

11-13 December 2016 Orient-Institut Beirut (OIB)

**LEFT-WING TRENDS IN THE ARAB WORLD (1948-1979):
BRINGING THE TRANSNATIONAL BACK IN**

GILBERT ACHCAR, HAGGAG ALI, ABDULSALLAM ALRUBAIDI, ANNE-LINDA AMIRA AUGUSTIN, ORIT BASHKIN, DALAL AL-BIZRI, MICHAELLE BROWERS, MUSA BUDEIRI, JEFFREY BYRNE, MAHER CHARIF, ELLIOTT COLLA, YASMEEN DAIFALLAH, LEYLA DAKHLI, NICOLAS DOT-POUILLARD, MOHAMED EID, ALEXANDER FLORES, NATE GEORGE, GENNARO GERVASIO, LAURE GUIRGUIS, DYALA HAMZAH, JENS HANSEN, SUNE HAUGBOLLE, ELIZABETH HOLT, IDRIS JEBARI, VIRINDER KALRA, ELIZABETH SUZANNE KASSAB, TARIQ MEHMOOD, KAMEL MHANNA, MARLENE NASR, MALIKA RAHAL, MATTHIEU REY, GIEDRE SABASEVICIUTE, MARGARET SCARBOROUGH, ALINE SCHLAEPFER, ABED TAKRITI, FAWWAZ TRABOULSI, PHILIPP WINKLER

December 11 at Mansion

7.00 *We Were Communists*, by Maher Abi Samra (2010)
Screening and Discussion

December 12 at the Orient-Institut

9.00- 7.15 Panels and Roundtables

7.30 *A Hundred Faces for a Single Day*, by Christian Ghazi (1972)
Screening and Dinner-Aperitif

December 13 at the Orient-Institut

10.00- 05.45 Panels

6.00 Keynote Speech: **Gilbert ACHCAR**

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

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

Organizer: Laure GUIRGUIS, postdoctoral researcher, OIB

In collaboration with The Mansion-Nadi li Kull Nas, Zoqaq al Blat. Beirut
With the support of the ERC-Programme WFAFW (When Authoritarianism Fails in the Arab World)

**Mansion. Abdul Kader Street Zokak el-Blat. Beirut
ORIENT INSTITUT. HUSSEIN BEYHUM STREET. ZOKAK EL-BLAT. BEIRUT**

At one time, not too long ago, radical left-wing trends were predominant in the Arab world — and throughout the world. After socialist revolutions as well as pan-Arab and Third-Worldist projects “melted into air” (Fadi Bardawil), left-wing activists turned to Islamism and to liberalism or converted to advocacy militancy, while security states strengthened in the Middle East in spite of growing contests and revolutionary waves during the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

But in 1967, the Arab political and cultural defeat against Israel in 1967 has fostered the formation of a revolutionary New Left, which drew on the revolutionary models of Chinese, Cuban, Algerian, and Vietnamese fighters, and mainly took a critical stance towards the USSR, the Arab communist parties and the Arab regimes which have proved unable or unwilling to take the bull by the horns. The national scale of analysis therefore does not allow one to take into account the revolutionary dreams and passions involved, which have been shaped by a transnational interpretative framework inspired by Marxism and embedded within the wider context of the Cold War and emancipation struggles.

To be sure, adopting a pericentric approach to the Cold War, several scholars have started paying closer attention to South-South connections. Meanwhile, beginning with the end of the 1990s, the attempts to better understand the historical dynamics that made the 1960s a critical juncture gave birth to a new epistemological framework, which was explicitly transnational and addressed from the “periphery” the issues of revolutionary movements and imaginaries, and the transformation of political subjectivities. Arab left-wing revolutionary movements, however, have long been set apart of these emerging field studies. But this is starting to change. This workshop is aimed at presenting and discussing recent trends in scholarship, which replace these movements in the broader dynamics of a transnational reference framework. Gathering an interdisciplinary and international team of scholars, it combines the history of power play, changing coalitions, and broken relationships, with the study on the circulation and reframing of representations, passions, hopes, and know-how, in the shifting interplay of local, national, regional, and transnational frames of reference.

Talking about the transnational, be it considered as a field study, an approach, or a category, let us start with the very paradox of the “global sixties”: left-wing revolutionary ideas, passions and representations became prevalent, up to forming a transnational universe of meaning, insofar as they were embedded in national struggles for emancipation. Hence, on the one hand, “understanding moments of global conjuncture such as the 1960s” (Jeremi Suri) requires a transnational approach. On the other hand, transnational history should not underestimate the persistence of the state as the dominant expression of political power, as well as the resilience of the nation as the main frame of reference for political communities. The first session (*Arab Nationalism and the Left: Convergences, Tensions, Aporia*) will explore these dynamics of tensions and convergences in several sites, from Baathist “experiment with leftist ideas” (Rey) to postcolonial Algeria and *al-Tanzim al-Shuyuṭ al-Misrī (TshM)*’s entanglement in a narrow national framework.

Then, we will pay attention to (*Counter-)* *Revolutionary Circulations in the Interplay of Transnational Networks and Local Challenges*, following four paths of investigation: foreign militants’ mobility towards the Middle East; motivations, organizational contexts and impacts of Arab militants’ circulations abroad; dynamics of translation and appropriation of revolutionary models; power play and the external frontier of the left in the Cold War Arab world. We will continue the

reflection on the *linkages and disjunctions between the three worlds* at the theoretical level, analyzing “Left-wing Egyptian Intellectuals' Readings of the Frankfurt School in the 1960-70s” (Ali) or deciphering the multilayered influence of trends such as “Pan-Africanism and Black Marxism in the development of a Sudanese radical thought within a Marxist framework” (Scarborough).

Complementing the cross regional approach, we propose to revisit the past and embark in the future, the future that left-wing militants had not dreamed of, our current situation. Whereas Achcar, in his keynote speech, will identify the *commonalities and differences between “the New Arab Left of the 1960-70s and the Global New Left,”* we will take up the invitation of Dina Khoury to think about “the idea of an Arab radical tradition” and ask: “*Do Arab radical intellectuals constitute a tradition?* If so, what are the various strands and contexts of such a tradition? What are the political and intellectual uses of positing such a tradition in the context of the current politics of the Middle East, dominated as it is by questions of Islamism, sectarianism and the persistence of authoritarian rule?”

From times to times, we will focus on revolutionary sites and experiences, by discussing the book *South Yemen under the Rule of the Left. A Personal Testimony*, by Fawwaz Traboulsi, by revisiting *The Dhofari Revolution*, and by engaging in conversation with Dalal al-Bizri, who has recently published the romanticized memoir of her militant experience, *Years of Revolutionary Joy*. Finally, let us hope that the presentation of Takriti, *Digital Histories of the Underground: Teaching the Palestinian Revolution*, will stimulate us not only to continue the discussion later on, but also to get involved in a collective endeavor of creating an archive of the Arab left.

L.G.

DECEMBER 12

9.00 Welcoming Address__Introduction

9.15-12.45 **(ARAB) NATIONALISM AND THE LEFT: CONVERGENCES, TENSIONS, APORIA**
Discussant: Marlene NASR, Researcher, Doha Institute, and Musa BUDEIRI, retired
Professor, Bir Zeit University

09.15 Dyala HAMZAH, Assistant Professor, University of Montreal

Pan-Arabism, Regionalism and Socialism in the Making of Professional Arab Historiography (1920s-1950s)

09.35 Michaëlle BROWERS, Professor, Wake Forest University

Communism, Socialism, Arab Nationalism, and the Imperative of Nation-Building: A Moment of Enthusiasm?

09.55 Matthieu REY, IREMAM, CNRS

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

10.15 Sune HAUGBOLLE, Associate Professor, Roskilde University

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

10.35-11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 Jeffrey BYRNE, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia

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

11.20 Mohamed EID, Assistant Professor, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

From Identity to Politics in the 1960-70s: The Great Shift in Arab Culture, Society and Identity

11.40 Gennaro GERVASIO, Senior Lecturer, Roma 3 University

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

12.00-12.45 Discussion

12.45 - 02.00 LUNCH

02.00-04.00 **GENEALOGIES OF AN ARAB TRADITION OF RADICAL THOUGHT**

Discussant: Dyala HAMZAH, Assistant Professor, University of Montreal

02.00 Jens HANSEN, Associate Professor, Toronto University

The Arab Radical Tradition in Comparative Perspective

02.20 Leyla DAKHLI, Marc Bloch Center, CNRS

Was the Arab Left ever Feminist? Revisiting the Arab Movements and their Leftist Counterparts (1920s-1960s)

02.40 Giedre SABASEVICIUTE, Postdoctoral Fellow, Oriental Institute (Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)

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

03.00 Tariq MEHMOOD, Assistant Professor, AUB, and Virinder KALRA, Senior Lecturer, University of Manchester

Poetry of Lotus and the Narratives of Hope

03.20-04.00 Discussion

04.00 – 04.30 Coffee Break

04.30-05.15 *Years of Revolutionary Joy* سنوات السعادة الثورية

(Dar al-tanwir, Beirut, 2015)

Discussion with Dalal al-BIZRI, Columnist for *al-Modon*

05.15-06.15 PARADOXES AND LEGACIES OF THE SOUTHERN YEMENI LEFT

Discussion around

جنوب اليمن في حكم اليسار: شهادة شخصية

South Yemen under the Rule of the Left. A Personal Testimony (Riad El Rayyes Books, Beirut, 2015)

By Fawwaz TRABOULSI

Anne-Linda AMIRA AUGUSTIN, PhD Candidate, Centre for Near and Middle East Studies, Philipps-University Marburg

Abdulsallam ALRUBAIDI, PhD Candidate, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

Fawwaz TRABOULSI, Visiting Professor, AUB

06.15-07.15 THE DHOFARI REVOLUTION: MODEL AND EXCEPTION?

Roundtable

Abdel Razzaq TAKRITI, Associate Professor, Houston University

Dr Kamel MHANNA, President of Amel Association

07.30-10.00 Screening and Diner-Aperitif

A Hundred Faces for a Single Day (1972), 60', by Christian Ghazi

DECEMBER 13

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

Discussant: Yasmeen DAIFALLAH, Assistant Professor, UMass-Amherst

10.00 Margaret SCARBOROUGH, PhD Candidate, Columbia University

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

10.20 Haggag ALI, Assistant Professor, Academy of Arts, Cairo

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

10.40 Idriss JEBARI, ACSS Postdoctoral Fellow at CAMES, AUB

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

11.00 Alexander FLORES, Professor Emeritus, Hochschule, Bremen

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

11.20- 11.50 Discussion

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

Abdel Razzaq TAKRITI, Associate Professor, University of Houston

12.50-02.00 LUNCH

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

Discussants: Laure GUIRGUIS, OIB Postdoctoral Fellow, and Aline SCHLAEPFER, Swiss National Science Foundation Fellow, University of Geneva & AUB

02.00 Malika RAHAL, Researcher, Institut du Temps présent, CNRS

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

02.20 Philipp WINKLER, PhD Candidate, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen Nuremberg

Khalid Ahmad Zaki and the Revolutionary Struggle in Iraq's Southern Marshlands

02.40 Maher CHARIF, Researcher, The Institute for Palestinian Studies

الشيوعيون الفلسطينيون وإشكالية العلاقة بين "الخاص" و"العام" في النضال الفلسطيني
Palestinian Communists: The Problem of the Relationship between the 'Particular' and the 'General' in the Palestinian Struggle

03.00 Orit BASHKIN Professor, Chicago University

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

03.20-03.50 Coffee Break

03.50 Nicolas DOT-POUILLARD, Researcher, ERC-programme WAFAW

The Fatah's Student Brigade (Katiba tullabiya): between Maoism, "Asian models" and Islamism (1972-1979)

04.10 Elliott COLLA, Associate Professor, Georgetown University

Revolution in an Era of Counter-Revolution: Transnational and Local Registers of 1970s Activism in Egypt

04.30 Nate GEORGE, PhD Candidate, Rice University

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

04.50 Elizabeth HOLT, Assistant Professor, Bard College

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

05.10-05.45 Discussion

06.00-07.00 Keynote Speech: Gilbert ACHCAR, Professor, SOAS, University of London

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

Discussant: Elizabeth Suzanne KASSAB, Associate Professor, Doha Institute