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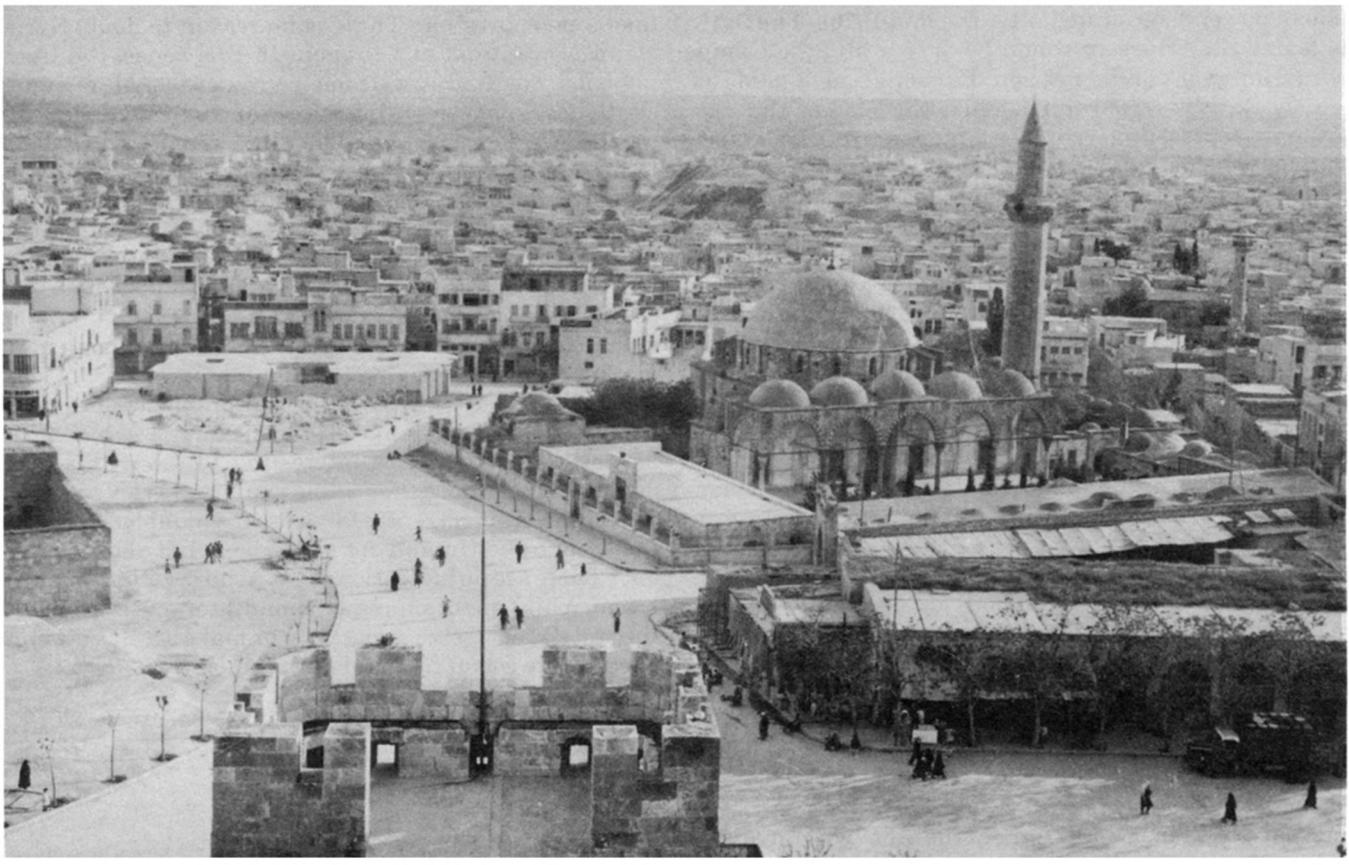
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Aleppo from the fortress, mid-1950s.

Samih Farsoun

# Syria's Muslim Brethren

Hanna Batatu

**W**ho are the Muslim Brethren in Syria? What is their significance socially? How are they related to Syria's social structure? What is the social meaning of their ideas and values? Are these ideas and values responses to distinguishable conditions and interests of one or more identifiable social groups? Are the Muslim Brethren, in other words, an incidental phenomenon or the organizational expression of a basic structural force? For the most part, this essay deals with these and related questions. It provides a tentative, exploratory interpretation, with some vivid and sharp images, rather than a thorough and refined picture of the movement.\*

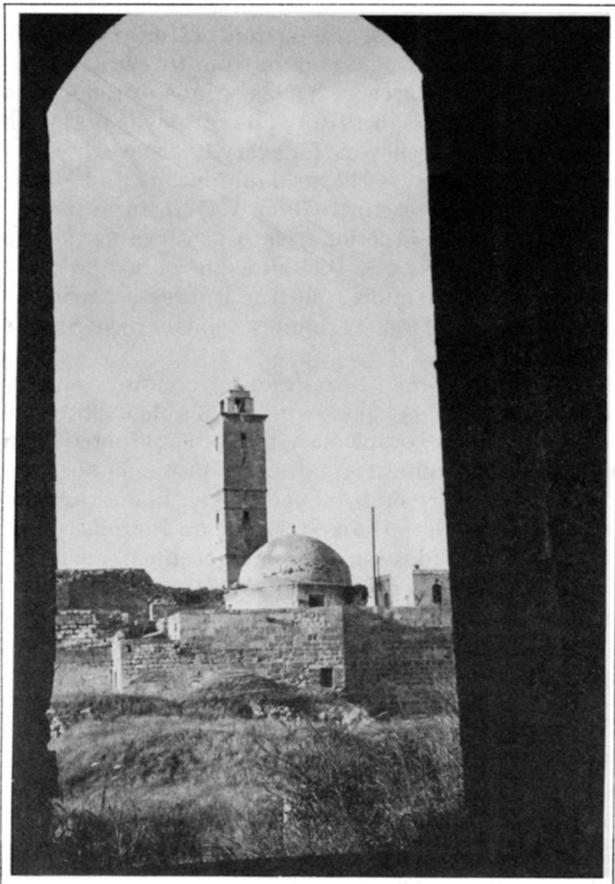
## Program and Ideas

The Muslim Brethren of Syria can initially be identified by the ideas which they have espoused. At first, they had no

\*I am grateful for comments on this paper by Hafiz ash-Shaikh, a knowledgeable journalist from Bahrain.

clear thoughts on social or economic issues or the problems of government. In the late 1940s and the 1950s they flirted with an undefined "Islamic socialism,"<sup>1</sup> but by 1961 they had excised the term altogether from their political vocabulary. Their earliest program—that of 1954—offered only generalities. It committed them to such objectives as "the combatting of ignorance, disease, want, fear, and indignity" and "the establishment of a virtuous polity which would carry out the rules and teachings of Islam."<sup>2</sup> Their central slogans were no more definite: "God is our End; His Messenger our Example; the Quran our Constitution; the Jihad our Path; and Death for God's Cause our Highest Desire."<sup>3</sup> These formulas had an immense weight of popular sentiment behind them, but their practical implications were vague and difficult to ascertain: The Quran and the Muslim heritage, like the Bible and the Christian traditions, contain rich and varied elements which can be and were in the past interpreted in different directions by different Muslims according to their circumstances.

In 1980, in the light of the accumulating experience of the intervening decades and under the red-hot pressure of the bloody events in Aleppo, Hamah, and Palmyra, the Muslim Brethren published a new program. Here they spelled out their position on several issues in somewhat clearer and more concrete terms. A number of points stand out.



Mosque in a village below Aleppo, mid-1950s.

Samih Farsoun

First, there is a forthright appeal to the “wise men” of the ‘Alawi community. “Nine or ten percent of the population,” the appeal reads, “cannot [indefinitely] dominate the majority in Syria.” This would be against “the logic of things.” “The [‘Alawi] minority has forgotten itself and is ignoring the facts of history.” This state of affairs and “the provocative and aggressive practices” of the regime with which it has linked its fate “could ignite a murderous civil war.” The appeal ends with the hope that the ‘Alawi community would shake off the “guardianship” of Hafiz al-Asad and his brother Rif‘at and thus “prevent the tragedy from reaching its sad end.”<sup>4</sup>

In this appeal, the Muslim Brethren clearly put themselves forward as the natural spokesmen of the Sunni community, and define their conflict with Syria’s rulers as a conflict between Sunnis and ‘Alawis. To no little extent, the conflict has indeed taken on this aspect in the past few years. At the same time, it is quite plain that the conflict is not about religion. It is not the beliefs of the Sunnis that have been in danger or under attack since the Ba‘thist take-over in 1963, but the social interests of the upper and middle elements of their landed, mercantile, and manufacturing classes.

It should be noted parenthetically that the 1980 program is remarkable for the absence of any mention of Iran’s Islamic Revolution. This is easily explained. The

Muslim Brethren had appealed to Ruhullah al-Khomeini in 1979 for moral support against Syria’s regime but received no response whatever. It did not escape their leaders that an informal coalition embracing Syria’s rulers, the Shi‘i ‘*Amal* movement in Lebanon, and Iran’s theocracy had taken shape. Moreover, they could not afford to displease the Iraq government which had been helping them with money and military supplies<sup>5</sup> and continues to be their principal source of support. Over and above this, Sa‘id Hawwa, the chief ideologist of Syria’s Muslim Brethren, had made clear in no uncertain terms that the authentic community of Muslims is “the community in which has appeared the only form of truth conventionally recognized through history and which finds its embodiment in the People of the Sunnah.”<sup>6</sup> This appears to exclude, at least tacitly, an ideological accommodation with a regime so uncompromisingly Shi‘i as that of present-day Iran.

More to the point is the great emphasis which the Muslim Brethren place in their 1980 program on the political emancipation of the common citizens: “the need of the nation to regain its freedom is as vital as its need for air, water, and food.” They strongly condemn martial law, arbitrary decrees, and inhuman police practices and proclaim their attachment to the freedom of the citizenry to think, publish, assemble, protest, oppose, and form political parties and trade unions. They also declare themselves firmly for the principles of the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, and for a government subordinate to the rule of law and resting on *shura* [mutual consultation].<sup>7</sup>

Except for the last point, there is nothing characteristically Islamic about these values. They are obviously drawn from the moral armories of classical liberalism. There may be a temptation to dismiss them as empty formulas in an uncongenial context, but the temptation ought to be resisted. The recurring rise to power in the past three decades or so in Syria and other parts of the Arab world of unrepresentative and narrowly-based groups, their discharge of public affairs in manners prejudicial to the general interest, their violent and often bloody suppression of dissenters, their bringing of writers, journalists, and teachers to low esteem, and the sad deterioration of Arab thought have pushed the question of basic freedoms to the political forefront. Through bitter experiences, increasing numbers of politically conscious Syrians have realized that these freedoms are very important human values and have incalculable practical significance. What may have been in the 1940s mere catchwords have become now a living faith. By hoisting high the standard of political and civil liberties, the Muslim Brethren hope to press this faith into the service of their cause.

No less interesting are the economic demands of the Muslim Brethren. They insist on the need for vesting “full ownership of the land” in the farmers and for their liberation from middlemen, guardians, and officials who “suck [their] blood in the name of the state, party, and socialism.” They call for the transfer of the ownership of public industrial establishments unrelated to national security from the state to the workers. They favor adequate rewards and better conditions for the laborers in factories owned by private individuals, but in the same breath castigate workers who “think they are entitled to everything and

others possess no right to demand anything from them” and who “convert factories into *takaya* [hospices] for the lazy and the indolent.” They also call for the encouragement of artisans, and the freedom of private capital to export, import, and manufacture within the limits of a “studied plan approved by the *shura* [consultative council].” While conceding that “some merchants may be excessively greedy” and “inclined towards monopolism,” they express their conviction that “the state is bound to fail. . . when it turns into a merchant.”<sup>8</sup>

In brief, the economic program of the Muslim Brethren is consonant with the outlook and interests of the urban Sunni trading and manufacturing middle and lower middle classes. Can it be inferred from this that the Muslim Brethren are the organized expression and forward arm of these classes? To answer this question, it is necessary to cast a glance at the origins and evolution of this movement.

## Roots of the Movement

The Syrian branch of the Society of the Muslim Brethren struck roots first among young men who were for the most part students of the *shari'ah* [Islamic law]. Some of them had attended courses at Cairo's al-Azhar University; there they had come under the influence of the ideas of Hasan al-Banna, the society's founder. Others had apparently been won over by Egyptian Muslim Brethren who toured Syria in the middle 1930s.

With few exceptions, the earliest of the society's Syrian devotees stemmed from families of “men of religion.”\* Thus Muhammad al-Mubarak and Salah ash-Shash, who founded its Damascus branch in 1937, belonged to families of '*ulama*' of middling income and status. Mustafa as-Siba'i, the first superintendent general<sup>9</sup> of the society in Syria and its foremost leader from 1945 to 1961 came from a family which had for long provided the *khatibs* [preachers] of the Grand Mosque of Homs. His successor, 'Isam al-'Attar, who guided the entire organization from 1961 till the rift in its ranks in 1972 and continued up to 1980 to inspire only its Homs, Dayr az-Zur, and Damascus branches, also sprang from '*ulama*' of intermediate social standing and was himself the *imam* [prayer leader] at the mosque of Damascus University. 'Abd-ul-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, who led the seceding elements in 1972 and had set up the Aleppo branch in 1935, descended from a family of artisans and began life as a weaver but subsequently became a *mudarris* [teacher] of the *shari'ah*.<sup>10</sup>

The religious class with which the Muslim Brethren were and still are closely connected is not, relatively speaking, very large in Syria. It is not, in a numerical sense, anything like its Iranian counterpart. According to an informed Shi'i source, the *mullahs* in Iran counted no fewer than 120,000 in 1979;<sup>11</sup> if correct, this would translate roughly into one *mullah* for every 308 Iranians. By contrast there were in Syria among all denominations in 1960 only 1,761 and in 1970 only 2,843 “men of religion and

persons connected to them,”<sup>12</sup> including *muwaqqits* [timekeepers], mosque servants, and reciters of Qur'anic verses. In other words, there was one man from this broadly defined religious class for every 2,592 Syrians in 1960<sup>13</sup> and for every 2,217 Syrians in 1970.<sup>14</sup> The ratio was higher in urban than in rural areas: one for every 1,638 city-dwellers as against one for every 3,042 rural inhabitants in 1970. In clearer terms, there were in 1970 only 1,173 rural men of religion and related functionaries and servants for no fewer than 5,000 villages.<sup>15</sup> Due allowance must be made for statistical imperfections, but the figures confirm the discernible absence of men of religion from many of Syria's villages.

The bulk of the “men of religion” were and are very poorly remunerated, as is evident from Table I. The meagerness of the *imam* compensation can be gathered from whispers among merchants relating to the income of senior army officers: they are said, not perhaps without exaggeration, to average no less than 8,000 Syrian Pounds (about \$1,840) monthly. In addition, they can purchase subsidized goods from army cooperatives, build apartments or villas with state loans obtained on very easy terms, and—as the merchants wistfully point out—have the use of cars not subject to customs' inspection at official borders. By contrast, the minimum pay of the *khatib* and the *mudarris* is lower than that of the mosque servant; their maximum pay is higher only by nine and 18 percent respectively. Even the *imam*'s maximum salary exceeds that of the servant by only 58 percent.

Of course, the servant puts in long hours at the mosque, whereas the *imam* merely leads the assembly of the faithful in reciting the five daily prayers, and the *khatib* preaches to them only on Fridays. Moreover, a “man of religion” may discharge two or more religious functions. He may also receive fees on the occasion of ceremonies attendant upon circumcision, marriage, and death. Even so, except for the *muftis* and *qadis*, who draw much higher salaries—and there are no *muftis* and few *qadis* among the Muslim Brethren—the “men of religion” cannot, as a rule, live on the income they derive from religious service. They must frequently engage in petty trade or handicraft. Many of them are drapers or stationers or booksellers or perfume vendors.

Table I

Monthly Pay Scales, in Syrian Pounds,\* of “men of religion”\*\* and of “persons connected to them” as of March 6, 1980.

<i>imam</i> [prayer leader]	385-610
<i>mudarris</i> [teacher]	285-455
<i>khatib</i> [preacher]	250-420
<i>mu'azzin</i> [announcer of the hour of prayer]	285-320
<i>qari</i> [reciter of Qur'anic verses]	190-270
<i>muwaqqit</i> [timekeeper]	180-250
<i>khadim</i> [servant]	305-385

\*The Syrian pound exchanged for roughly 23 American cents in 1980.

\*\*Excluding *muftis* [consultative jurists] and *qadis* [judges in *Shari'ah* cases].

Source: Primed Minister's Decision No. 61 of March 6, 1980, Syrian Arab Republic, *Al-Jaridah ar-Rasmiyyah* . . . [Official Gazette], Part I, No. 11 of 1980, pp. 466-467.

In fact, there is a substantial degree of coincidence between the class of tradesmen and the religious shaikhly class. The shops of the tradesmen-shaikhs are usually located in the neighborhood of mosques. In Damascus, for example, they are established in the *suqs* [markets] of al-'Asruniyyah and al-Madinah close to the Umayyad Mosque. Some of the founders and earliest devotees of the Society of Muslim Brethren descended from this class of people, as is apparent from their family names: 'Attar is the Arabic for perfumist, Tunji<sup>16</sup> for goldsmith, ash-Shash for muslin or white cloth. Incidentally, the father of Hasan al-Banna belonged also to this class: he was both a religious *mudarris* and a watch-repairer, and thus known as as-Sa'ati.

The economic self-support of the bulk of the Muslim "men of religion" has had important consequences. Inasmuch as they have not depended for their livelihood on the government, they have not on the whole truckled to it or cringed at its feet. On the other hand, by dint of their trading interests and the government's ability to damage or impair these interests, and in view of the appropriation by the government in 1965 of the right to appoint and dismiss the *khatibs* in the mosques, the "men of religion" have on the whole been careful—unless ideologically provoked or economically injured, as at some points in the Ba'thist period—not to take sharp political positions.

This is true not only of the tradesmen-shaikhs but of the whole small-scale trading and artisan class among whom, as could be expected, the Muslim Brethren penetrated deeply and with ease. But in this regard two distinctions must be made. According to the society's deputy superintendent general, 'Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din, craftsmen and petty traders form indeed a major component of its membership, but its most militant activists are drawn from their offspring or their educated elements—students and members of the intelligentsia by and large<sup>17</sup>—who are in their teens, twenties and thirties and, being youthful, are more daring and reckless than their elders and more prone to take uncomplicated and brisk attitudes. To the generational difference must be added regional dissimilarities. The Damascene Muslim Brethren, like other Damascenes, are in general milder, more flexible, more subtle, more cautious, and less inclined to violence than, say, the Aleppans, possibly by reason of climatic and environmental differences. There is nothing similar to Damascus' fertile oasis of Ghutah on any side of Aleppo. Its landscape is more barren, its climate drier and more severe. Damascus, being the principal seat of government, has also been more favored economically in recent decades.

There has been another consequence of the economic self-reliance of the Muslim "men of religion." Since most of them have lived by their own effort rather than on exactions from the people and since their class has not, on the whole, enjoyed privileges or special rights, they have not been viewed by the mass of Syrians as a parasitic body or an economic burden upon society. Moreover, they have never been a highly organized or closely integrated group, and at least in recent times, have not presented a united ideological front or constituted a powerful or insurmountable impediment to the advance of secular ideas. This explains the absence in Syria (and in other Arab countries) of strong anti-shaikh or anti-religious trends.

There were, in the past, protests or demonstrations against individual arbitrary or unpopular *muftis* or *qadis*, but not against the shaikhs as such. Irreligion or indifference to ancestral beliefs or doubt concerning basic *shari'ah* principles have progressed among leftist intellectuals but have not resulted in intense anti-religious feeling. In the 1920s, the Communists frontally attacked the men of religion. Making no headway among the populace, they quickly desisted from this course.

## Significance of the Small Traders

The small-scale trading class has a number of features



Syrian woman on the *haj* resting outside Jeddah, 1972.

Geoff Braun

which throw some light on the ideas, policies, and history of the Muslim Brethren. First, the urban small tradesmen and artisans were and still are the most religiously oriented class in Syria. They by and large observe faithfully and regularly the precepts of Islam. Their idiom is that of the religious shaikhs, and they are akin to the religious shaikhs in values and way of life.

Second, they are strongly attached to "free enterprise." They favor competition among the big merchants and simultaneously fear it in their own sphere. The terms of trade between them and the big merchants are often not to their advantage. In this sense the interests of the two

classes are opposed. In another sense, however, they are complementary. Under certain conditions, when the big merchants suffer they are also affected. After the rise of the Ba'athists to power in 1963, some of the functions of the big merchants, like the wholesale import and export of goods, were assimilated by new public organizations. Small-scale traders had to deal with government employees who were often of rural origin and, if not hostile to the urban trading community, had little understanding of the intricacies of trade and thus wittingly or unwittingly raised all sorts of impediments in its path. The small-scale traders had clearly been more comfortable with the traditional big merchants who, in addition, were Muslim Sunni like themselves.

Interestingly enough, some of the important merchants of the *suq* of Hamidiyyah somehow continued all along to exercise influence over the small tradesmen of Damascus. The adoption by Hafiz al-Asad in 1970 of the policy of "economic liberalization" greatly enhanced their position. At the present time, they appear not only to control the small traders but also to maintain relations with influential army officers and with the Ba'ath party apparatus. In fact, there is reason to believe that the merchants of *suq al-Hamidiyyah* are playing a double game. At least some of them are thought to be liberally subsidizing the Muslim Brethren. Others, by gestures of support to the government through the Chamber of Commerce which they control, are obtaining concessions for the class as a whole. In 1980, for instance, when the activities of the Muslim Brethren were at one of their peaks, the import quotas of the merchants for consumer goods were sharply increased.

The trading class as a whole has been adversely affected by the rise of agricultural cooperatives in rural districts and consumers' cooperatives in urban areas. Sellers who travel from village to village and constitute a large group at Hamah, where they are known as *al-muta'iyishin*, have apparently been similarly hurt. Cooperative stores were the first establishments to be destroyed in a rising organized by the Muslim Brethren in 1980 in Aleppo.

One other point needs to be underlined: the small-scale artisan and trading class is very significant not only in terms of skills and economic *savoir-faire* but also numerically. The traditional big landowners and their mercantile allies consisted of a few hundred families and were hit or overthrown with relative ease. By contrast the small-scale traders and artisans counted in 1970 nearly a quarter of a million.<sup>18</sup> With their dependents, they easily accounted for one-sixth of the entire population. They are not a force that can be discounted or effortlessly suppressed.

## The Movement in Syria

At this point it is appropriate to highlight and explain the major events in the history of the Muslim Brethren.

One thing that at once attracts our attention is that the movement first took shape in Aleppo. It appeared there in 1935 under the name of "The House of al-Arqam" and was so-called after al-Arqam b. 'Abd Manaf b. Asad who was one of the earliest converts to Islam and in A.D. 614 offered

his house at Mecca as a meeting-place for the Prophet Muhammad and his followers.<sup>19</sup> The "House of al-Arqam" at Aleppo remained for several years the most active center of the Brotherhood and served as its headquarters until 1944. How can one account for this fact?

Of course, the Aleppan Muslims were deeply disturbed by the passage of Syria after World War I from Turkish Muslim into "infidel" French hands. But this feeling was shared by the believers in the rest of the country. More to the point is that Aleppo was at that time the largest and most important city in Syria. Moreover, the Aleppan Muslims had special reasons to be aggrieved. Between 1919 and 1925 no fewer than 89,000 Armenians moved from Turkey to Syria, most of whom settled in Aleppo<sup>20</sup> and, by virtue of their industrial skills and aptitude for making money, not only disturbed the denominational balance of the population in the city but also the position of its trading class. Much more seriously, the artificial detachment from Syria—to the benefit of Turkey and in defiance of the factors of trade, history, and ethnic origin—of the port and district of Alexandretta in the late 1930s and of the Cilician wheatlands, the cities of 'Aintab and Urfa, and the Baghdad railway territory across northern Syria in the wake of the First World War, cut off Aleppo from its natural outlet to the sea and from its natural markets and hinterland and limited its commerce to the district lying within a radius of some twenty miles from the city.<sup>21</sup> The Muslim trading community in all its components suffered more profoundly than the Christian merchants, who were connected with the European rather than with inter-Ottoman trade. By the middle 1930s, the Muslim men of commerce had not yet adapted to their shrunken markets.<sup>22</sup> All these factors resulted in the revival of Muslim sentiments and in movements against European and for native products<sup>23</sup> and no doubt assisted the advance of the ideas of the Muslim Brethren.

In 1944, sensing, in the light of an open and sharp clash between French and British interests, the approach of political independence, the society shifted its main center to Damascus. In the following year it adopted the appellation of "Muslim Brethren"<sup>24</sup> and elected Mustafa as-Siba'i<sup>25</sup> as its first superintendent-general.

The short supply of consumer goods during World War II, which was then nearing its end, and the accompanying inflated prices, heightened by speculation and profiteering, enriched the local merchants and improved the conditions of the small traders. This decreased their susceptibility to the views of the Muslim Brethren who, however, gained some support among lower middle class state employees, and especially schoolteachers, with fixed incomes.<sup>26</sup>

It was the defeat of the Arab armies and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 which gave a considerable impetus to the movement. The disruption of a large part of the Palestinian community and of its economic structures inflicted special harm on the Damascene merchants and traders for whom Palestine had, for generations, served as an important market. Indeed, the interests of the mercantile classes of Damascus were far more closely interwoven with the interests of the Palestinian trading families than with the interests of the commercial communities of Aleppo and northern Syria.<sup>27</sup>

The rise of the Nasserist pan-Arab trend in the second



A printer in one of Damascus' traditional quarters, 1973.

Geoff Braun

**Table II**  
Distribution of Parliament Seats in the Pre-Ba'thi Period

Year	Total Seats	Parties of Big Land-owners and Merchants People's National Party	Akram Hurani's Socialists	Ba'th Party and Allies	Muslim Brethren and Allies	Independent Deputies	Other Elements
1949	114	43	14	1	4	3 (2.6%)	45 <sup>a</sup> 4 <sup>b</sup>
1954	141	27	14	5	13	5 (3.5%)	64 <sup>c</sup> 13 <sup>d</sup>
1961	173	25	13	7	8	10 (5.8%)	96 <sup>e</sup> 14 <sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Includes 9 tribal representatives.

<sup>d</sup>Includes 2 seats for P.P.S. and 1 seat for Communists.

<sup>b</sup>Includes 1 seat for Parti Populaire Syrien (P.P.S.).

<sup>e</sup>Includes 13 tribal representatives.

<sup>c</sup>Includes 18 tribal representatives.

<sup>f</sup>Includes 5 Nasserists and 1 Arab Nationalist.

Sources: Great Britain, F.O. 371/75541/XL/A/11644 E 14487E, Letter of November 28, 1949 from British Legation, Damascus to Foreign Office, London; Khalid Al-'Azam, *Mudhakkirat* [Memoirs], Volume II (Beirut, 1973), pp. 300-307; Amin Isbir, *Tatawwur-un-Nuzum as-Siyasiyyah wa-d-Dusturiyyah fi Suriyyah* [Development of Political and Constitutional Systems in Syria] (Beirut, 1979), p. 89, and 'Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din, deputy superintendent-general of the Muslim Brethren, conversation, January 1982.

**Table III**  
Distribution of Parliament Seats in the Pre-Ba'thi Period

Year	Total Seats in Damascus	Parties of Big Land-owners and Merchants People's National Party	Ba'th Party	Muslim Brethren	Independent Deputies	Other Elements
1949	13	2	—	3 (23.0%)	6	2 <sup>a</sup>
1954	16	2	1	3 (18.7%)	5	3 <sup>b</sup>
1961	17	1	4	3 (17.6%)	8	1

<sup>a</sup>Includes 1 seat for Parti Populaire Syrien (P.P.S.).

<sup>b</sup>Includes 1 seat for P.P.S. and 1 for Communist Party.

Sources: Great Britain, Foreign Office, F.O. 371/75541/XL/A/11644 E 13908, Telegram No. 618 of November 17, 1949, from British Legation, Damascus, to Foreign Office, London; Khalid al-'Azam, *Mudhakkirat*, Vol. III (Beirut, 1973), pp. 220-221; and Amin Isbir, *Tatawwur-un-Nuzum as-Siyasiyyah wa-d-Dusturiyyah fi Suriyyah*, p. 93.

half of the 1950s tangibly reduced the appeal of the movement. The Egyptian leader drew part of his strength in Syria from the very same urban Sunni petty trading elements which nourished the Brotherhood. In 1958, upon the creation of the United Arab Republic, Mustafa as-Siba'i yielded unconditionally to Nasser and officially dissolved the society.

The attitude of the Muslim Brethren towards the break-up of the UAR in 1961 was ambiguous. Isam al-'Attar,<sup>28</sup> who had just succeeded Siba'i as superintendent-general, refused to sign the historic manifesto issued by eighteen of Syria's foremost politicians in support of secession. At the same time, Lieutenant-Colonel 'Abd-ul-Karim an-Nahlawi, the principal author of the separatist coup, who descended from a family of traders and artisans and shaikhs of the defunct Ahmadi mystic order,<sup>29</sup> moved in an ideological environment pretty much dominated by the Muslim Brethren. After the coup he relied on them and gave them a free hand.<sup>30</sup> This led to a noticeable expansion of their ranks.

The comparative strength of the Muslim Brethren in the fourteen years or so prior to the conquest of state power by the Ba'thists in 1963 may be gathered from the figures in Tables II and III. For the proper interpretation of these figures, it is necessary to keep in mind that every district and the chief center of every province and the villages attached to it constituted single electoral districts. Thus, in 1961, the city of Damascus and six of its surrounding villages formed only one constituency. Moreover, every eligible voter could cast as many votes as there were candidates in his district and could thus endorse more than one list. The big merchants and landowners of Damascus, for example, threw their principal weight behind the People's Party and the National Party, but they and their supporters also voted for the Muslim Brethren, not out of sympathy for them but out of their fear of the Communists and Ba'thists. At the same time, in the hope of enhancing their electoral chances, the Muslim Brethren pursued, at least in 1961, the tactic of voting exclusively for their own candidates. For these reasons, the figures may not provide an accurate index of the actual distribution of the influence of the Muslim Brethren or of their rivals. The favor they enjoyed with Lieutenant-Colonel 'Abd-ul-Karim an-Nahlawi in 1961 may also have had a distorting effect.

Even though at that time they were making headway, they did not enjoy wide support in the country as a whole. In the parliamentary elections they won only 2.6 percent of the seats in 1949, 3.5 percent in 1954, and 5.8 percent in 1961. In Damascus, though, in striking contrast to the marked frailness of the Ba'th Party, they occupied a relatively strong position: they captured 23 percent of the seats in 1949, but 18.7 percent in 1954 and 17.6 percent in 1961.

While showing vitality in Damascus and other Syrian cities, the Muslim Brethren had scarcely any foothold in the countryside. Indeed, until 1975 there was, according to their deputy superintendent-general,<sup>32</sup> a discernible resistance within the society to any orientation towards the peasants: influential leaders in the organization apparently did not think it desirable to politicize country people. On the eve of the Ba'th's seizure of power, therefore, the movement of the Muslim Brethren was and has, to a

lesser extent, remained to this very day essentially a movement of the cities, in sharp contradistinction to the rurally oriented and rurally supported Ba'th party. Of this point we should not lose sight, if only to understand the conflicts to which Syria fell prey in the last two decades.

## Stages Under the Ba'th

For the same purpose, and in order to grasp the meaning of the policies and tactics of the Muslim Brethren in the Ba'thi period, it will help to emphasize the three main stages that the Ba'th regime has gone through.

Its first stage began in 1963 and ended in 1968. The Ba'th regime was then more broadly based than it is at the present time. At bottom, it rested on an authentic if uneasy alliance within the army between varying groups which shared similar rural roots and similar rural orientations and included 'Alawis from the Latakia province, Druzes from the Jabal al-'Arab, and Sunnis from the region of Hawran and the district of Dayr az-Zur, and from different small country towns. The inadequately studied and rather carelessly applied socialist policies with which these groups became identified, and the rapid penetration of the bureaucratic apparatus by rural elements allied to them, severely damaged the interests not only of the big men of commerce, industry, and finance but also of the broad class of urban artisans, petty traders, middling state employees, and members of the professions. Indeed, on the whole, the intermediate urban classes viewed the "socialism" of the day as a weapon by which the more conscious segments of the long neglected and long suppressed rural people sought revenge against the main cities and the decisive impoverishment of their inhabitants. Consequently, in this period the political conflict took on much the aspect of an urban-rural conflict, and the Sunni element of the population itself split clearly along urban-rural lines.

To understand better the dynamics of the conflict, it would help to focus briefly on the relationships between the Sunni Hawran and Sunni Damascus. For a very long time, the Hawran was the granary of Damascus. Its people, who were for the most part small farmers, sold their produce in markets controlled by the merchants of the capital. Even in the towns of Hawran, the shopkeepers were more often than not Damascenes. Their relationships became in essence relationships of debtors and creditors. This is in part explicable by the improvidence of the Hawranis: "*isrif ma fi-j-ayb, ya'tika ma fi-l-ghayb*" ["spend what is in the pocket and you will share in that which is invisible"] runs one of their favorite sayings. The Damascenes, on the other hand, prefer the adage "*khabbi irshak-il-abyad liyomak-il-aswad*" ["save your white piaster for your black day."] But the merchants of the capital were also more artful than the Hawranis in money matters, and markedly more calculating. Moreover, in the past the state machine was pliable to their wishes. They were, therefore, able to set the conditions of trade in manners consistent with their interests.

As the merchants of Damascus dominated the Hawran, so did the entrepreneurs of Aleppo dominate Dayr az-Zur and the Jazirah. But here there was also a tribal division at work. For example, at Dayr az-Zur the affluent traditional leaders stemmed from the Albu Saraya, a section of the

Baggarah tribe, whereas many of the Ba'athists descended from such inferior clans as the Khorshan and Shuyukh.

In this many-sided situation, the Muslim Brethren emerged in the middle sixties as the most implacable opponents of the Ba'ath and the forward arm of the endangered urban traders. They promoted a campaign of civil disobedience, using the mosques as their centers and mobilizing or encouraging for this purpose 'ulama' hostile to the secular orientation of the Ba'athists, including Shaikh Hasan Habannakah, a popular figure in the Damascus district of al-Maydan.

Their agitation attained such a force that it succeeded in bringing about in 1965 a *partial* polarization within the officer corps along sectarian lines, with many of the rural Sunni officers gravitating towards the compromise-minded Sunni General Amin al-Hafiz and the 'Alawi, Druze, and part of the Sunni Hawrani officers towards an inflexible bloc led by the 'Alawi Salah Jadid and the Druze Hamad 'Ubayd.

From the ensuing tug-of-war, Jadid emerged supreme. He pulled down Amin al-Hafiz in 1966 and, not long afterward, got rid of his erstwhile Druze and Hawrani allies. By 1968, the 'Alawi dominance of the armed forces was well-nigh complete.

But at this point, as the regime entered its second stage, which was to last till 1970, the military 'Alawis split. One section, buttressed by the bulk of the civilian component of the Ba'ath Party, gave its loyalty to Salah Jadid, the other to Hafiz al-Asad. The division arose partly out of a conflict of personalities. It may also have had a tribal aspect: Salah Jadid belonged to the 'Alawi tribe of al-Haddadin, Hafiz al-Asad to the 'Alawi tribe of al-Matawirah. Publicly, the division assumed the form of a clash of policies, with the more pragmatic Asad insisting on the need for moderating the urban-rural conflict and Jadid bent on a radical "socialist" line.

Dissensions also set in within the Society of the Muslim Brethren in this period. The younger members of the Aleppo and Hamah branches, shaken by the Arab military defeat of 1967, agitated for the continuance of the policy of confrontation with the regime. The Society's superintendent-general, 'Isam al-'Attar, backed by the bulk of the membership in Damascus and Homs, determinedly and successfully opposed this tendency.<sup>32</sup> Strengthening the hand of Asad in his contest with Jadid served better the interests of the natural supporters of the Muslim Brethren, the urban artisans and petty traders.

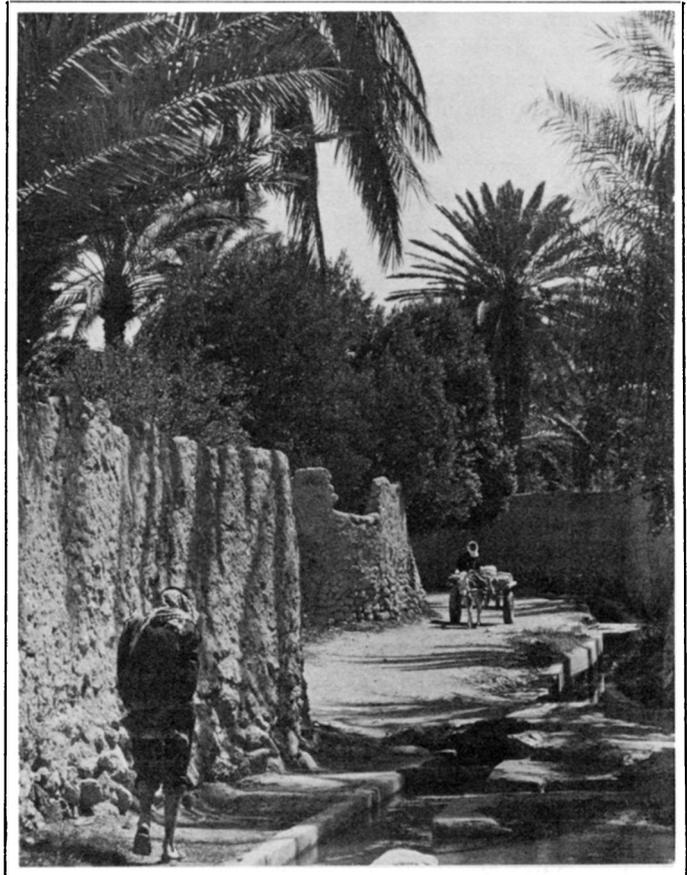
In 1968, irreconcilable young militants led by Marwan Hadid, a 34-year-old agronomist and the son of a small agricultural entrepreneur from Hamah, left Syria for Jordan. There they joined Fatah, the principal arm of the Palestinian resistance movement, and received commando training in one of its camps. This marks the beginning of the militarization of the policy of the Muslim Brethren.

The third phase in the development of the Ba'ath regime opened in 1970, with the triumph of Asad over Jadid and his seizure of the reins of government. Throughout the first half of the 1970s, he steered Syria in a manner congenial to the urban traders and the Damascus leadership of the Muslim Brethren. He drew close to Egypt, waged with Sadat the October War of 1973, and mended Syria's relations with the Saudis and the Jordanians. He

simultaneously liberalized the country's economic policies, attracting wide-scale aid and some investment capital from the Arab Gulf states. A sort of *de facto* axis developed between military 'Alawis and the commercially-minded Damascenes. The traders of *suq al-Hamidiyyah* never had it so good as in these years.

## The Brethren Against the Ba'ath

After 1975, however, things began to change. The flow of Arab oil money, which had been copious, diminished sharply. The heightened scale of peasant migration and a mounting rate of inflation deepened the injury to the social fabric of the principal cities.\* Rents became



Oasis near Palmyra, 1973.

Geoff Braun

inaccessible for the middle and humbler classes, with modest apartments in the better parts of the capital going for 60,000 or even 80,000 Syrian Pounds a year. An honest man could no longer live on his salary. Laborers and petty state employees had to take two jobs just to survive. The growth of a parasitic class of state contractors, the rampant corruption in the upper layers of the bureaucracy, and the fat commissions made on government contracts by men close to the pinnacle of power added to the popular

\*The official wholesale price index rose from 100 in the base year 1962 to 226 in 1975 and 350 in 1979 for cereals and flour and, in the same years, to 294 and 509 for vegetables and to 328 and 483 for meat. [Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract, 1980* (Damascus, 1980).]

discontent. Even more aggravating was the intervention of the Syrian regime against the Palestinians in the Lebanese conflict: at one point, in 1976, the Syrian units pinned down the main Palestinian forces in the mountains, allowing the Maronite Phalange to destroy completely the camp of Tal az-Za'tar with considerable loss of life. Since 1917, no regime in Syria, whatever its coloring, had taken an anti-Palestinian stand. It was a policy without precedent, and shocked and alienated wide segments of Syrian opinion.

But what above all incurred the hostility of the Muslim Brethren was the sharpened 'Alawi bias of the regime and the deepening erosion of the status and power of the Sunni community. Two political orders, both headed by President Asad, had by now crystallized in the country and still function at the present time. In the first, which consists of a Council of Ministers, a People's Assembly, the Ba'th Party Command, and their subordinate organs, the Sunnis play conspicuous roles. But all these bodies have merely an apparent or derivative authority. Real power lies on another, more fundamental level. It is held by Asad and the leaders of three intelligence apparatuses and of two crucial heavily armed units which underpin the whole structure.

In more concrete terms, the decisive figures are, in order of importance, Hafiz al-Asad; his brother Rif'at, the chief of *Saraya-d-Difa'* [Defence Units]; Muhammad al-Khawli, the chairman of the Presidential Intelligence Committee and Chief of Air Intelligence; 'Ali Haydar, the commander of the Special Forces; 'Ali Dubah, the head of Army Intelligence; and Ahmad Sa'id Saleh, the Chief of Internal Security. All these men are 'Alawi, except perhaps for 'Ali Haydar, who may be a Shi'i from Salamiyyah or an 'Alawi from the tribe of al-Haddadin. Again, except for 'Ali Haydar and possibly Ahmad Sa'id Saleh, all belong to the tribe of al-Matawirah, Asad's tribe. More than that, all of them had been uninterruptedly at the head of their units since Asad took power or the units were formed. By contrast, the composition of the cabinet, the People's Assembly, and the Ba'th Command underwent in the same period frequent and marked changes.

The Muslim Brethren began their offensive against this order of things in 1976, not long after the intervention of Syria's armed forces in Lebanon. At first they confined themselves to persistent minor blows in the hope of provoking Syria's rulers, involving them in repressive policies, and estranging them further from the people. They concentrated on hit-and-run killings of 'Alawi functionaries, security agents, and professional men, focusing attention on their origins and the origins of Hafiz al-Asad outside the Sunni Muslim main current of Syria's life.

In a second stage, they escalated their acts and widened their scope: they carried out attacks on government buildings, police stations, Ba'th party institutions, and army units. They provoked demonstrations and large-scale shutdowns of shops and schools as at Hamah and Aleppo on March 8-10, 1980, and at Hamah in February of this year. They also struck spectacular blows at the ruling power: in June 1979, with the help of a Ba'thi Sunni officer who had been won over to their cause, they assailed with grenades and machine-gun fire 200 or so 'Alawi cadets of the Artillery Academy at Aleppo, killing 83 of them and wounding many others.<sup>33</sup>

The violence produced an atmosphere of crisis and great

danger. The Muslim Brethren's defiance of the authorities also emboldened other opposition forces to follow along.

The militants who carried out these acts were men in their 20s or early 30s, ardently attached to their beliefs, daring to the point of recklessness. In large part, they were university students, schoolteachers, engineers, physicians, and the like. This is evident from the occupational distribution of the activists—mostly Muslim Brethren—who fell into the hands of the government between 1976 and May 1981. Out of a total of 1,384, no fewer than 27.7 percent were students, 7.9 percent schoolteachers, and 13.3 percent members of the professions, including 79 engineers, 57 physicians, 25 lawyers, and 10 pharmacists.<sup>34</sup> The profiles of the leaders of the Military Sections of the Muslim Brethren point to the same conclusion. 'Adnan 'Uqlah, who led the latest rising at Hamah, is a civil engineer and the son of a baker. His predecessor, 'Abd-us-Sattar az-Za'im was a dentist and the son of a tradesman. Husni Abbu, who was the chief of the Military Branch of the Aleppo region in 1979, was a teacher of French, the son of a well-to-do merchant, and the son-in-law of Shaikh Zayn-ud-Din Khayr-ul-Lah, the *Imam* of the Grand Mosque of Aleppo.<sup>35</sup>

What have the Muslim Brethren achieved? They have succeeded in widening the distance between the government and the majority of the people, but not in destabilizing the regime. Instead of splitting the 'Alawis and thus weakening their foothold in the army, they have, by their anti-'Alawi practical line, frightened the 'Alawi community into rallying behind Asad. They have also provoked a ferocious response on the part of the government. In June 1980, in putting down an attempted breakout by political prisoners at Palmyra, the security forces killed no fewer than 400 men.<sup>36</sup> Last February, in order to suppress a rising by the Muslim Brethren at Hamah, the government went to the length of leveling whole sections of the northern and eastern parts of the city. In the process, they killed at least 5,000 people, according to Western diplomats.<sup>37</sup> About 1,000 government troops are also said to have died in the fighting.

What is the outlook for the Muslim Brethren? In the past decade, the movement underwent acute shifts in its strength. For example, on the reckoning of its own leaders, its membership in the city of Aleppo did not exceed 800 in 1975, but had by 1978 swollen to an estimated maximum of 5,000 to 7,000.<sup>38</sup> There is reason to believe that its numerical weight—but not moral sympathy for its cause—shrank noticeably after the passage of Law No. 49 of July 8, 1980, which regarded adherence to the Muslim Brethren as "a crime" punishable by death.<sup>39</sup> Its total strength at the beginning of 1982 probably did not surpass 5,000. At Hamah last February it suffered a deep wound from which it will not recover easily. Many of its natural supporters in Syria's other cities may have come to entertain second thoughts about its tactics, which have no doubt been too costly in human lives and material possessions. However, so long as the present regime remains narrowly based and unrepresentative of the country's majority, there is bound to be a revival of the spirit of revolt which no repression, however brutal, can extinguish.

June 1982

See *Batatu*, page 34

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Mustafa as-Siba'i (the then superintendent-general of the Society), "Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun" [the Muslim Brethren], House of ar-Ruwad, *al-Ahزاب as-Siyasiyyah fi Suriyyah* [The Political Parties in Syria] (Damascus, 1954), pp. 30-31.

<sup>2</sup>Article 6 of the Society's Basic Rules of 1954, The Muslim Brethren, Syria, *an-Nizam al-Asasi* (Aleppo, 1954), pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted by Sa'id Hawwa (the Syrian Muslim Brethren's principal ideologist) in his *Fi Afaq-it-ta'lim* [In the Horizons of the Society's Instructions] (Cairo, 1980), p. 162.

<sup>4</sup>The Command of the Islamic Revolution in Syria, *Bayan-uth-Thawrat-il-Islamiyyah fi Suriyyah wa Minhajaha* [The Declaration and Program of the Islamic Revolution in Syria] (Damascus, November 9, 1980), pp. 10-12. The Declaration was signed by Sa'id Hawwa, 'Ali al-Bayanuni, and 'Adnan Sa'd-ud-din, members of the Executive Bureau of the Society of Muslim Brethren.

<sup>5</sup>Letters dated July 26 and August 8, 1980 from Iraq's First Deputy Premier Taha Yasin aj-Jazrawi to 'Adnan 'Uqlah, Chief of the Military Section of the Muslim Brethren, attest to this fact. For photocopies of these letters, whose authenticity has not been called into question, see *Tishrin* (Damascus), October 26, 1980.

<sup>6</sup>Sa'id Hawwa, *al-Madkhal ila Da'wat-il-Ikhwan-il-Muslimin* [Introduction to the Mission of the Muslim Brethren] second edition, ('Amman, 1979), p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>The Command of the Islamic Revolution in Syria, *Bayan-uth-Thawrah* . . . , pp. 14-20.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 20-32.

<sup>9</sup>The Arabic term is "al-Muraqib al-'Am."

<sup>10</sup>The foregoing observations are essentially based on a conversation with 'Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din, deputy superintendent-general of Syria's Muslim Brethren, January 1982.

<sup>11</sup>Conversation with this writer, November 1980. Paul Balta and Claudine Rulleau, in *L'Iran insurge* (Paris, 1979), p. 152, gave the higher figure of 180,000.

<sup>12</sup>The Syrian Republic, Ministry of Planning, *At-Ti'dad al-'Am li-s-Sukkan li-'Am 1960* . . . [The Population Census for 1960 in the Syrian Republic] (Damascus, n.d.), pp. 224-225 and 230-231; and Central Statistical Office, *Nata'ij at-Ti'dad al-'Am li-s-Sukkan* . . . , 1970 [The Results of the Population Census for 1970 in the Syrian Arab Republic], p. 225.

<sup>13</sup>The total population of Syria in 1960 was 4,565,121.

<sup>14</sup>The total population of Syria in 1970 was 6,304,685.

<sup>15</sup>There were 5,476 towns and villages in 1952, Syrian Republic, *At-Taqsimat al-Idariyyah fi-j-Jumhuriyyah as-Suriyyah* [Administrative Divisions in the Syrian Republic] (Damascus, 1952), pp. 295-301.

<sup>16</sup>Abd-ul-Wahhab at-Tunji was one of the founders of the society's Aleppo branch.

<sup>17</sup>Conversation with this writer, January 1982.

<sup>18</sup>Consult the Syrian Arab Republic, *Nata'ij at-Ti'dad al-'Am li-s-Sukkan* . . . 1970, Part I, pp. 247-250.

<sup>19</sup>Conversation with 'Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din, January 1982.

<sup>20</sup>In 1928, out of an estimated population of 300,000, not less than 50,000 were Armenians: see Great Britain, Foreign Office, F.O. 406/62/4694 E5338, 141-89 Letter of October 30, 1928 from Consul Monck-Mason, Aleppo, to Lord Cushendun.

<sup>21</sup>Consult Great Britain, Foreign Office, F.O. 406/46/4694 E5774/117/89 Letter of April 23, 1921 and F.O. 406/51/4694 E2345/2204/89 Letter of February 12, 1923, both from Consul Smart, Aleppo to Earl Curzon, London; and F.O. 406/75/4694 E196/3/89 Memorandum of January 11, 1937 by J.G. Ward of the Eastern Department.

<sup>22</sup>Great Britain, F.O. 406/74/4694 E961/195/89 Letter of February 15, 1936 from Consul Parr, Aleppo to Mr. Eden, London.

<sup>23</sup>Movements of this kind first appeared in the 1920s. See Great Britain, F.O. 406/51/4694 E6332/867/89 Letter of May 31, 1921, from Consul Smart, Aleppo, to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston.

<sup>24</sup>Mustafa as-Siba'i, "al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun," House of ar-Ruwad, *al-Ahزاب* . . . , *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup>For Siba'i, see *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup>According to the Society's deputy superintendent-general, inferior state officials and schoolteachers still constitute a substantial portion of the Society's membership: conversation with this writer, January 1982.

<sup>27</sup>In the 1930s, Palestine was the most important customer of Syria: consult the figures for Syria's exports provided in Great Britain, F.O. 406/74 E4121/1403/89 Letters of April 13 and June 24, 1936 from Consul-General Havard, Beirut, to Mr. Eden and F.O. 406/74 E6898/1403/89 Letter of October 22, 1936 from Acting Consul General Furlonge, Beirut, to Mr. Eden.

<sup>28</sup>For al-'Attar, see p. 6.

<sup>29</sup>Muhammad Adib Al-Taqi-ud-Din al-Husni, *Kitab Muntakhabat at-Tawarikh li-Dimashq* [Selections from the Histories of Damascus], Beirut, 1979, p. 885.

<sup>30</sup>Sami aj-Jundi, *al-Ba'th*, Beirut, 1969, p. 101.

<sup>31</sup>Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din, conversation, January 1982.

<sup>32</sup>The particulars relating to the dissension in the ranks of the Muslim Brethren provided in this and the succeeding passages are based on 'Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din's account.

<sup>33</sup>*An-Nadhir* (underground organ of the Muslim Brethren) No. 16 of April 29, 1980, pp. 7-10 and No. 17 of May 25, 1980, pp. 26-27; *Le Monde Diplomatique* (Paris), April 1980, pp. 4-5 and October 1979, p. 7; and *The New York Times*, June 23, 26, 29 and September 4, 1979.

See Batatu, page 36

## To the Editors:

While I was extremely glad to see a wealth of factual information in your recent issue "Horn of Africa: The Coming Storm" (No. 106), I was bothered by the fact that Halliday, Molyneux, and to a much lesser extent Gilkes see Ethiopia continuing to move in a revolutionary direction "toward socialism." But I don't see that happening, for some fundamental reasons. The point, to me, is that the revolution in Ethiopia is *long over*.

The *Derg* exists today not because the people (either workers or peasants) put it in power, but because it has had the ability to crush popular opposition. The fact is, power remains in the hands of a relatively small number, and that is something the *Derg* is simply not about to change, whether or not the country is ruled by a military junta or what will amount to an "elite" party formation. Whether some of the *Derg's* decisions and reforms have been progressive seems to be beside the point.

Personally, I don't believe that the claim to socialism of a regime that has a) murdered thousands of leftwing opponents; b) imprisoned even more; and c) continues its fight to subjugate non-Amhara peoples, can be accepted. Socialism is supposed to liberate human beings from oppression, not find new methods for that oppression. In my view, a better analysis of Ethiopia would be that of a state-capitalist society.

The revolution that will free the people of Ethiopia from oppression and the revolution that will free the Eritreans, Tigreans, Oromos and others from national and colonial oppression is yet to be won. In any case, keep up the good work informing us of events in the Horn of Africa.

Ian Daniels  
New York

## To the Editors:

I was shocked to read your "From the Editors" column in the July-August 1982 issue of *MERIP Reports*. I have, during the past few years, grown accustomed to your blatant bias and selective presentation of facts when dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict. But your comments regarding Israel's invasion of Lebanon put your magazine at the top of the Arab-Israeli propaganda "garbage heap." I don't know what press and eyewitness reports you are referring to in your comments about alleged Israeli mistreatment of prisoners (unless you mean Giannou's account; Giannou, as is well known now, was paid by a group of American-Arab physicians—hardly what could be called impartial observers), but I have read many accounts by Lebanese civilians of the mistreatment and brutality they suffered at the hands of the PLO. I also notice you use the words "tactics of

indiscriminate slaughter" in referring to the Israeli invasion, but fail to provide any evidence (let alone objective evidence) to back up your claim. Quite the contrary to your claim (with the noticeable exception of Sharon's August 12 attack on Beirut), most of the claims of indiscriminate slaughter and high casualty figures seemed to have emanated from Yasser Arafat's brother and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (once again hardly an objective source).

Do you really think the cause of peace will be furthered by your blatant bias and by ignoring facts which don't support your preconceived conclusions? In a sense you, by knowingly distorting the truth, are just as much a criminal as you claim Begin and Sharon are. Peace will be achieved when both Israelis and Palestinians stop portraying each [other] as "black beasts," "savage barbarians," etc., and when Jews stop attributing Nazi motives to Arabs and Arabs stop attributing colonial motives to Israelis. Your publication is obviously doing nothing to contribute to peace and is apparently unable to rise above the infantile level of vituperation which characterizes most of the Arab-Israeli debate.

Jeff Broude  
Los Alamitos, California

## Drysdale, from page 11

<sup>24</sup>FBIS, February 26, 1982, p. H1.

<sup>25</sup>FBIS, February 22, 1982, p. E3.

<sup>26</sup>Estimates ran as low as several hundred and as high as 20,000.

<sup>27</sup>FBIS, March 26, 1982, p. H2.

<sup>28</sup>FBIS, March 24, 1982, p. E3.

<sup>29</sup>FBIS, February 11, 1982, p. H-1.

<sup>30</sup>FBIS, February 26, 1982, pp. H2-3. See also an interview with Ahmad al-As'ad, the Ba'ath party's Hamah branch secretary, in which it is claimed that "the services rendered to Hamah Province, particularly after the (1970) corrective movement, surpassed those rendered to any other province in Syria" (FBIS, February 25, 1982, p. H5).

<sup>31</sup>FBIS, February 23, 1982, p. H2.

<sup>32</sup>FBIS, March 8, 1982, p. H2.

<sup>33</sup>Cited in van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria*, p. 108.

<sup>34</sup>For example, in a two-minute Amman radio editorial on Syria, the word 'Alawi was used fifteen times. In a television report, the regime was openly described as "founded on domination by a faction of the 'Alawi sect." (FBIS, February 26, 1981, p. F1 and March 2, 1981, p. F2).

<sup>35</sup>During this phase of the Iraqi-Syrian dispute, Iraq has also resorted to sectarian propaganda. For example, the Voice of Arab Syria radio, based in Baghdad, accused the Asad regime of having "fostered secessionist trends and odious sectarianism" in order to "fragment Syria into small states," just as in Lebanon. (FBIS, March 11, 1981, pp. E4-5.)

## Batatu, from page 34

<sup>34</sup>Based on figures provided by the Committee for the Defence of Freedom and Political Prisoners in Syria, in its organ *al-Minbar* (Geneva), No. 3 of January 1981, pp. I-XL, and No. 4 of May 1981, annex after p. 95.

<sup>35</sup>The particulars concerning these leaders were obtained from 'Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din, conversation, January 1982.

<sup>36</sup>The leaders of the Syrian opposition estimated the number of killed at Palmyra prison at between 550 and 700 in their letter of May 18, 1981 addressed to the secretary-general of the United Nations and published in *an-Nadhir* No. 35 of June 17, 1981, pp. 40-43.

<sup>37</sup>*The New York Times*, May 29, 1982.

<sup>38</sup>Adnan Sa'd-ud-Din, conversation, January 1982.

<sup>39</sup>Article 1 of the Law, Syrian Arab Republic, *al-Jaridah ar-Rasmiyyah* . . . Part I, No. 29 of 1980, pp. 1450-1451.

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