poor economic performance of the Middle East was due primarily to internal causes and not the impact of Europe or the world economy.

In addition to the books he produced on the economics and economic history of the Middle East and Middle East oil, Issawi made incursions into other fields and wrote many articles on historical, cultural, and, occasionally, political topics. Many of these articles were reprinted in *The Arab World's Legacy* (1981). He published *Issawi's Laws of*

Motion in 1973, which combines his keen insights into things Middle Eastern with considerable wit to arrive at such profound truths as Issawi's Law of Petroleum, Path of Progress, and Rules on Revolutions. An expanded edition appeared with additional cartoons in 1991. He also published verse translations of German and Arabic poetry.

When Charles Issawi began his career, the history of the modern Middle East barely existed as a separate field. It was treated, above all, as part of the study of history, languages, and cultures of the Islamic world. Little attention was paid to the economy from this perspective. In the post-World War II era, he and his generation of scholars established the study of the history of the modern Middle East as a discipline in its own right. And it was thanks to him that we now have a well-developed understanding of the role of economics and how economic developments relate to political, social and cultural changes in the shaping of the modern Middle East.

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Lorenzo Kent Kimball (1922-1999), Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Utah, passed away on 10 June 1999, in Salt Lake City at the age of seventy-six. He is survived by Jane, his wife of fifty-five years, his sons Patrick and Michael, and his grandchildren.

Kent was born, raised, and spent most of his life in Utah. He enlisted in the army upon graduation from high school at the age of eighteen. His military career spanned from 1941 to his final retirement from the US Air Force in 1962 as Lieutenant Colonel, with a brief interruption in 1945-46, a year that he spent as a student at the University of Utah. He later earned a B.A. (1962) and a Ph.D. (1968) in political science from the same institution.

Upon his retirement from the Air Force, Kent began a second career: that of a student of politics, and especially of Middle Eastern politics, a field for which he developed an avid interest. While completing his undergraduate degree, the University took the step, in 1960, of founding the Middle East Center (or the Center for Intercultural Studies as it was initially known) under the direction of the renowned medievalist, the late Aziz S. Atiya. Kent took this opportunity to study Arabic and developed a genuine interest in Arabic and Islamic civilization. In 1963, he was awarded the Graduate Certificate in Middle East Studies, and in 1968, he completed a doctoral thesis on "The Changing Pattern of Political Power in Iraq, 1958-1966," later updated to cover the period 1958-1971, and published as a monograph in 1972.

In 1965, Kent was appointed Director of Conferences and Institutes at the University's Division of Continuing Education and held an adjunct appointment in the Department of Political Science. From 1967 on, he joined the Department of Political Science as an Assistant Professor (1967-71). He was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 1972 and to Professor in 1977. He chaired the same department from 1974 to 1982. In 1987, he retired from full-time teaching. Kent was active in the Western Political Science Association (Secretary-Treasurer, 1973-78) and was a member of its Executive Board (1979-81). He served on several occasions as acting director of the Middle East Center (University of Utah) and, after his retirement, contributed to its outreach programs.

My memory of Kent is that of an excellent teacher and supportive mentor. As a member of my doctoral committee, he was generous with his time and advice, and I could always count on a long talk with him to help me cope with the pressure of the dissertation. I also remember his excitement when he learned that I received an NEH grant during my last year as a graduate student. My best of recollection of Kent is that of an understanding and supportive friend.

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