

## BOOK REVIEWS

LEONARD BINDER, *The Ideological Revolution in the Middle East*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964, x+287 pp.

### I

Dr. Binder's latest work, *The Ideological Revolution in the Middle East*, consists of nine papers written since 1957 on the basis of his studies on the East Arab area, particularly Egypt and Syria. A part of his efforts for studies of politics in Islamic area was already published under the title of: *Religion and Politics in Pakistan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California, 1961) and *Iran: Political Development in a Changing Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California, 1962), and those have been appreciated among specialists both of politics and Islamic-Middle Eastern affairs, because of the thoughtful construction of his theoretical framework and his wide-scope empiricism based on overseas research and careful references.

His intention is clearly directed to constructing a general theory of a *revolution of a whole political system* in respect of Islamic-Middle Eastern area, and his general idea of it was presented most clearly in the introductory chapter to *Iran: Political Development in a Changing Society*, that is, "A Strategy of the Study of a Whole Political System: What is a Revolution?" According to his theoretical framework, the repetition of which, however, is avoided in this work, it is clear that he is aiming at elaborating the method of modern politics by distinguishing it into two parts: the method to be applied in analysis of a *whole political system change* and the method for analysis of a *pattern of political function groups*. As to a modernization theory presented by Almond-Coleman's scheme, Dr. Binder cannot be on the side of it, because of its lack of concern with the logical interrelation among its *functional categories* and the logical premises of its *classification scheme*, still more the absence of a dialectic theory of a *whole political system change*. Being worthy of a pupil of Prof. H. A. R. Gibb who has been desiring a *marriage of orientalism and the social sciences*, Dr. Binder offers a severe criticism against Almond-Coleman's simple application of function analysis and empiricism, saying that their function analysis cannot elucidate any momentum for a *revolution*. In this connexion, he warns students of modern politics against the most alluring danger for them, that they are liable to commit a grave error by confusing an ideal with an institutional framework, and he also warns them against being satisfied with picking up some *parochial peculiarities* and debasing a study of comparative politics into an arbitrary comparison of criteria. He asserts that studies which cling to *relativism and parochialism* might say *something of significance* about a changing system in non-Western areas, but no more than *something*.

On the subject of historical perspective for a changing ideology, Dr. Binder's primary thesis to be set out in this work is: "Whether or not Truth, as it relates to social organization and political institutions, exists and can be known independently of a given socio-historical situation." His main concern lies in a theory-construction about *a revolution*, that is, the intrinsic reasoning of system change from the viewpoint of: What would be the proper institutional framework and discipline necessary to change a traditional society to conform to Western ideals, fitted to the given socio-historical circumstances of non-Western areas. From a sequel to this primary thesis, Dr. Binder introduces the secondary thesis based on the properties of Arab-Islamic culture, namely: "Whether Islam has lost its influence entirely;... whether changed material circumstances are at the root of the changes which occurred?" He affirms it to be true that the main topics of Middle Eastern politics are in close connexion with the swaying Islamic mode of thinking, or a crisis in Islamic-Arab ideology, and an academic concern in the crisis in Islamic ideology as such is in sympathy with the very practical interest in politics among Middle Eastern intellectuals. Thus he is solicitous to grapple with political life, in order to "break away from a fruitless formalism and to reach for that essence which we all know and feel to be the really *political*." As a consequence, he looks for constructing a theory of interaction and interdependency between Islamic and Western political ideology, namely, *the fundamentally traditional orientation* and *the Western ideal of democracy* in the context of nationalism, because "the rise of nationalism is intimately connected with the continued difficulty in using *democratic ideology* to justify *democratic institutions*."

Therefore, it is the most important for him to clarify the *essence* which is cognized as being *the really political* among intellectuals in confronting an ideological crisis derived from the impact of Western ideology and powers. That *essence* would be the most basic concept in his reasoning which could elevate the status of modern politics from that of a science of classification to that of a science of principle, and without it modern politics could not adopt a feasible orientation to a cultural crisis. Dr. Binder's theory of *a revolution* may thus be reasonably appreciated as claiming to reconsider the substance of cultural crisis and its range, regardless of the nation or society concerned, by setting up the idea of the ultimate value system and the logical premise of democracy existing historically in manifold forms. Democracy as an orientation of political culture, in his sense, seems not to be a formalized ideal or political procedure. Moreover, in constructing *a political system type* composed of three criteria, that is, *traditional*, *conventional*, and *rational*, he does not set up any value distinction between Western culture and non-Western culture.

In spite of this unprejudiced way of thinking, Dr. Binder leaves an important question unsolved: What is the proper institutional framework and discipline necessary to change a traditional society to conform to the *Socialist ideal of democracy*, fitted to the given socio-historical circumstances of the non-

Western area. He broke the spell of the myth of the irrational culture-bound framework as different from Western institutions, but still he is bound to set aside the orientation of the Socialist ideal of democracy. His theory might not be in common feeling with Middle Eastern political leaders and intellectuals, because they are concerned with the very existence of these manifold democracies and political systems, which are together to be the orientation opposed against a crisis of political ideals and institutions among the Arabs.

Dr. Binder takes an ideological revolution, in the context of nationalism, not as a factor of real politics but in the sense of a subjective cognition of history, for "a dynamic process in which the reasoning of the mind is primary," that is, a part of a "political system composed of material circumstances in part, but... also composed of received idea of the God, of reasonable and pragmatic considerations, and of arbitrary notions of personal and group identity." The dynamic process in his terminology refers to the subjective or primary part of the inherent logic in the changing structure of consciousness among intellectuals, and does not imply the historical existence of the nation as an objective factor. In the corner-stone of this *dynamic process*, he pays his attention, before everything, to the government, "because Middle Eastern leaders and theorists name the change of a culture and society a revolution and take a government as the instrument for revolution." This is a sharp-sighted idea about a subjective factor of Middle Eastern politics where an idea of *umma* is at the root of social and political life on the side of both the élite and the masses.

In order to settle the role of *umma* in orienting a revolution, he should ask again the following question: in what situation and at what opportunity could this instrument for a revolution become an objective factor of Arab nationalism. An ideological revolution may be set up as a dialectic development of an intrinsic-ultimate value within a changing culture, which is ultimate because existing as consciousness. It is also true that Arab nationalism would be characterized as a subjective one *par excellence*. In his reasoning of function group-*umma*-ultimate value system, Dr. Binder reached, the most prevailing pattern of *romantic-Islamic-nationalist* as an ideology and *radical-reform-nationalist* as a factor in Middle Eastern politics. In this respect, the latter has been dissolved to the former concept, because he failed to perceive an aspect of the government as an objective power system and to understand a sense of being victims among Middle Eastern political leaders, derived from international politics and economics. Here a question remains unsolved: What relation exists between the objective factor of nationalism and the subjective factor of nationalism, or in what situation could an ideology be really objective. This may be, of course, very difficult to answer, because an orientation for a political system change or objective reasoning for a revolution cannot be legitimated explicitly and straightforwardly. What is more, Dr. Binder, though he sets up the subjective concept of *umma* as an instrument for self-identification, refrains from setting out all his ideas about the objective part of *revolution* and *umma*.

## II

Dr. Binder's work now under review contains the following topics which are to demonstrate his theory as applied to Arab nationalism.

The first topic: an ideological inner-relation between Arab nationalism and politics, and also Islam and politics, is dealt with in Chapter 1, "Introduction: Political Change and the Nation-state" and Chapter 2, "Religio-political Alternative." The most important argument here is that the Western ideal of democracy has lost authority to justify democratic institutions in confronting the rise of nationalism. Then he turns his criticism to the Marxist concept of the state, saying that the rise of nationalism might have changed the intrinsic nature of the state, established as it is to serve a specific class: the bourgeois class. This is a relevant criticism of the formalized conception of the state on the grounds that this conception is bounded by a creed of specific political doctrine. Certainly Middle Eastern political leaders are interested in the very historical experiences of manifold political systems, but not in the creed of doctrines. They used to talk about *sha'b* instead of the class-concept, but it is not likely that Dr. Binder cannot remember that the *sha'b* concept in Arab socialism is approved by the Arab communists whose consideration is now given to productive-power before the class structure. In this connexion, the ideal of Western and Socialist democracy, classic and contemporary, should be taken up within his scope for the subject of a nature of the Arab state. Besides that, the specific function group such as '*ulamā'*' is exclusively demonstrated as a traditional-Islamic type, without paying a consideration to local differences. His idea of it, however, is clearly issued in Chapter 4, "Ideological Foundations of Egyptian-Arab Nationalism," dealing with the subject of separation of religion and politics among Egyptian muslim leaders in the framework of ideology and socio-political foundations.

The second topic: Islamic modernism and politics in the context of Western rational and Islamic traditional, is set out in Chapter 3, "The Uneasy Synthesis of Religion and Politics in Islam" and Chapter 4, taking an example from Islamic modernists such as Muḥammad 'Abduh. Dr. Binder puts forward a question, asking for the reason why the separation of religion and politics did not occur, or why the legitimacy of government has been sought in Islam, contrary to the expectations of Islamic modernists. The reason why muslim nationalists have chosen a political system in conformity with Islam is ascribed to a political situation, namely, that the traditional ideology has been sustained with nationalist ontology derived from Islamic theology. From the viewpoint of the primary and subjective part of Arab nationalism, Dr. Binder has been able to clarify that Arab nationalism would not be in conformity with the Western rational. But he overlooks an objective role of the Islamic traditional in Middle Eastern politics. For example, the traditional-Islamic ideologies of reform and revival seem to have been entangled, having Muḥammad Ghazzālī and Ibn Taimiyya as their genealogical origin. If he pays attention to the Islamic-traditional, such as the

Muslim Brotherhood, rather than the Islamic modernists, this tangled situation will be more explicit, because the Muslim Brotherhood might be connected with revivalism in ideology, but, as an objective factor in politics, would be the first political function group which could bring a synchronized pattern of Islamic ideology and mass-organization into Middle Eastern politics. An early attempt at the politicization of the masses in Middle Eastern politics will be primarily ascribed to the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood and similar bodies in the 1930's.

The third topic: *umma*, the idea of nationhood or communityhood, is argued in Chapter 5, "Islam, Arabism, and the Political Community in the Middle East." He mentions here the influence of an ideological compromise in the formation of a political community. His argument is mainly based on Montgomery Watt's *Islam and the Integration of Society* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), concluding that the concept of *umma* should be characterized as an authority or ground for self-identification by individual muslims or groups of muslims, because the essence of nationalism is subjective and, therefore, must reside in any of the political communities. In searching for the subject of self-identification of muslims in the context of nationalism, Dr. Binder unfortunately loses sight of the very simple factor that in the Arab area the concept of *umma* has no substance as a ground for self-identification, unless it is connected with an orientation of self-identification derived from the objective framework of inter-Arab and international politics.

The fourth topic: Arab socialism is studied in Chapter 6, "Radical-Reform Nationalism," Chapter 7, "Nasserism: The Protest Movement in the Middle East," and Chapter 8, "Egypt's Positive Neutrality." Among Dr. Binder's classification of the main ideological patterns in the Middle East: *Traditional-Islamic*, *ijma-modernist*, *secular-nationalist*, *romantic-Islamic-nationalist*, *fundamentalist-Islamic* and *communist*, the *romantic-Islamic-nationalist* is related to the *radical-reform-nationalist* who now prevail in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. The idea of *radical-reform-nationalist* or *radical-romantic-nationalist* is advocated as a leading factor in Middle Eastern politics by the Ba'th Party, particularly in Michel Aflaq's writings, in its ideological aspect, and by Nasser's revolutionary government as a practical factor in politics. According to his opinion, the common characteristic of the Ba'th Party and Nasser's government is that Arab nationalism is not necessary to be authorized by any concept of doctrine, but rather to be authorized by the very existence of a nation, and that Arab nationalism cannot be advanced by the middle class. Though Dr. Binder has a high opinion of the *radical-romantic-nationalist* lower-middle class which is capable of serving the masses or the people, he cannot overlook the limited scope of its democracy or politicization of the masses, because there is a clear posture taken by the leaders that they do lead the masses but never confer with the masses. Dr. Binder crushes an illusion of the middle-class theory on the one hand, but, on the other, his observation on this lower-middle-class is confined to before 1962, so that he should again follow the ideological and practical development of *radical-reform-nationalists* after 1962,

inquiring into the following question: Why and how those *radical-reform-nationalists* could be transmuted to *radical-romantic-socialists*, namely, why and how the nationalist *Weltanschauung* could be enhanced to a socialist *Weltanschauung*.

In conclusion, Dr. Binder's work is undoubtedly one of the most excellent works which has appeared in recent years concerning the subjective part of the Middle Eastern politics and the reader will be much affected by his proposal to emancipate area studies from simple-minded students of comparative politics and *overseasmanship*, thus hoping for an *amphibious animal* who can synchronize reasoning and empiricism, or discipline and application. Dr. Binder's subjective analysis of Arab nationalism is successful in searching for an ideological situation in a changing society, reasonably placing the stress on the ideological crisis rather than the material damage, but, on the contrary, the very merit of his method leaves the objective part of the Middle Eastern politics and any orientation for a revolution implicit. Middle Eastern intellectuals who read his work may be impressed that this is a sincere example of studies conducted by a romantic Westerner who is unable to be either a simple advocate or a critic of Western democracy.

(San-eki Nakaoka)

ARNOLD C. BRACKMAN, *Southeast Asia's Second Front: The Power Struggle in the Malay Archipelago*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1966, xv+341 pp.

Arnold Brackman is an experienced American observer of the Indonesian political scene since the days when he covered the independence struggle in Indonesia as a foreign correspondent. In his previous book *Indonesian Communism: a History* (1963), he revealed his considerable knowledge of and original, perceptive insight into not only the Communist movement in Indonesia but also the basic characteristics of the political history of that land since the inception of its nationalist movement. In his new book *Southeast Asia's Second Front: The Power Struggle in the Malay Archipelago* (1966), Brackman continues to concern himself with the problem of Communism but this time in the larger area of what he calls the "Malay Triangle" including Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and the Philippines as well as Indonesia.

This Malay Triangle is important from the standpoint of the author whose central concern, as in his previous book, has been with the problem of "who encircles whom" in the Cold War. In Brackman's view, in the event that the Indochinese Peninsula slides under Communist control, the logical next stage of the Communist enterprise will centre in this area. (p. ix) Brackman is of the opinion that the political happenings of the Malay Triangle, both within and across the countries and territories involved, must be understood in terms of what he deems to be the "multi-complex struggle for power."